

Episode 54 – Emotion at Work Analysis – Negotiating Meaning in Context

Phil Willcox: Hello, and welcome to the Emotion at Work podcast where we take a deep dive into the human condition and this is episode 55. For today's episode, we are doing something a little bit different, it's a first for The Emotion at Work podcast, actually. And we're starting to look into some of the behavioural analysis parts of the work that we do within Emotion at Work and in particular, we're looking at pragmatics today. So we're looking at meaning in context and how people negotiate meaning in context and the way that we're doing that is analysing a piece of data. So we're analysing a real life interaction that happened, and we're looking to unpick that to say, okay, what happens then, how do people negotiate meaning in context? And this is supported by a piece of analysis that's been completed by myself and Ashley Hilton. We've done the analysis together of a TV interview where Susanna Reid and Ben Shephard from Good Morning Britain are interviewing the then Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock, on the anniversary of the first lockdown as part of the COVID 19 pandemic. And the report we put together, it sits alongside this podcast as a, as an asset as a resource for those that are interested in how we as humans negotiate meaning in context.

Now, why are we talking about behavioural analysis then? Well, it's a big, big part of what we do, in what I mean by that is analysing behaviour, analysing emotions, working out what people may be thinking, or what people may be feeling, is a key key part of what we do. Now, that could be when working with teams. So when we're working with teams or groups of people that need to kind of come together or align together, then reading the room and analysing the behaviour and working out what's going on. When I say reading the room, that's the physical room and the virtual room, to analyse their behaviour to try and work out where people may be, what their stance on something is, or what their stance or something maybe, is important. Also, when we get involved in investigative work, then again, analysing the behaviour of those individuals that we might be talking to or interviewing is really important. And then, when I'm carrying out consulting work, so the interactions that I have with senior leaders, teams within organisations where we're trying to establish what's really happening, and what's really going on, the ability to analyse behaviour is such a helpful thing to do, because it helps us get an idea of what really matters to people, what might they be thinking, and what might they be feeling? And how do those thoughts and feelings change over time. So if we're talking about one particular topic, and then we move on to a different one, and the behaviour changes when we move topic, and then if we, so we're talking about topic (a) and their behaviour is happening in one particular way, we then move on to topic (b) and their behaviour changes, we move on to topic (c) and it goes back to similar behaviour as it was for topic (a). So I might then bring the conversation back to topic (b) to say, what does that behaviour change again, and if that behaviour does change, what might that mean? And come up with different hypotheses as to how that could be happening and what could be going on for that individual that's causing these changes in behaviour. Because what we think, and how we feel, show up in the way that we behave. And a previous guest on this podcast Dawn Archer, she talks about this idea of giving a message, so when we're trying to give a message in particular, but then we also may be giving off another message. And it's those aspects around analysing behaviour that I think is quite unique to what we do in terms of the skill sets that both we have and also what we bring to the work that we do. So if analysing behaviour is something that is going to add some value for us then it does for our clients as well. And that's why we want to start to showcase more of the analysis work that we're

doing. So this is the first of a number of pieces of analysis with a different focus every time. And today's one is on meaning in context.

So as you know, with me, there's always an evidence base that sits behind the work that we do. And so the underlying principle that we're going to look at for this piece of analysis is something called the Cooperative Principle. Now the Cooperative Principle was first put forward by Grice in 1979, as a theory to explain, or not to explain, maybe to support the understanding of how conversation works. And what we mean, what we say sorry, isn't necessarily always what we mean. So the underlying, I guess, part of the Cooperative principle is that in the main in interaction, when people are talking with each other, they want to cooperate. So this Cooperative Principle comes with that kind of base assumption that people want to cooperate with each other when they're interacting. And what Grice suggested then, is that there are 4, he called Maxim's so 4 sort of spectrums of the way that we communicate that then underpin this Cooperative Principle. And those are quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. So quality being that you tell the truth, and you don't say what you believe to be false. So one of the things that has to underpin this Cooperative Principle, there's some may call it a truth bias is we work on this underlying principle that we will tell the truth and not say what we believe to be false. Now, the second one, then is quantity. So quantity is about saying enough, and not too much. So we're giving enough information so that the other person that we're interacting with can understand what we mean, but we're not giving too much information. Third, one then is about relevance, which is staying on topic. So whereas quality is about giving enough information, but not too much, relevance is about staying on topic, it's staying on the topic or topics that the conversation is on, and not going off on tangents, or introducing new information, or new new topics, new ideas, it's about staying on topic staying on the point. And then manner, which is, you'd think it's to do with the like, the manner in which you have the conversation, but it is and it isn't really, so it's a bit of a confusing title. But it's about avoiding ambiguity, and being clear, it's about avoiding ambiguity and being clear, and then what can happen in interaction is people can bend, break or adhere to these Maxim's so I can adhere to them in terms of I can tell the truth and say things that I believe to be true. I can give you enough information and not too much for quantity, I can stay on topic for relevance. And I can be clear and avoid ambiguity for manner. But I can also bend some of those Maxim's. And what then starts to happen is we get into the realms of what's called implicature, which is where by bending some of these Maxim's we start to imply things, rather than say them clearly or overtly. So what would a good example be? If I think back to my days of working in teams and working with other people, somebody comes up to me and says, Phil, Phil, can you give me a hand with this? And I say, not right now, because I'm just drowning at the moment. So the opening utterance says, Phil, Phil, can you give me a hand with this? My reply is not right now. I'm just drowning at the moment. Now, that implies that I am in a body of water, submerged, and unable to breathe. Now, whether we're talking over a video camera, if it's in a virtual world, or whether we're in a physical space together, the other person that I'm with will be able to see that I'm not in a body of water, and I'm not submerged. So what they are likely to take from a meaning perspective, is that I have a high workload at the moment there's a high volume of work on my plate, and I don't have enough time to fill in, to help them and support them right now.

So when we talk about meaning in context then, if you were to look at that utterance, out of context, you might think, ahh Phil's in a body of water drowning. But what Phil actually means in context is there's too much work on or he feels there's too much work on and he doesn't have time

to help the individual that's asking for the help in the first place. And so, in that example, you could argue, well, is Phil bending or breaking those Maxim's? Is he telling the truth? Through metaphor? Yes. Is he giving enough information And not too much? Probably not. So by saying not right now, I'm drowning at the moment, is giving enough information and the small amount of information that gives meaning but is he giving enough information to, to answer the other person's question. I would say no. Is it relevant? Yes. Am I avoiding ambiguity and being clear? Probably not because I'm not saying instead of saying, no, my workload is so vast, I can't help you at the moment, I can help you on Wednesday next week. I'm saying not right now, because I'm drowning at the moment. So I'm not giving a clear indication or idea of when I can help, or what the volume of my work is. So I'm bending 2 of the maximums there. And you can both, you can be bending or breaking 1 or more at a time, depending on on what it is that's happening. So if these Maxim's can then be adhered to, they can be bent and they can be broken. As an analyst, I am really interested in when people I'm interacting with are doing those things. When are they bending? When are they breaking? And when are they adhering to the Maxims. Because when individuals do, bend or break the Maxims, I'm interested, in particular, if that's out of pattern, so if there's been a pattern of adhering to the Maxims for example, and then the individual starts to bend or break them by either being vague and ambiguous, not giving me enough information, not saying what they believe to be true, going off topic, some of those things, that's interesting for me, because it gives me an indication of something more going on. Because if somebody is going to go to the effort of bending or breaking those Maxims, it's because there's something more going on for them. And as an analyst, I'm interested in that. And if I can understand what that is, I can better understand the individual. So whilst the Cooperative Principle is about meaning, and it's about the meaning that we take from something, because there can be a first like a first meaning and then an additional meaning. So if you think about my example, the semantic meaning would be I'm in a body of water drowning, what I actually mean is, I've got a high workload and I haven't got time to help the individual in question. So as well as linking to implicature then, it can also link to deception. Because when we think about that first Maxim of telling the truth or not saying what we believe to be false, then that, again is an interesting part of what I'm looking in, what I'm looking at from a behaviour perspective, because people lie all the time. And why they lying? Well, that's a whole other kettle of fish and what they lie about, that's something else entirely. Please notice that I'm bending Maxim's within my response within my utterances of that's a whole different kettle of fish. So what I mean by that is there's some aspects of what we do when we're involved in an investigation where there may be deliberate deception in terms of trying to mislead the interviewer or trying to mislead an investigation. Other times though, there is deception happening because people are embarrassed, or deception is happening because people aren't sure. Or they're not sure what the right thing is to do. So one of my favourite questions that I like to ask when I'm consulting, is, what verifiable evidence do you have that x is the problem? Because often when I'm consulting, I'm going with one person's view of the world. So somebody is coming to me saying, oh, Phil, Phil, we've got this difficulty, or we've got this problem, or we've got this challenge. Can you come and help us? And I'm like, yeah of course. What verifiable evidence do you have that this is the situation? And when the answer is, I don't know. That's helpful for me, because then I can say, well, let's see if we can verify that then. Or other times what I'll get is an answer that is vague, ambiguous and unclear, lacking in detail, lacking in information to allow me to get meaning. And why might that person be vague, ambiguous or lacking in detail? It could be because they're embarrassed because they're thinking, oh my goodness, this person just asked me a question, this consultants just asked me a question I don't know the answer to and I don't want to

say I don't know, because I might look bad. So instead, I'll try and make something up. So I'm interested in that then as an analyst, because then that tells me that there's additional work to be done. And there's additional thoughts and feelings that are at play that I might not be aware of. So so far, I've given you a fictional example of I'm drowning at the moment. I've given you an example of some of the things I do in the work that I do. So let's have a look at the actual data set we're going to use for the piece of analysis today then.

So this is an openly available TV news interview and a link to the YouTube video will be in the show notes. And what's happening here then is we've got the then Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock is being interviewed by Ben Shephard and Susanna Reid on Good Morning Britain. Now, TV and TV interviews with politicians in particular, and you may argue on Good Morning Britain, especially, are known to be confrontational. And so there are other aspects that are at play at this, in this interview, in this dataset, confrontation is there, there's a phenomenon called impoliteness which is at play. And if you're interested in impoliteness, then I would encourage you to go back to a previous episode of this podcast with Dr. Derek Bousfield, we talked about in-politeness and banter in particular. And one of the things to remember about TV stuff, or TV interviews in particular is we're getting, we are being positioned a particular perspective. So there's a finite amount of time, the interviewers will have an agenda. So the interviewers will have an agenda that they're trying to push, they'll have a line of questioning that they want to explore that will have either just been designed by them, or the producers or the directors of the of the TV show. Similarly, the politician, in this case, Matt Hancock, will also, is likely to also have an agenda to push. So he will have a particular line that he wants to take that could be decided by him or so by somebody within his political party. And so what we may have is, these things could align or they could miss align. So they could be aligned in terms of the areas they want to explore or the lines they want to take or there could be misalignment. And so that can make analysing TV interviews, sometimes tricky, because of the activity type that they have. And what we also need to remember is that part of what a TV interview is trying to do is to entertain and/or inform the viewer. So there's more at play here than just the what we'd call in linguistics, you'd call them interlocutors. So that people that are involved in the conversation. So here you've got Ben Shephard, Susanna Reid, and Matt Hancock. But they're not just talking to each other like you might have in a day-to-day conversation in the workplace, because they're also talking to the broader audience because they know that this has been broadcast out to the public as well. And whenever we're thinking about analysis, it's important that we put the data set in context, because when we're, the title of this podcast is about Negotiating Meaning in Context. And so when we're thinking about what we're going to look at, what we're going hear actually, we have to put it in context. So the first aspect we want to think about then, is when we think about the meaning and context and how Matt Hancock in particular uses the Cooperative Principle Maxims, so how he uses quality, tell the truth and don't say anything you believe to be false. Quantity say enough, but not too much relevance, stay on topic, manner, be clear and avoid ambiguity.

The first aspect we're going to look at is framing and how Matt Hancock uses those Maxim's to reframe what's happening within this interaction. So framing then is a way that we position, a topic or an issue, or an utterance. And in day-to-day life, we frame things all of the time. So you have some classic examples of, come to me with solutions not problems. Or if you might be framing features versus benefits. So if you ever worked in sales, then the mantra would be frame them as

benefits, not as features. So think about your feature, and then reframe it into a benefit, or are you making somebody wait, or are you building anticipation? So the wait, so framing happens all the time. And what I'm interested in is how Matt Hancock uses the Maxims to reframe what happens in this first part of the interview. So what I'm going to do now is I'm going to leave a small gap, you're going to hear the audio of the interview, there'll be a small gap, then you'll hear the audio again, so you'll get to hear it twice, for this excerpt of this part of the audio, and then we'll come back and we'll start to unpick what Matt Hancock does. So if you want to grab a pen, grab a piece of paper, think about those four Maxims and then as you listen to this excerpt and you listen to it twice. Note down where you think Matt Hancock may be bending or breaking some of those Maxims, okay, ready? Here we go.

Susanna Reid: Matt Hancock what are your regrets over the past year? What do you reflect on that you could have done differently?

Matt Hancock: Well, I regret, I regret all of the deaths. I remember the very first one. And I remember feeling a deep sense of loss and actually I found out about it when I was here at home and sitting down and that, that really hit me. I remember at the start, we thought that you couldn't pass this disease on unless you had symptoms. That's what er, you know, that that was the, that was the assumption and that underpinned some of the early policies and we've learnt a lot. We've learned a lot as a society and you know, thankfully, now we can see a route out of this, but it's, it's probably been the hardest year this country has had for, for a generation and...

Susanna Reid: ...I wonder if one of your...

Matt Hancock: ...Everybody's been touched?

Susanna Reid: Yes and that is absolutely true, just wonder if one of your biggest regrets?

Phil Willcox: Okay, so that was your first listen. And here it comes again.

Susanna Reid: Matt Hancock what are your regrets over the past year? What do you reflect on that you could have done differently?

Matt Hancock: Well, I regret, I regret all of the deaths. I remember the very first one. And I remember feeling a deep sense of loss and actually I found out about it when I was here at home and sitting down and that, that really hit me. I remember at the start, we thought that you couldn't pass this disease on unless you had symptoms. That's what er, you know, that that was the, that was the assumption and that underpinned some of the early policies and we've learnt a lot. We've learned a lot as a society and you know, thankfully, now we can see a route out of this, but it's, it's probably been the hardest year this country has had for, for a generation and...

Susanna Reid: ...I wonder if one of your...

Matt Hancock: ...Everybody's been touched?

Susanna Reid: Yes and that is absolutely true, just wonder if one of your biggest regrets?

Phil Willcox

All right, then. So that was two opportunities you had to have a listen to the audio in particular that we're going to look at in this first phase. So there's probably a couple of bits that we want to, I guess just look at, first of all, so when we think about interaction, and we think about compensation, what we need to bear in mind is the fact that meaning is constructed as we go. So what we're, what's often happening is, and in this example, you've got Susanna Reid asking a question, and then you've got Matt Hancock responding. And Susanna reopens with Matt Hancock, what are your regrets over the past year? What do you reflect on that you could have done differently? And there's a pause, slightly longer pause and you might get annoying interaction. And then Matt Hancock's reply is well, I regret I regret all of the deaths. And what we can see there is an example of Matt Hancock picking up on some of the language that Susanna Reid has used in her question because the key words I want to pick up on is Matt Hancock, what are your regrets over the past year? What do you reflect on that you could have done differently? So the way that Susanna Reid is framing this section is on regrets and reflections. So, when we then think about the, how Matt Hancock bends or breaks the principles of the Cooperative Principle, those 4 Maxims are quality, quantity, relevance and manner, then we can also look at how does he build on the framing that is used. So we can hear that his initial responses I regret, I regret all of the deaths. And then what we see that follows that is the first bending of the quantity Maxim because he goes on to describe how his feeling of a sense of loss and then he goes on to describe how he find out, how he describes he found out about it when he was at home, that he was sitting down and that it really hit him. And so you got there, a combination of things. So one is he's bending the quantity Maxim, because he's giving us additional information that we don't need. So, Susanna Reid's questions are, what are your regrets? And what do you reflect on that you could have done differently? What Matt Hancock is giving us is a regret of all of the deaths. And he remembers the very first one, and he remembers a big deep sense of loss, and he found out about it when he was at home was sitting down, and that's when it really hit him. And it's that bit about the deep sense of loss. Okay, maybe. Because with sadness, and with death, often there is a sense of loss, but then you've got, I found out about it when I was at home, I was sitting down, and that really hit me. So it's this additional detail that we don't really need. And so when we think about the quantity Maxim, which is about giving enough information, but not too much, here, Matt Hancock is giving us additional information. And now the question that would leave me as an analyst is well, why is he doing that then? Why is he giving me this additional information? Which would bend one of the Maxims. Now it could be for a couple of different reasons. 1, it could be because when Susanna Reid asked the question, this has come to mind. And it's recorded a memory for him of of that experience, because when she's mentioned, what are your regrets? Then he's saying I regret all the deaths. And then it's bringing back a memory of this additional information. 2 it could be that what Matt Hancock is trying to do is to manage an impression of him, so as to manage how the audience and so in the audience and this could be Susanna Reid and Ben Shepherd. But as I talked about prior to this, this audio clip that I've given you, there's also a broader TV audience at play here. So it could be the what he's aiming to do is to manage an impression of how the audience see him. Now, impression management is a phenomenon that I am very, very, very interested in. And it's not one for today, we're going to save that for a different piece of analysis that will come in the future.

So we've had a couple of different hypotheses then that 1 is the Susanna Reid's question has recorded memory for Matt Hancock, 2 that he's giving us this this additional information to manage an impression of him. 3, it could be that he's giving us additional information to buy him some thinking time. So sometimes in TV interviews, the guest or the interviewee will get told in advance the questions that are being asked and other times they might not they may not. So for this interview, we don't know for sure if Matt Hancock has or has not been told what the questions are going to be beforehand. So it could be that he's also trying to buy some thinking time, it could be that he's overwhelmed with emotion on the anniversary of the first Covid lockdown and/or it could be something else entirely. So as an analyst then, what I'm doing what I'm noticing, as we are here that this quantity maximum has been bent, I'm coming up with different hypotheses into an rationale or reasons as to why that could be. And then my task is to then try and test those hypotheses as much as I could. So what evidence or data do I have to support one or more hypotheses? So if we move on through the dataset then, Matt Hancock goes on to talk about he remembers at the start that we thought we couldn't pass this disease on unless you have symptoms, and that was an assumption that underpinned some of the early policies and we've learned, we've learned a lot as a society and you know, thankfully, now we can see a route out of this. So this bits interesting. So Susanna's question was, what are your regrets over the past year? And what do you reflect on that you could have done differently? And we're starting to get additional information here, where Matt's telling us about sorry, Matt, let me try that one again. We're starting to get information here where Matt Hancock, the then Secretary of State for Health is saying at the start, we thought that you couldn't pass this disease on unless you have symptoms, and we've got the word we and they're not me. So Susanna Reid's question was, what are your regrets? And what do you reflect on that you could have done differently. And we've moved from I to we, so we've got I see, I remember, I found out, I was at home, I remember at the start we thought that you couldn't pass this disease on unless you have symptoms. So Matt Hancock is now shifting the positioning of himself in this, so he's putting himself alongside others by come by using this we aspect. And then he goes on to talk, well that was the assumption that underpin some of the earlier policies and we've learned a lot, we've learned a lot as a society. And now you know, thankfully now, we can see a route out of this. So we've got this continuation of the shift from I to we and we've got a shift of regrets and reflect to learning and learned or sorry, learned and learned, I should say. So you have initially when Susanna Reid's questions are, what are your regrets over the past year? What do you reflect on that you could have done differently? Matt Hancock initially opens with an acknowledgement of that, with I regret, I regret all of the deaths, but now we've moved to and we've learned a lot, we've learned a lot as a society. And you know, now we can see a route out of this. So what I'm highlighting here is that once again, Matt Hancock is reframing things and or he's bending the Maxim's. So he's bending the relevance Maxim now in terms of he's given us information that isn't necessarily relevant to Susanna Reid's question at the beginning because her question was, what are your regrets over the past year? What do you reflect on that you could have done differently? And instead, we've began with I regret and then we've moved on to we and we've learned a lot and then we've learned a lot as a society. And he goes on to say, you know, thankfully now we can see a route out of this, but it's probably been the hardest year this country's had for a generation and everybody, everybody's been touched. So not only are we now in from I to we, were now from a we to everybody and the country. So this country's had, and everybody everybody's been touched. Now, I think Susanna Reid notices this because it's at this at this point, she starts to interrupt. So when Matt Hancock is saying and everybody and everybody has been touched, Susanna

Reid starts to interrupt. So let me just play this part of the interview again. So grab your pen and paper or turn your ears back on and I'll play this snippet of the interview again.

Matt Hancock: But it's it's probably been the hardest year this country's had for for a generation and...

Susanna Reid: I wonder if one of your...

Matt Hancock: Everybody's been touched?

Susanna Reid: Yes and that is absolutely true, just wonder if one of your biggest regrets?

Phil Willcox: Okay, so we've got a couple of different things here. I think, so 1 is, it's on the and everybody's on every, so when Matt Hancock finishes with for a generation and everybody's, that's the point where Susanna Reid comes in with, I wonder if one of your and then is, she pauses lets Matt Hancock finishes and everybody's been touched and then Susanna Reid latches immediately on the end with, yes and, and, and this is absolutely true, I wonder if one of your biggest regrets was that it wasn't taken seriously enough at the beginning. So Susanna Reid is reintroducing regrets and reintroducing your because we got I just wonder if 1 of your biggest regrets was, so Susanna Reid seems to be reorienting the audience and/or the interviewee and Matt Hancock back around him as an individual with the use of your, she's added an intensifier with the use of biggest or not an intensifier sorry, an amplifier, so she's amplifying the regrets now. So she's going from just what do you regret, is your biggest regrets and she's bringing us back to regrets. So she isn't out loud saying that she's noticed the shift from I to we to society to everybody or and she's not again, openly saying that she's noticed a shift from regrets and reflect to learned, by highlighting it though, that implies that she has, so by reorienting us back to her original question, it would suggest that she can see that Matt Hancock or notices that Matt Hancock is bending or breaking some of these Maxims because she's bringing us back to the question that he didn't really answer or that he went, he broke the quantity Maxim, too much information about where he was potentially and/or he's broken the relevance Maxim by bringing in additional information that wasn't there. So, what Matt Hancock has done is use the combination of bending of the Maxims and changing of the language to reframe Susanna Reid's opening question in a way that changes how the audience may see the message and/or him.

Now, if we look broader across the dataset, then you have additional examples of this happening. So the interviewers are both Matt Hancock and sorry, both Susanna Reid and Ben Shepherd, they use the word regret once they use regrets twice, reflect twice, failure once, failures twice and inquiry five times. Whereas Matt Hancock uses learn, learned or learning 11 times through the interaction. So when we look at how both sets of interviewers and interviewees are using language to frame and position what's happening and going on, there certainly seems to be a dominance from Matt Hancock anyway, in wanting to frame learning, using the terms learn, learned and learning within it. And yes, you have got regrets twice at the beginning from or regrets, sorry, from Matt Hancock in the beginning, it doesn't show up again, in the dataset. So that in itself is interesting in terms of often what you see when two individuals in a conversation have a connection is you will see, not necessarily exact mirroring or an exact matching of language, but you'll see alignment together. So

potentially, with the use of reflect which the interviewers Susanna Reid and Ben Shepherd use twice, you could argue that reflect and learning, maybe synonyms of each other. So in which case that may indicate alignment. But when you've got things like regret, regrets, failure, failures and inquiry, those are less synonymous with learning, they occur less frequently with learn and learned or learning through that interaction. So by bending these Maxim's and introducing a different set of language it is looking to potentially change the way the meanings, sorry not change the way it's looking to change the meaning that the audience takes from this interaction. And, as I mentioned earlier on, often a politician will have a line that they want to take a particular argument they want us to support or a particular point they want to put across, or a particular perspective they want the audience to take. And that may be at odds with what the interviewers want to do in this interviewing type scenario. And that seems to show up in the language within this opening section. Now within the reports that I mentioned earlier on, so within the piece of analysis that myself and our community and Insights Manager Ashley Hilton have done, we also go into look at a section on where Susanna Reid mentions the word smoking ruin. And if you want to know more about that, and how Matt Hancock again, bends and breaks, actually some of the Maxims within that part of the interaction, then you need to have a look at the report. But for me to include that in this podcast, I mean, this podcast will go on for a very long time.

So what I want to do is contrast this opening, where we've got Matt Hancock bending 2 of those Maxims and reframing from I through to we, to society, to everybody and then the use of the changing use of language from regret and reflect to learning. What I want to do next is look at an example of where Matt Hancock does adhere to the Maxim's because that, for me is an interesting contrast. So I mentioned earlier on as an analyst I'm interested in when things change in an interaction. And what we have at the beginning and in the middle are examples of Matt Hancock bending or breaking Maxims and what we have at the end towards the end of the interview, in this second example I'm going to give is him adhering to the Maxims and that's something that I think again is worthy of our attention. So grab your pen and paper again. And then what I'll do is I'll play you the second piece of audio for you to have a listen to and then we will unpack it afterwards.

Ben Shepherd: We heard from a care home manager earlier Mr Hancock, if you are looking at trying to make it mandatory to say that recruitment is a nightmare in the care home industry at the moment already and if you do make it compulsory, people are going to leave that industry.

Matt Hancock: Well no decision's been taken and we've got to take into account all of these things, but I'm glad to say that recruitment is up in social care, which is good news. But crucially, we also have a duty of care over the people who are in care homes. So both sides of this have to be taken into account and er er and we've got to talk to people in the sector. There are many in the sector who are calling for this to happen, because a legal change would be required and it's, it is something we're considering.

Susanna Reid: And you're considering it. That suggests it's likely, when would it be introduced under consideration?

Matt Hancock: Well no decision's been taken, so there's no, there's no date or timing on this, because it's something that we've been looking at, but we haven't come to a conclusion off.

Phil Willcox: Okay, so that was your first pass. Here we go again, second time around. And then we will unpick what happens on the other side.

Ben Shepherd: We heard from a care home manager earlier Mr Hancock, if you are looking at trying to make it mandatory to say that recruitment is a nightmare in the care home industry at the moment already and if you do make it compulsory, people are going to leave that industry.

Matt Hancock: Well no decision's been taken and we've got to take into account all of these things, but I'm glad to say that recruitment is up in social care, which is good news. But crucially, we also have a duty of care over the people who are in care homes. So both sides of this have to be taken into account and er er and we've got to talk to people in the sector. There are many in the sector who are calling for this to happen, because a legal change would be required and it's, it is something we're considering.

Susanna Reid: And you're considering it. That suggests it's likely, when would it be introduced under consideration?

Matt Hancock: Well no decision's been taken, so there's no, there's no date or timing on this, because it's something that we've been looking at, but we haven't come to a conclusion off.

Phil Willcox: Hello and welcome back. So even though I've played that as a single piece of audio, I'm going to chunk it up into 2 parts. So part one is going to be the Ben Shepherd question. And then the second which is the male interviewer and then the second part is going to be the Susanna Reid section, which is the female interviewer. And what we notice here is different to what we've noticed in the other sections. Now if you've read the report, you'll have read the Smoking Ruin section, which is where Matt Hancock is responding to questions by Susanna Reid and Ben Shepard about Dominic Cummings assertion that the Department of Health and Social Care was a smoking ruin and how Matt Hancock bends and breaks the Maxims in his, in the way that he approaches that part of the conversation. And then it's also different to what we've covered in this podcast. With regards to the opening section where Matt Hancock uses the bending and breaking of the, well the bending of the Maxims to reframe Susanna Reid's opening question. So what happens here then is we've got Ben Shephard, who says we've heard from a care home manager earlier Mr Hancock, if you're looking to make it mandatory, to say in the recruitment is a nightmare. In the care industry at the moment already, if you do make it compulsory, people are going to leave that industry. So there's a there's not really a question in there it's more of a statement, which is a method of elicitation actually, where you make a statement, and you wait for someone to reply rather than asking a question. So, Ben, Ben Shepard's assertion then is that if you make it mandatory people will leave? And Matt Hancock's response is well, no decision has been taken, we've got to take into account all of these things. He then adds in a little bit of information, but I'm glad to say the recruitment is up in social care which is good news, which is kind of relevant, but maybe less so. So it's something that certainly seems to support his argument or support his point of view but there could be some bending of the of the relevant Maxim in there. He goes on to talk about crucially, we've got a duty of care to people who are in care homes. So both sides of this have to be taken into account and we've

got to talk to people in the sector. There are men in the sector who are calling for it to happen because a legal change would be required and it's something we're considering. So apart from that small moment where I say small moment, apart from that moment where Matt Hancock talks about being glad to say recruitment is up in social care, which is good news, if we look across the Maxims then quality, presuming that his assertion that recruitment is up and that is good news, is there, quantity. There's too much, there's enough but not too much and not too little. Potential 1 around the relevance 1 and then in terms of manner in avoiding ambiguity and being clear, again it's a, there's little ambiguity in there. And that then moves on to Susanna Reid's follow up question where she's saying and you're considering which suggests it's likely, when would it be introduced under consideration? And Matt Hancock's response is, well no decision has been taken, so there's no, ah ah, there's no date or timing on this, because it's something we've been looking at. But we haven't come to a conclusion on. So again, we've got enough information that's relevant. It's truthful, or what he believes to be true as far as we know. And there's little ambiguity and there's clarity. So we have a contrast here then, between this answer, or these answers that Matt Hancock gives to both Susanna Reid and Ben Shephard with the example that we looked at earlier on in this podcast where the question asked was about what are your regrets over the past year? What do you reflect on that you could have done differently, where within his response there is additional information that bends the quantity Maxim. There's additional information that bends the relevance Maxim. There's some ambiguity that bends the manner Maxim. So in that example, we've got Matt Hancock doing many different things to shift the focus that was asked from the original question into the answer that he gives. And here there's a, and the exact answer to these questions from first Ben Shephard and secondly, Susanna Reid, there's much less of that in comparison with that earlier example.

So we've looked at the 4 Maxims or the 4 unwritten rules of conversation. We've then looked into this real-life data set of an interaction between Matt Hancock as an interviewee and Susanna Reid and Ben Shephard as interviewers on the ITV show, Good Morning Britain and what I've aimed to demonstrate is how people that are in conversation, do things as they interact. And the way they do things and in this example, looking at the cognitive principle is interesting for myself and for Ashley as analysts. And we're looking at what happens because it tells us things about what people may be feeling and how they may be thinking. And so when individuals in this example that we have here are bending or breaking those Maxims of the Cooperative principle, there's something going on. Now does that something equal deception, no. Does that something equal cognitive load where someone's got to think really high? No. Does that something equal nervousness or anxiety? No. But it could equal one or more of those things at the same time. Now, there's other aspects of communication that you can analyse, facial expressions, body language, the more specifically the words that are used, I know we've I picked up on some pronoun use in here, and I've picked up on some word use. But you can look more specifically at that, you can also look at the response latency. So the time it takes somebody to respond questions, you can also look at the voice and how the voice is produced. There's lots of different communication components that can be analysed and in this particular piece of analysis, we're only looking at one. So when we look across those channels, then, across those different components of communication, it allows us to get a really good idea of what somebody may be thinking and how they may be feeling. Now, I can't read somebody's mind. That's not a gift, that's a gift that I do not have. What I can do, though, is get a really good idea of what might be happening for someone. I can build some hypotheses as to why that may be happening and then I can test those hypotheses out as we've done here in this analysis with Matt

Hancock. And that helps me, that helps Emotion at Work, it helps Emotion at Works clients, by giving them an extra layer of insight that isn't available to most people. And when it comes to decisions that are important, whether you should hire person (a) or person (b), what the outcome of an investigation may be, whether or not we need to pursue a particular line in a negotiation, or whether we want to build a relationship and build some collaboration with other people in the workplace. Understanding behaviour, analysing behaviour, gives you a really insightful look at the world around you and Emotion at Work as an organisation exists to enrich lives and reduce harm. So we enrich lives by building relationships, building collaboration, harnessing the power of emotion in the workplace, and we reduce harm by identifying areas of miscommunication, misunderstanding, or misrepresentation.

When you get to the point where you're just not sure and you want more informed decision making on those really key decisions that matter, then know, you can give Emotion at Work a call and we've got the skills to be able to help you and provide that additional layer of insight when it matters the most. To round us off then, I'm going to say thank you very much, Ashley Hilton, the Insight and Community Manager here at Emotion at Work for your expert analysis and writing of the report that sits alongside this particular episode of the podcast.

To you fair listener, the full report is available in the Emotion at Work community, you can register for free at community.emotion@work.co.uk. and there you can find access to this particular piece of analysis. There is more to come. So there's more analysis on the way looking at nonverbal communication, in particular looking at body language, we're also going to take a look at some facial expression work as well, as well as the voice because the voice can tell us an awful lot about how others may be thinking and feeling.

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