



A study on in-match football coaches' communication to players

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Background

Formal coach education often prioritizes in-practice coaching behaviors, neglecting in-match communication strategies. This gap limits understanding of real-time coach-to-player interactions, which are crucial for player development during competitive matches. Monitoring and evaluating these interactions, including player-to-coach communication, can provide valuable insights to enhance learning and performance.

Purpose

The study aimed to provide insights into the communication strategies utilized by Brøndby I.F. Masterclass coaches during official matches in U13 to U19 best Danish youth leagues 2024 with particular focus on coach-to-player communication.

Method

Five ($n=5$) coaches from the Brøndby I.F. Masterclass academy voluntarily participated in the study ($n=5$), representing youth teams from the U13, U14, U15, U17 and U19 categories. Each coach was recorded using a Vokalo (Vokalo, Denmark) recorder that was attached to their chest during one league match to analyze their in-match communications to the players. The verbal communications were classified into four categories:

- *Communication target*: This category was divided into communication directed to individual players (CP), communication directed to subgroups within the team (CS), and communication directed to the entire team (CT).
- *Addressing of Names*: This was categorized as addressing players by name before giving instructions (NI) or giving instructions before addressing the player by name (IN).
- *Evaluative Feedback*: This was subdivided into positive feedback (PF) and negative feedback (NF).
- *Referee Interactions*: This category included complaints (C) and interactions related to substitutions (S).

Results

- *Communication target*: Coaches directed 52 % of their communication to individual players, 32 % to subgroups within the team, and 16 % to the entire team.
- *Addressing names*: When providing instructions to individual players, coaches evenly distributed their approach between addressing the player's name before or after delivering instructions.

Limitation

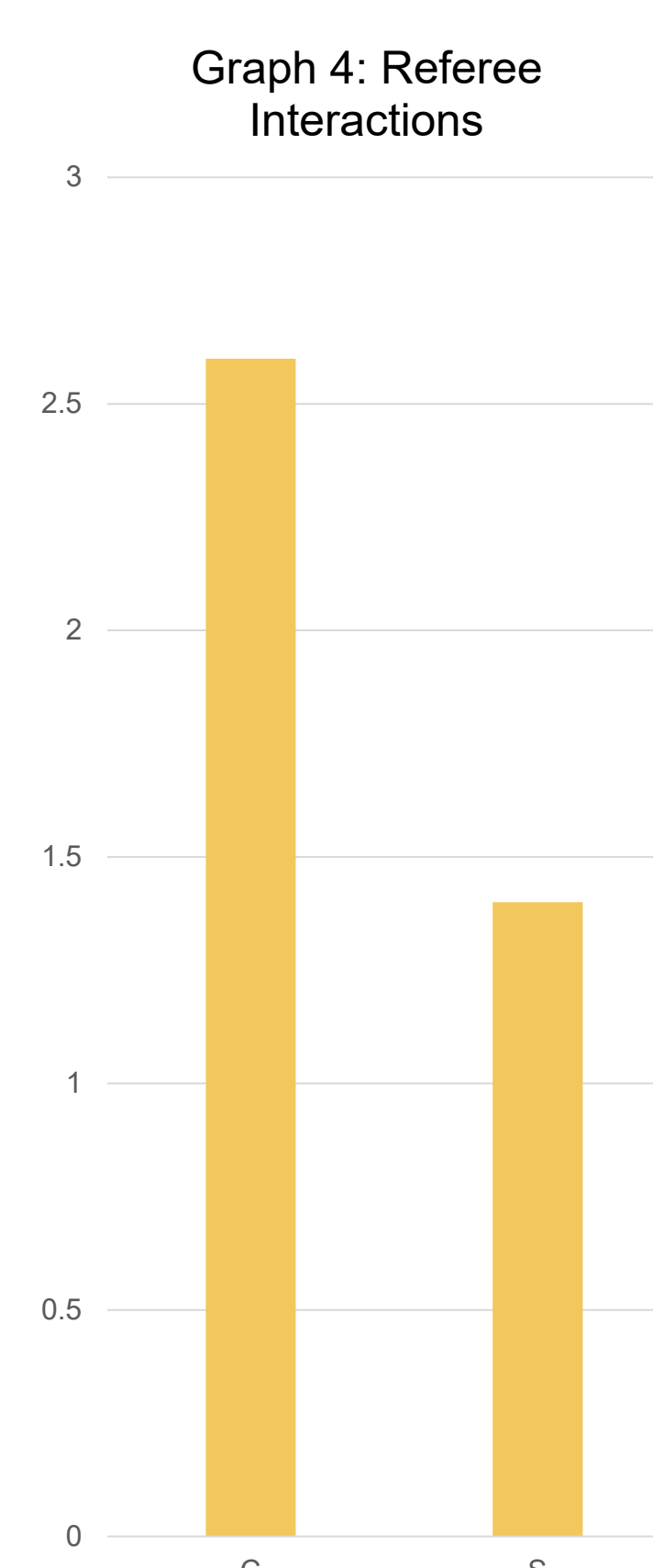
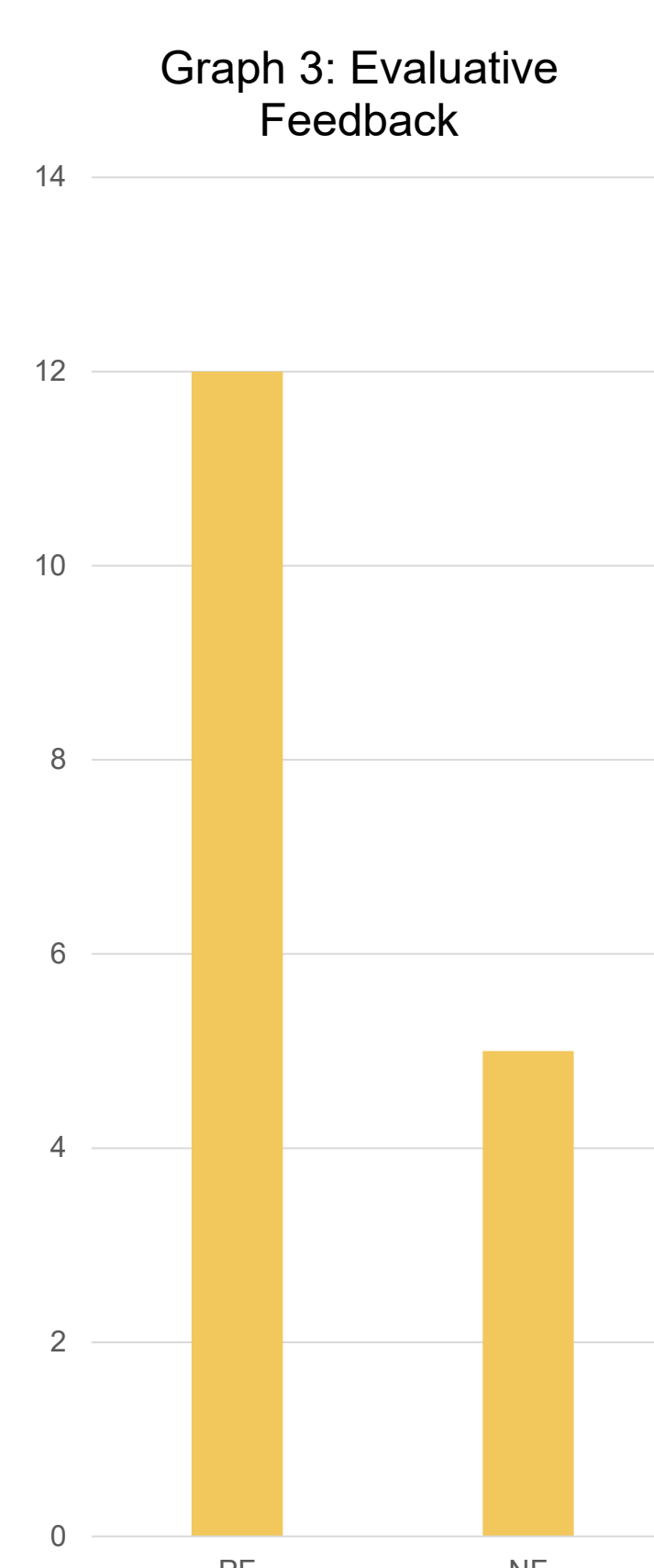
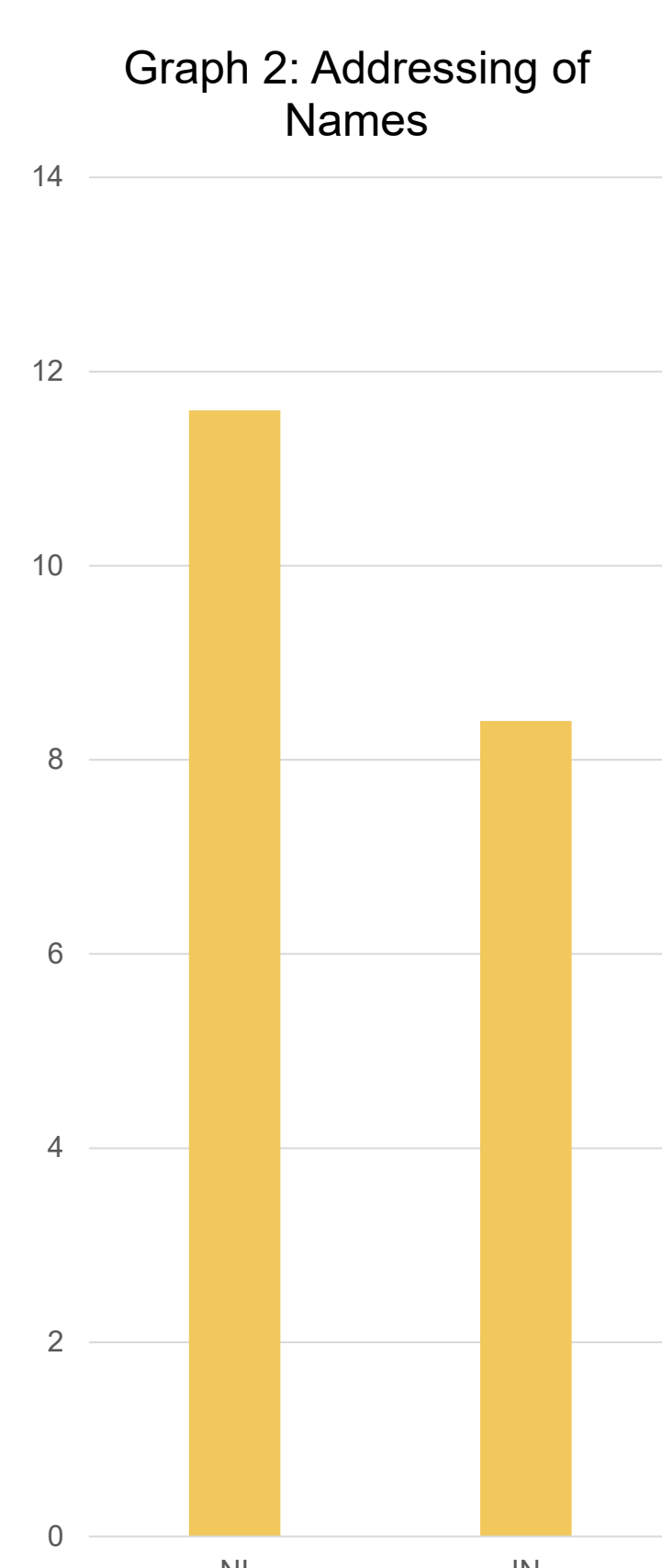
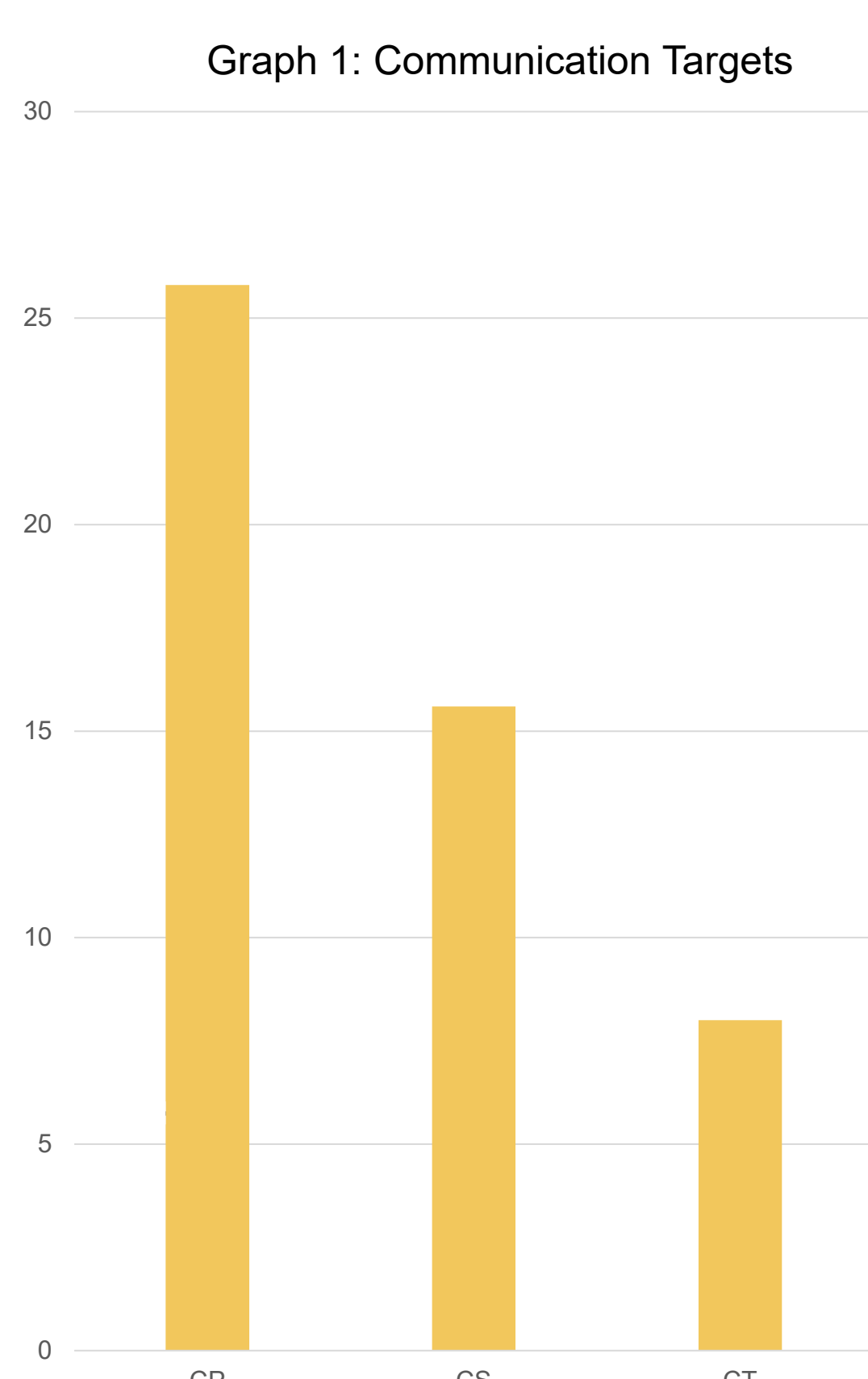
It is important to acknowledge that the results were based on the author's subjective interpretations of the above stated communication categories.

Practical implementations

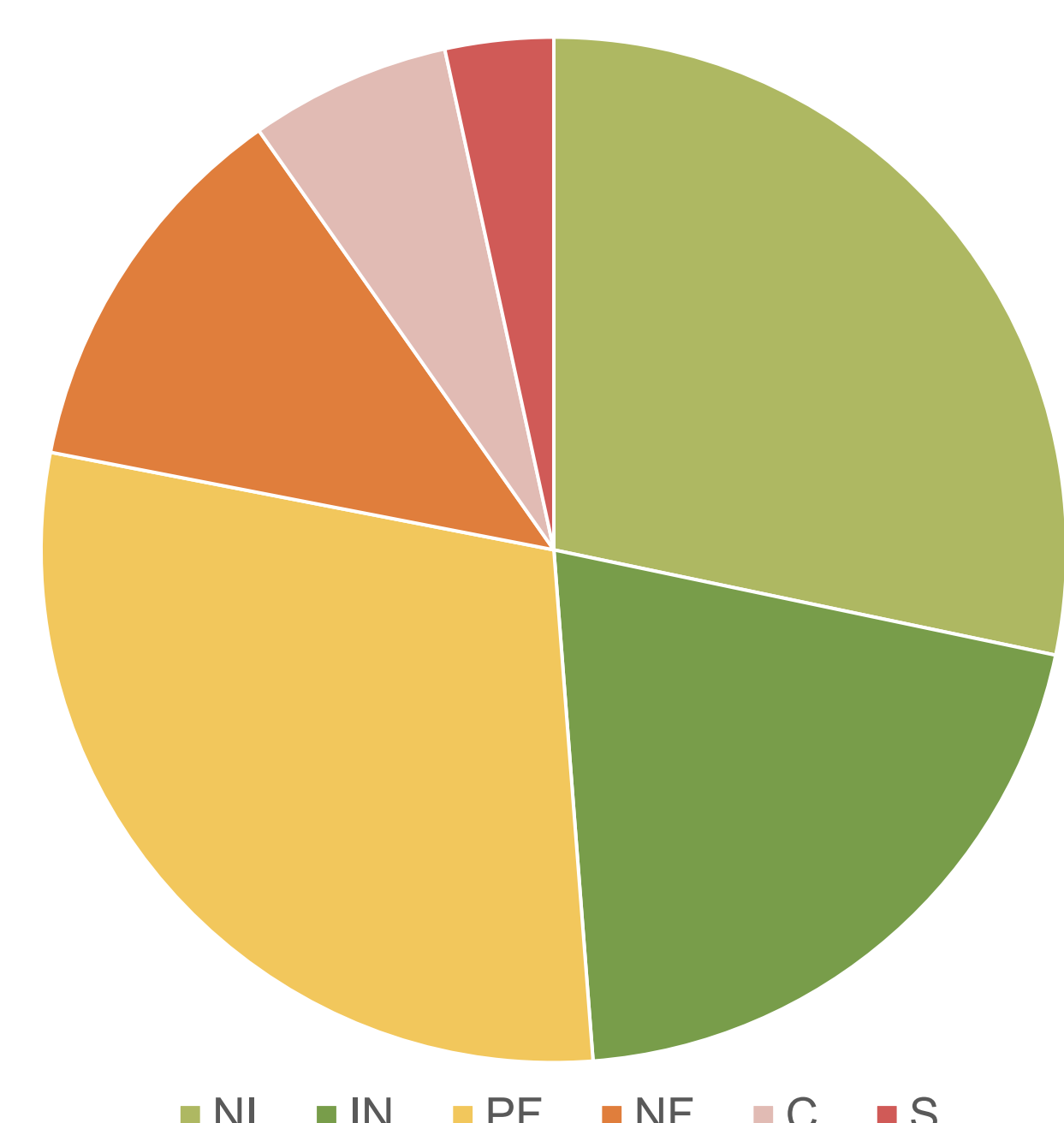
- Coaches could develop specific knowledge of their communication styles to improve their ability to effectively influence players' decision-making processes.
- Formal coach education programs might place greater emphasis on the teaching of in-match coaching behaviors, particularly communication strategies, to optimize performance.

Results

All graphs present the mean values calculated across the five participants. The X-axes represent the respective categories, while the Y-axes indicate the frequency of occurrences.



Pie Chart 1: Distribution of the Total Communication



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