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UNIVERSITY

BEGAE-182
English Communication Skills

Indira Gandhi National Open University
School of Humanities

Block

1

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

One good skill to know,
Is the art of Good Communication...
It's exchanging one's thoughts and ideas,
And it results in clarification!

We'll need to listen closely,
And look at the one who speaks...
You might miss something important,
And catching-up might take weeks!

We'll need to speak clearly,
And use a proper tone...
You might need to speak-up,
Or you might be on the phone!

If you watch and observe closely,
You'll pick-up on non-verbal clues...
You'll soon begin to understand,
And respect other's point of view!

So if you want some good advice,
Then you should take it from me...
When you have Good Communication,
In the dark you'll no longer be!

(http://winningpointacademy.blogspot.com/2013/02/poem-on-communication.html)

Welcome to the course English Communication Skills. This course is of 4 credits and has 3 Blocks and 11 Units. Please read all the Units carefully and attempt all the check your progress activities diligently. If you have any problems consult your Academic Counselor at the Study Centre.

We begin with a bit of theory in Block 1 - *Understanding Communication*. Here we will dwell on the process of communication, communication in globalized communities and non-verbal communication.

In Block 2 *Listening and Speaking in Informal and Formal Contexts* the emphasis is on the speaking and listening skills in both informal and formal situations. The Units will help you not only in personal encounters but at your university and at the workplace.

In Block 3 *Reading and Writing Skills* we concentrate on reading, vocabulary enhancement and writing skill.

We hope that you will benefit from the course!

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

In this Block *Understanding Communication* we give you some theoretical insights into the communication process. Unit 1 'The Process of Communication' deals with topics such as: What is communication, the process of communication, barriers to communications, the difference between written and spoken communication. We then describe at some length a Speech Act i.e. Conversation.

In Unit 2, The Globalization of Communication: A Global Village we briefly describe the story of communication from ancient times to the modern era. We also discuss how language and new technologies interact harmoniously with each other.

Non-verbal communication is a very important factor in the communication process. This may be through body language and even signs, symbols and graphs. Our purpose in Unit 3 is to holistically understand the communication process so that you will be able to interact meaningfully in your life.

UNIT 1 THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Unit is to tell you:

- the process and elements of communication

- different types of communication

- barriers to communication

- difference between written and spoken communication

After you complete the Unit, you should shift your attention from English as a 'subject' of knowledge to English as a 'skill' that you can train yourself to use.

1.1 INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

We all engage in communication with others right from our birth. When we interact with others we are communicating with them. Right now I am

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communicating with you through this unit and while you are reading it, you too, are in fact communicating with me through this text.

It is often said that we live in an age of communication characterized by speed, efficiency, and the ability to transcend physical or geographical limitations. But what does it mean to communicate? The dictionary definition is 'to exchange (thoughts) or make known (information or feelings) by speech, writing or other means; to transmit'. Communication is more than just messaging or swapping information. It involves not just words, but the use of all our senses. With face-to-face dialogue, our facial expression, tone, body language, ability to listen with patience, all contribute to the conveying messages and information between people.

For example, the written word, whether in books and magazines, e-mails or texts can convey more than just the writing. It can inspire, elevate and encourage if that is the intention of the writer. It can also confuse and exasperate if we are not careful! Lynne Truss, in a recent book on punctuation, pointed out how easily the meaning of the written word can be altered just by rearranging the punctuation. She invites us to compare the following two sentences; 'A woman, without her man, is nothing', and 'A woman: without her, man is nothing.'

As human beings we have the ability to express ourselves and share our thoughts and feelings in many ways. We could live in isolation, never communicating with another person, but that would not create value. We can keep feelings to ourselves or we can share them. Each person has his or her unique view of things, and each perspective is valuable. Through sharing these individual ideas or views with each other, global solutions may be found.

Someone may share an idea that the other person may not have even considered. These differing views could be compared to a jigsaw puzzle, where each person has their own piece, and when the pieces fit together, the full picture emerges and a solution is found that may not have been considered previously. Certainly increased communication that uses technology can be enormously valuable. Being able to share information quickly between people has meant that a disaster in one part of the world can be responded to in another; it has led to the fall of corrupt governments, as people have been able to unite in challenging authoritarian regimes. People in remote areas fighting injustice have linked up with people on the other side of the world who can support their cause. As with everything, new technologies such as e-mail and text messaging have the potential to be positive or negative.

So don't you see the value of communication!

1.2   THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

The following figure gives a simple model of the process of communication:-
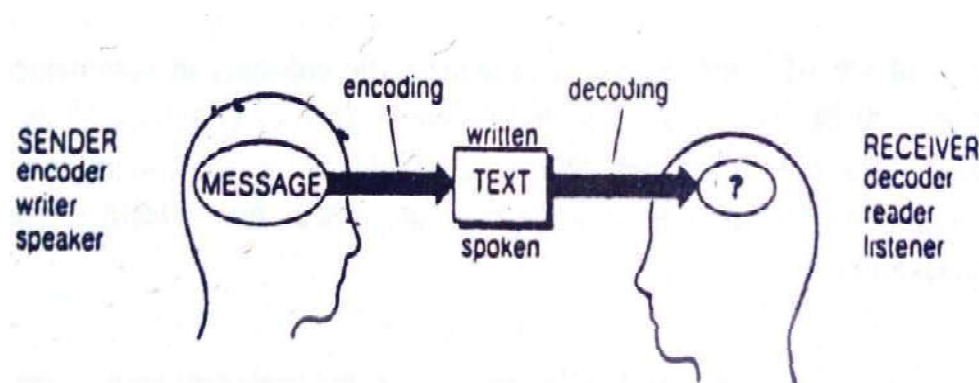
Check your progress 1

Look at the figure given above and try to answer the following questions:

1)   At least how many persons do you need for communication to take place?

2)   Can two people communicate if they do not share the same language?

3)   If your answer to Q2 above is 'yes', then explain how they will communicate.

4)   A saint sitting with his eyes closed says he is communicating with God. Do you think it is an example of communication? Give reasons for your answer.

5)   A person was lost in his thoughts with his eyes closed. When asked he said that he was communicating with self. Would you term it as communication? Discuss with others in your study center.

Elements of Communication

If we look at the figure given above we can derive the elements of communication as follows:

1)   Communication involves at least two persons (a) The addresser and (b) the addressee.

2)   The topic: the contents of the message.

3)   The channel: the medium through which the message travels, e.g. letter, telephone, e-mail, etc.

4)   The code: the language of the message e.g. English, French, Hindi, etc.

5)   The message form: the selection of particular grammar and lexical choices of the message.

6)   The setting: the social and physical setting.

Check your progress 2

Look at the figure once again. Can you write a paragraph now explaining the process of communication?

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The Role of the Decoder

The process of decoding by the addressee is not passive as some people think. His/Her role is an active one. Language, it is said, does not have meaning; it has potential for meaning and it is the decoder who is actively engaged in making meaning on the basis of his/her background knowledge and the context of communication i.e. the knowledge of the subject, topic, addresser-addressee relationship, knowledge of the code (language used), the physical and social context, etc.

Let us consider the following utterance:

"Mr. Gupta is not coming".

The literal meaning of the sentence is not difficult; it is quite clear-but do we know what the speaker wants to convey? Is it a statement for our information? Is it a warning for the hearer? We can understand this text only if we know what the context is, i.e. who is the addresser; whom is s/he addressing; when, where and in what context. Suppose the addresser is the Managing Director (MD) of a company; and the addressee is his Secretary; the MD utters these words on arriving in his office and going through a fax message; Mr. Gupta is a consultant with the foreign collaborators of the company; and he was due to arrive that day for a meeting with the MD and other officials of the company. If we possess this background knowledge, we will be able to understand the meaning of the sentence uttered by the MD. This sentence can now be called an utterance in this context. The secretary can interpret the utterance to mean: 'The meeting will have to be cancelled and the officials informed accordingly. Arrangements such as sending the car to the airport, hotel reservation, etc., if any, made for Mr. Gupta, will have to be cancelled', etc. etc.

When we make an utterance we always do something; we use language to perform some function, e.g. to inform, warn, promise, persuade, etc. and the hearer or the reader can derive the meaning of the utterance only through actively processing the utterance in the context in which it is made.

Check Your Progress 3

Can you think of some of the functions of language? One can be to 'inform' someone; or to 'warn' them. Think of some more functions and compare your list with that drawn up by others at your study centre.

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Macro Functions of Communication

The macro functions of communication are listed below:

1) **The emotive function**: to communicate the inner states and emotions, e.g. Oh no!

2) **The directive function**: seeking to affect the behaviour of others, e.g. Close the door, please.

3) **The phatic function**: opening the channel or checking that it is working, e.g. Hello, is it Thomas Cook? or Can you hear me, Mrs. Gupta?

4) **The poetic function**: the particular form chosen is the essence of the message. This refers to the aesthetic function of language.

5) **The referential function**: to carry information.

6) **The metalinguistic function**: focusing attention on the code itself, e.g. 'the use of both *will* or *shall* is correct in modern usage.'

7) **The contextual function**: creating a particular kind of context, e.g. Right! Let's start the meeting now.

Check your progress 4

Which of these functions are often performed in workplace situations? Give examples to support your answer.

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1.3 BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

It is said that communication can never be hundred per cent complete. Many factors are involved in the process of communication and something can always go wrong with one or more of these. From your own experience, make a list of some of the factors that can impede communication.

Let us now consider some of these barriers:

a) **Code**, i.e. the addresser and the addressee may not share the same language between them. The addresser is speaking in French and the addressee does not know French.

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b) **Vocabulalry**: *The market declined under persistent bear hammering*. One who is not familiar with the vocabulary of the stock market may not understand what is meant.

c) **Concept**: Technical and subject specific concepts may not be understood by all. For example, *a black hole* is simple language, yet the concept may not be understood by many.

d) **Background knowledge and shared assumptions** e.g. a Victorian style mansion may not be understood by those living outside England.

e) **Pronunciation, intonation, accent and stress in spoken language**. Sometimes may not be understood.

f) **Culture specific** communication may cause misunderstanding.

g) **Physical environment**: Noise and other environmental disturbances or even physical distance between the address and the addressee can impede effective communication.

h) **Affective factors**: personal factors e.g. anxiety, fear, attitude, motivation, beliefs, values, lack of mutual trust, lack of time or pressure of work, lack of attention, and personal rivalries. All these factors impede communication.

Check Your Progress 5

How can the barriers to communication be removed? Discuss with others in your group or class.

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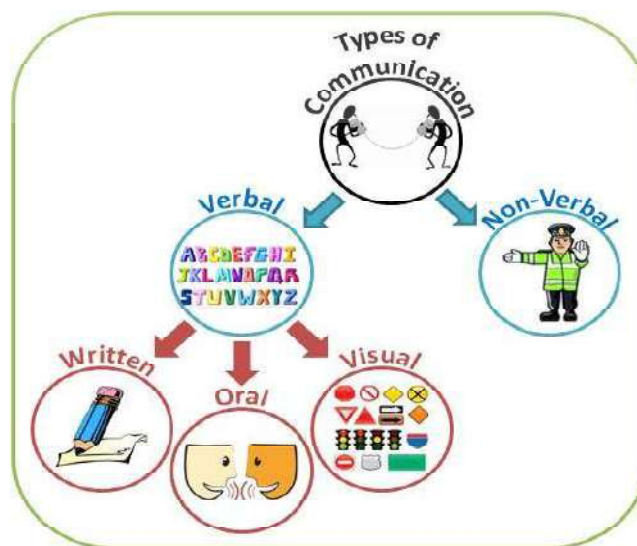
1.4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication may be classified into several categories on the following basis:

Expression: Written, oral and gestural

Flow: Internal (Vertical & Horizontal) and external

Relationship: Formal and informal

Various Media of Expression (Written, Oral & Gestural)

Communication can be achieved through various media, such as writing, speech, gestures and actions. One can use written words or draw pictures or one can use speech sounds. Speech is primary, writing secondary, that is, speech came first and the writing system was developed later on. There may still be some languages which are spoken but not written. In fact, several of the tribal languages do not have any script. Deaf and dumb people use actions and gestures in order to communicate with each other—this is also a form of communication and known as sign language. The visually challenged read and write using Braille.

At the workplace, communicating in writing or via email is the most popular form of communication. It can take various forms such as letters, circulars, office memorandums, newsletter, brochures, bulletins, reports, manuals, house journals, magazines, etc. You are already familiar with some of these.

This does not mean that oral communication is not used in workplace transactions. Speech is also used and quite often. It takes the form of face-to-face interaction, telephone conversations, lectures and talks, meetings and discussions, etc.

Expression through body language is known as gestural communication. Who is not familiar with the nodding of the head from side to side to say 'no' or up and down to convey 'yes'? Parents often use this means of communication with their children if they tend to be naughty in the presence of guests and it is often used in workplace situations as well in similar circumstances or when verbal communication is impossible e.g. in the factory where the noise of machinery makes verbal communication difficult.

Check Your Progress 6

Can you think of a situation when gestural communication would be more effective than oral communication? What kind of messages can be communicated through gestures? Give some example from your own experience.

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Pictures, charts, diagrams are also used either on their own or in combination with written or oral communication for greater effect and better understanding. Business houses make use of them in their illustrated catalogues and brochures meant to promote their product.

Downward, Upward & Horizontal Communication

Companies have to communicate with outside agencies and other companies, government and private bodies, newspapers, advertisers, manufacturers of machinery, builders, suppliers of goods and services, clients and customers, etc. But there is also the need to communicate within the company itself, e.g. communication between a superior and a subordinate, i.e. from higher to lower

levels of authority. This is an example of *downward communication*. There are also occasions when communication flows from a subordinate or subordinates to a higher authority. It may be a report, suggestion, opinion or a charter of demands from the workers. We call this *upward communication*. Both these are forms of vertical communication.

Communication between officers working at the same level of management is called *horizontal* or *lateral communication* e.g. interaction between manager (Production) and Manager (Marketing). It involves exchange of ideas, information, opinions or seeking clarifications, etc. between personnel of the same rank.

Formal and Informal Communication

At the workplace, these two terms are used in a slightly different sense than what we generally understand by them. Communication done through the chain of command is known as *formal communication*. It involves the transmission of official message in the formal organization structure. Such communication is planned and established by management and clearly indicates the hierarchical relationships involved and these generally are in writing e.g. orders, decisions, instructions, etc.

Informal communication does not flow through the official channels of communication. It involves the spontaneous expression of reactions and ideas and is usually done orally. Hence it may carry incomplete or incorrect information.

The words *formal* and *informal* are used to indicate change in form and language of communication according to change in relationship between the addresser and the addressee and the context of situation. For example, you will use informal language while talking to your brother at home. But if your brother also happens to be your boss in office and a formal meeting is going on in office, you will address him in a different way, i.e. in formal style.

1.5 WRITTEN VS. ORAL COMMUNICATION

When we speak of language as a tool for communication, we mean both spoken and written forms of the language. Both these modes can be used for communication. While they perform the same functions, their form and manner of use differ in many respects. For example, one makes use of sounds, other of symbols. The speaker has available to him/her the full range of voice quality effects, as well as facial expressions, postural and gestural systems, but these paralinguistic features are denied to the writer. The writer, on the other hand, has

typographical variety at his/her disposal. The speaker is face-to-face with hearer

while the writer writes for an absent reader who may also be far away in space and time.

These different features have their own advantages and disadvantages. In oral communication the speaker, being face-to-face with the hearer can monitor and match the reactions of the hearer. At the same time s/he can simultaneously plan his/her next utterance and fit it in the overall pattern of what s/he wants to say. S/he must keep on talking during the period allotted to him/her; s/he must decide when to take his/her turn, how to interrupt his/her interlocutor, how to hand over the turn—in fact s/he must be in command of all the conversational skills. S/he has certain advantages as well; s/he can observe his/her interlocutor and, if necessary, modify what s/he is saying. Oral communication is quicker, more economical and more effective than written communication. Doubts and misunderstandings can be cleared on the spot as immediate reaction and response is available.

There are variations in spoken language and also in the way it is delivered. These could be on account of geographical or social and cultural differences. There are dialectical differences, accent differences and also differences in the use of paralinguistic features and body language. Speech is less organized than written language; it contains many incomplete sentences; often it contains simply sequences of phrases. These features may easily create misunderstandings. Oral communication is less reliable because it is not available in future; it is also affected by the attitudes and personality, self-interest, beliefs, values and prejudices of the sender as well as the receiver and also the time and circumstances of the communication. Oral communication is also not suitable for lengthy messages to be communicated to distant and widely scattered people.

Similarly the written mode gives the writer certain advantages as well as disadvantages over the speaker. Since the writer is writing for an absent reader, s/he may look over, reflect, and edit what s/he has already written, with no fear of being interrupted by his/her interlocutor; s/he can take his/her own time in choosing a particular word, even looking it up in the dictionary, if necessary, reorder what s/he has written, and even change his/her mind about what s/he has to say. S/he is under no pressure to keep on writing; she can even destroy what s/he has written and throw it into the dustbin without fear of offending the reader. But the writer has disadvantages too: s/he has no access to immediate feedback and simply has to imagine the reader's reactions. This non-reciprocal nature of written communication makes it more difficult to learn.

Written communication ensures the transmission of information in a uniform manner and there is little risk of unauthorized alteration in the message. Since it is put in black and white, it provides a permanent record for future reference. Written communication tends to be complete, precise and unambiguous. The message can be repeated at regular intervals and lengthy messages can be sent to widely scattered readers. But written communication is time-consuming, expensive and rigid and it becomes difficult to maintain secrecy.

At the workplace, face-to-face and telephone communications are generally confirmed in writing by post or e-mail, particularly when the communication is with the world outside. Why do you think is it necessary to do so? Discuss with friends or mates at the Study Centre the comparative advantages and

disadvantages of the telephone mode of communication over face-to-face interaction.

Check Your Progress 7

1) Which mode of communication would you adopt in the following cases:-

   a) The message is very urgent.

   b) The message is important and lengthy.

   c) The message sent should be available in the records.

   d) The information is to be sent to all employees in different branches.

   e) You have to consult your boss, who is out of town, urgently and take a quick decision.

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2) You are the Marketing Manager of a firm. You want to hire a sales supervisor. Which form of communication would you use to communicate your requirement to the Manager (Personnel)? Would you prefer to talk to him personally, over the phone, write an email or memo? Give reasons for your answer.

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1.6 DIFFERENT TYPES OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS

Brown & Yule (1983) use two terms to describe the major functions of language. The function of language where the transfer of information is involved is called *transactional*, and the function involved in expressing social relations and personal attitudes is called *Interactional*.

1) a) A: There's no message for you   (Transactional)

   B: OK.

   b) A: How are you?   (Interactional)

   B: Fine, thank you.

In the world of business one has to make use of language for performing both of these functions. In business transactions, different situations may arise when one has to use language for different types of face-to-face interactions: (1) conversation for establishing social contact, performing various functions such as introducing oneself and others, making inquiries, giving and seeking information, giving instructions, reporting conversations, giving the company's profile, describing persons, places and processes, developing relationships, getting people to do things, offering help, seeking help, apologizing, persuading, elaborating, arguing a point, explaining a situation, comparing two products, negotiating business deals, asking for and giving advice, etc. (2) participating in discussions, (3)taking part and conducting meetings and interviews, (4) lecturing (5)demonstrating company's products, (6) talking about where you work, describing simple and everyday operations, describing work and business operations, describing office working conditions, consulting and reporting to superiors, asking for and giving advice, talking about problems at work, etc. Most of these encounters will be transactional while some of these will be interactional.

Conversation

You are already aware of social interaction at the workplace i.e. meeting and greeting people in business, and developing a conversation. From your observation, can you recall/derive some rules of face-to-face conversation? Do you think there are rules for conversation in every language of the world? Native speakers learn naturally as part of their growing up in that society and follow these rules in their conversation with other native speakers. Discuss this with others in your Study Centre.

Human beings spend a large part of their lives engaging in conversation and for most of us conversation is among our most significant and engrossing activities. We have already described the importance of communication, particularly face-to-face communication. Researchers from several academic disciplines have looked at conversation as an object of inquiry and come up with fascinating findings. Our understanding of how people conduct conversations has been enriched by observations made by psychologists and linguists, among others.

Before we describe the rules of conversation, let us be clear about the term *conversation*. As Richards and Schmidt point out, the term **conversation** is used somewhat ambiguously in current literature. It is used sometimes to refer to any spoken encounter or interaction and sometimes, more restrictedly, to:

"…talk occurring when a small number of participants come together and settle into what they perceive to be a few moments cut off from (or carried on to the side of) instrumental tasks: a period of idling felt to be an end in itself, during which everyone is accorded the right to talk as well as to listen and without reference to a fixed schedule; everyone is accorded the status of someone whose overall evaluation of the subject matter at hand… is to be encouraged and treated with respect; and no final agreement or synthesis is demanded, differences of opinion to be treated as unprejudicial to the continuing relationship of the parties." (Goffman 1976)

All talk, it is pointed out, is rooted in its surroundings. But conversation in this more restricted sense is not very firmly rooted to the world as other kinds of

utterances. The activities which are directly governed by norms for the use of speech are termed *speech events*. As speech events, conversations can be contrasted with other types of speech events such as lectures, discussions, interviews, debates and meetings.

1.7 CHARACTERISTICS AND CONVENTIONS OF CONVERSATION

The Cooperative and Politeness Principle

Conversation is more than merely the exchange of information. When people take part in conversation, they bring to the conversational process shared assumptions and expectations about what conversation is, how conversation develops, and the sort of contribution they are each expected to make. When people engage in conversation they share common principles of conversation that lead them to interpret each other's utterances as contributing to the conversation.

One of the assumptions we make when we take part in a conversation is that if I ask you a question, whatever you say will somehow be interpreted as constituting an answer to my question. Consider the following example:

2) A : Which generator did you buy?

   B : It is a Honda.

Let us now consider the following:

3) A : Which generator did you buy?

   B : You could have killed it.

In this latter case the speaker B does not seem to have followed the principle described above and hence the resulting exchange is uninterpretable.

The philosopher Grice has described four Maxims or Principles of Cooperative Behaviour which speakers observe in conversation. These are:

1) Maxim of Quantity : Make your contribution just as informative as required.

2) Maxim of Quality : Make your contribution one that is true.

3) Maxim of Relation : Make your contribution relevant.

4) Maxim of Manner : Avoid obscurity and ambiguity. Be brief and orderly.

Conversation is more than a series of exchanges; it consists of exchanges which are initiated and interpreted according to intuitively understood and socially acquired rules and norms of conversational cooperation. These can in turn be manipulated to create a wide range of meanings beyond the level expressed directly by the utterances in the conversation itself. Consider the following example:

4) A : It is very hot in here.

   B : I'll open the window.

We can infer the meaning of B's response. The room is hot, probably because the windows are closed, so if the window is opened cool fresh air will come in and cool the room. B's response is thus quite relevant and interpretable.

Check Your Progress 8

1) What do you think can be the relationship between A & B?

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We also know that the rules of conversational implicature, dependent on manipulating the four maxims, can be used to express sarcasm, irony, criticism and a range of other types of inferential meaning. Consider the following exchange:

A : How is the food?

B : There is plenty to fill your belly.

B is manipulating the maxims of conversational implicature to suggest that the other qualities of the food are not worth mentioning.

However, at the workplace the emphasis is on *clarity of communication* and indirect speech acts and manipulation of maxims are generally avoided.

The relevance of Grice's Maxims to conversation in a second/foreign language is dependent on the degree to which such maxims are universal or language specific. In Indian culture, for example, even during an interview for a job, candidates are very modest while talking about themselves and their achievements; while in the European context the tendency is to display oneself to an extent which an Indian might term 'boasting, or 'bragging'.

Adjacency Pairs

One way in which meanings are communicated and interpreted in conversation is through the use of what have been called *adjacency pairs.* Adjacency pairs are utterances produced by two successive speakers such that the second utterance is identified as related to the first as an expected follow-up. The two form a pair, the first utterance constituting a first pair part and the next utterance constituting a second pair part. Adjacency pair is described as the *basic structural unit in conversation.* Consider the following examples of adjacency pairs:

a) Greeting-Greeting   A : Hi

                                          B : Hi

b) Compliment-Acceptance   A : That's nice dress.

                                          B : Thanks.

The basic rule of adjacency pair operation is that when a speaker produces a recognizable first pair part, s/he should stop talking and the conversational partner should produce a recognizable second pair part. Adjacency pairs thus provide for turn-taking, and also prescribe the type of talking that the next talker can do.

Check your progress 9

1) Supply appropriate adjacency pairs for the following:

Summons-answer   Mother: Ramesh
                      Ramesh: ………

Farewell-Farewell   A: O.K. See you.
                      B: ………

Question-Answer   Customer: Do you have fresh apples?
                      Shopkeeper: ……………

For some adjacency pairs, there is much more freedom for conversationalists responding to first pair parts, with several options available as second pair parts:

Complaint   A : Who took away the keys of my car?

Apology   B : Sorry.

Denial   B : No, I didn't. It must have been
               Surindra.

Justify   B : I needed them to bring the Adit back from school.

Excuse   B : You shouldn't have left them here.

Challenge   B : So what?

Check Your Progress 10

Produce appropriate second part adjacency pairs as shown in the brackets for the following:

Compliment   A: That's a nice dress.

(Acceptance)   B:

(Agreement)   B:

(Rejection)   B:

(Topic shift)   B:

(Return)   B:

Openings and Closings

Conversations, it is pointed out, do not simply begin and end. The openings and closings of conversations and other types of speech events are organized and orderly. All transitions from a state of non-talk to talk or from talk to non-talk require engineered solutions. Openings and closings are problematic for the native speakers as well and have to be learnt like other social behaviours. For non-native speakers it is an area which needs special attention.

Openings and closings are speech event-specific. For a formal meeting, for example, there is an initial summons (a memo, circular along with the agenda, etc.) We will talk about this topic in some detail when we discuss below different types of face-to-face interaction.

A conversation is quite different from many other speech events in that it has no specified setting, no time or place, no required roles other than 'persons' involved (though some external roles such as boss/secretary may not be shed), no pre-specified agenda, and a quorum of simply two or more. Like other speech activities, however, conversations must be opened, and commonly this is done through the use of an adjacency pair such as Greeting-Greeting, Request-Grant, Question-Answer, or Statement-Response as in the following speech event:

A: Good morning

B: Morning. Can I help you?

A: I want to see Mr. Bhatnagar.

B: Which Mr. Bhatnagar do you want? We've two Bhatnagars in this office.

A: Mr. Mukul Bhatnagar. He's Director Finance.

B: Do you have an appointment?

A: I'm afraid not.

B: Let me check if he is free. You are Mr.?

A: Malhotra. Deepak Malhotra from ABC. (Mr. Malhotra takes his seat after a few minutes in the waiting room).

B: I'm sorry he's in a meeting.

A: When is the meeting likely to be over?

B: No idea. Can I take a message?

A: Will you tell him I came to see him?

B: I will, certainly

A: Thank you.

B: You're welcome.

Topic Development

Another important dimension of conversational organization is the way topics are selected for discussion within and the strategies used by the speakers to introduce, develop, or change topics within the conversation. Coherent conversations respect norms concerning choice of topics, for example, in a business meeting members will take turn to speak only on "the items on the agenda notified in advance and from among these only on that item which is being discussed at the moment."

Topics may develop in a recognizable structure as, for example, the language of buying and selling, court trial, doctor and patient conversation, etc.

Check Your Progress 11

Write a short conversation between a T.V. dealer and a customer. The customer bought the T.V. last month but is having some trouble with the picture and sound

quality. Discuss in your study centre the structure of this conversation in the light of the points made above.

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Turn Taking

Conversation by definition involves two or more people. But the distribution of talking among the participants is not merely random. It is governed by turn-taking norms, conventions which determine who talks, when, and for how long. One who talks too much and does not allow time for others, or one who contributes nothing to the conversation arouses negative evaluations.

Rules for turn-taking differ according to the type of speech event. In the classroom, for example, students generally raise a hand to take a turn to talk.

Repairs

The process of conversation involves monitoring to ensure that the intended messages have been communicated and understood. This involves correction whenever it is suspected that the message has not been received as intended. The term-*repair* refers to the efforts by the speaker or the hearer to correct trouble spots in conversation. Repairs may be initiated by either the speaker or the hearer:

A: Mr. Malhotra isn't in his office.

B: Sorry!

A: Mr. Malhotra is not in his office at the moment.

1.8   DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONVERSATION AND OTHER SPEECH EVENTS

Hymes uses the term *speech event* for activities that are directly governed by norms for the use of speech. As speech events, conversations can be contrasted with other types of speech events such as lectures, discussions, meetings, interviews, debates, etc. We recognize each of these speech events as distinct by virtue of differences in the number of participants who take part in them, as well as through differences in the type and amount of talking expected of the participant, the setting, quorum, if any, required, etc. Speech events, like conversations, as shown above, also have identifiable rules for proper beginnings, middles and endings. Violations if noticed, are frowned upon.

Openings and closings, as already said above, are speech event-specific. For many speech events, there is an initial summons, e.g. a memo/notice calling for a meeting and participants assemble over time before the occasion actually begins.

There may be a specified setting (e.g. hall, classroom) and the persons who assemble are oriented to as specified category members (e.g. members of the club, union, students faculty at a college lecture). Some events, such as a formal meeting (e.g. the Annual General Body Meeting of the Company) require a specified number of participants before the events may properly be seen as beginning, such as a quorum at a meeting.

Some speech events may not begin as soon as the required persons are present. These may require formal markers before the event properly begins. When the audience assemble for a lecture, there may be background noise and conversation may be in progress at different corners in the room, but the lecture itself has not properly begun until an authorized person uses some sort of attention-getter, saying 'Right, or O.K. It is time to begin,' etc.

We will be talking about interviews and meetings in subsequent units when we will illustrate in detail how these two specific speech events differ from conversation. Here we propose to consider another feature in which lecture differs from conversation.

While talking about the differences between spoken and written modes we said that one of the differences between these two modes of communication is that writing is an activity that is non-reciprocal in nature. Can you recall what we meant by this term non-reciprocal? Lecture, whether written or spoken from notes, tends to be non-reciprocal in this sense. In other words, there are no adjacency pairs, no turn taking, no immediate verbal feed-back as we have in conversation (though in the classroom lecture, the teacher might get feedback from expressions on students faces, raising of hands, uneasy movements, etc.) so s/he has of necessity to propel the communication on her/his own. This, however, does not mean that lecture (or written discourse) is not an interactive process of negotiation. It is interactive but this interaction is conducted by the speaker himself/herself by enacting the roles of speaker as well as of audience. Since there is no immediate reaction s/he has to anticipate what is likely to happen and provide for any possible misunderstanding arising from the lack of shared knowledge.

In the words of Widdowson, the act of lecturing is the enactment of an exchange, with the speaker taking on the roles of both the interlocutors. But whereas in spoken discourse (conversation) this process of negotiation is typically overt and reciprocal, in lectures and written communication it is covert and non-reciprocal. Because of the absence of immediate verbal reaction from her/his audience the speaker has a basic problem: S/he has a certain message to impart and s/he has to prepare the ground and set up conditions favourable to the reception of such information. S/he does this by continually shifting her/his function from speaker to hearer, enacting the interaction by playing the role of each interlocutor as in the following example:-

Yesterday I spoke to you about Canada. Today I shall talk about Australia which happens to be the next topic. Australia is a land of contrasts. It is geologically one of the oldest of land masses, yet it ranks as one of the youngest of nations. It is half a world away from Europe, but its people are largely of European descent and they follow a Western lifestyle.

If we look at the above text we find that the speaker makes an assertion in the first sentence and the subsequent sentences are then said to support what s/he says in the first sentence as if to answer the question of the listener, How can you say that? Can you give proof? We can write this text as follows:

Speaker: Australia is a land of contrasts.

Listener(s): How can you say that? Can you give some proof?

Speaker: It is geologically one of the oldest of land masses, yet it ranks as one of the youngest of nations.

Listener(s): Can you give more examples?

Speaker: Yes. It is half a world away from Europe, but its people are largely of European descent and they follow a Western lifestyle.

A lecture, like written discourse, thus involves non-reciprocal interaction and the result of this is a text. The audience must interpret this text to reconstitute the interaction as it does not reveal the second person's (or the audience's) reactions which the speaker (and the writer) anticipates by enacting the other participant's role. It is in this sense that lecturing is covert and non-reciprocal and differs from conversation which is overt and reciprocal.

1.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have tried to understand what communication is and defined it as the process of meaningful interaction between two or more persons with a view to arriving at a common meaning and understanding. Communication can be achieved through use of language, written or spoken, and gestures. There are different types of communication and these are used on different occasions. Each of these modes of communication has its own advantages and disadvantages. Communication may involve repeated interactions or negotiations of meaning and the addresser and the addressee play active roles in this process. Effective communication in business is as important as the blood circulating in the human body and hence managers do their best to overcome all barriers to communication.

Further, we also described different types of face-to-face interactions, especially conversation, its main features and how to develop it to make it meaningful. We have also described briefly some other types of face-to-face interactions and how they differ from each other and from conversation.

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1.11 ANSWERS

Check your progress 1

1) Two Persons

2) Yes.

3) Limited communication is possible through gestures

4) No. We'll not term it as social communication.

5) Same as 4**.**

Check your progress 2

On the left is the addresser. S/he can choose to write his/her message or equally well speak it. So we can use the more general word **encoder** for him/her. The **encoder** has a message. It may be news, an idea, a feeling. S/he wants to convey this message to somebody. To make this possible s/he must first put it into words, i.e. s/he must **encode** it. Once it is encoded, it is available outside his/her mind as a text (written or spoken). The text is accessible to the mind of another person who hears or reads it, that is, who **decodes** the message the text contains. Once it is decoded, the message enters the mind of the **decoder** and communication takes place.

Check your progress 3

Open ended.

Some points given in Macro Function of Communication.

Check your progress 4

Open ended

Check your progress 5

Barriers in communication can be removed by the following:

1) The interlocutors should share the same code (language)

2) If the interlocutors speak the same language but different dialects, the dialects should be comprehensible to all.

3) Often affective factors can cause misunderstanding. It is, therefore, important to dialogue without rivalry or tension and with a sincere motive to listen to one another.

4) Shared knowledge is another important factor for intelligent conversation.

Check your progress 6

Open ended.

Check your progress 7

1) a) Face to face or Telephone

   b) written (e-mail attachment, fax)

   c) written

   d) e-mail, written (memo)

   e) Telephone

2) Open-ended depending on your situation.

   Preferably a memo should be sent. Reasons:

   i) There should be a record of this communication

   ii) Cannot be a letter as it involves communication within the company

Check your progress 8

It can be anything where B would like to oblige A, e.g. guest/host, boss/secretary, wife/husband, etc.

A is evidently superior in hierarchy to B. B responds immediately to A's statement. Or A is a patient and B the concerned caretaker.

Check your progress 9

● Coming mom.

● Bye. (So long).

● Yes. Brought three boxes only this morning. Here you are. See how fresh they're.

Check your progress 10

We have given sample answers. Yours could be different.

● Thank you.

● It's quite nice, isn't it?

● Well. I think it makes me look old.

● Vanita found it for me.

● Thanks. I like yours too.

Check your progress 11

We have given a sample conversation, yours could be different.

(At the Showroom of Sony T.V. Company)

Mushtaq Ahmed: Excuse me. I bought a Sony T.V. set from your dealer at Rajat Park market last month. After using it for ten days I noticed that the picture was not clear and there were horizontal lines moving downwards on the screen. After another week, the volume control stopped working.

Sales Manager: Why have you come to us so late?

Mushtaq Ahmed: I complained to your dealer but he refused to do anything about it.

Sales Manager: Well, I'm sorry that your T. V. set has given you trouble so early. It's a bit surprising really, because our products have to undergo strict quality control checks before going to the market.

Mushtaq Ahmed: So what should I do now?

Sales Manager: Please arrange to send your set to our workshop at 10, Shahpur Road, Delhi. We'll attend to the defect.

Mushtaq Ahmed: What will the charges be?

Sales Manager: There will be no charge for the repairs. But, I am afraid we have to charge for any parts that need to be replaced.

Mushtaq Ahmed: Thank you.

Sales Manager: You're welcome.

UNIT 2 THE GLOBALIZATION OF COMMUNICATION: A GLOBAL VILLAGE

Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will help you to understand the following points:

- the world is now a "global village",

- there has been an acceleration in communication in the last one hundred years. Changes in communication technologies have made globalization possible, and indeed inevitable, and

- every revolutionary change in communications technologies results in unprecedented social change.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Have you ever thought what it would be like if you had lived a hundred years ago? There would perhaps have been no electric light in your home or village or city; you would have used oil lamps. How would you travel? How would you get news of the world around you – how large would the world around you have been?

What technology has done for us is to "shrink" our world. We travel by air rather than by bullock-cart. We have the telephone, the radio, and television via satellite, allowing for instant communication across the globe. We have e-mail and internet. A person who has magically transported from the early 20th century to the early 21st century would be puzzled and quite lost in our world!

In this Unit, we shall think about the technology that has changed our world, and about how it has done so. We shall see that in the past 150 years or so, technological changes have been much more rapid than at any time in the history of humankind. As our means of communication have changed, our communication needs have changed as well. We now need to communicate with people all across the world, whose language and culture may be quite different than our own. We can no longer remain "locked" within a society and culture that we know, or grew up in. We have to engage with new ways of living and seeing, and think of how best to integrate our lives into this larger world.

Today, after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned.

- Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media, 1964.*

2.2 A GLOBAL VILLAGE

It was Marshall McLuhan who coined the term "the global village." McLuhan, who died on the last day of 1980 (on December 31), has been called "the most celebrated English teacher of the twentieth century". This Canadian was a professor of English literature, but he was also a communications theorist and philosopher.

What did he mean by "the global village?" McLuhan was referring to a communications explosion that is creating a "wired world". Our world is now interconnected by the instantaneous flow of information between any two points on the globe, however distant or remote. Events in one part of the world can be experienced from other parts as they happen, "in real-time". So our world of experience has the immediacy of life in a village – except that our "village" is now the entire world.

Stop for a moment and think.

- Have you ever watched a cricket match or a football game that was happening in some other part of the world, such as Australia, Germany or the West Indies, "live" (that is, as it was happening) on television?

Activity 1

Ask an older person in the house if they remember a time when they waited for the next day's newspaper to find out what had happened in a game abroad.

- Have you ever used a cell phone to speak to your friend or relative from another country, or from a train or an airport?

Activity 2

Ask the older people in your family if they remember a time when telephone calls were expensive and difficult to make, and people sent telegrams to say that they had arrived safely, or to inform you about some urgent news (usually, bad news!).

Check your progress 1

1) Who was Marshall McLuhan? Why did he say the world is now a "global village"?

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2.3 AN ARDUOUS JOURNEY, JUST OVER A HUNDRED YEARS AGO…

For many of you, it may be difficult to imagine a time when a letter took three weeks to travel from India to Britain by sea, if we go back to the 19th century, we find that three weeks – twenty one days – were once required for a journey from "Trichinopoly" (now Tiruchirapalli or Tiruchi in Tamil Nadu) to "Vizagapatam" (now Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh)! In 1892, the grandfather of the astrophysicist S. Chandrashekhar performed just such a journey. (You may know that S Chandrashekhar is the person who formulated the "Chandrashekhar limit" that led to the discovery of neutron stars and black holes. Chandrashekhar's uncle was Sir C. V. Raman.) Chandrashekhar's biographer, Kameshwar K. Wali, tells us:

They first had to go out of their way to Guntakal in order to take the train to Bezwada (Vijayawada); then they travelled by construction train and canal boats to Rajahmundry. Finally they rode for four days in a cart pulled by bullocks to reach destination.

Kamleshwar K. Wali (1990:42)

He then tells us: "At that time the railroads were just being built. The very next year, Chandra's father could join them in one day."

So you see how dramatically the railways have altered our world — although today we think of a journey by train as a slow way of travelling!

Check your Progress 2

1) How long did it take to travel from Tiruchi (Tamil Nadu) to Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh) in 1892, and why?

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Activity

Find Tiruchi, Guntakal, Vijayawada, Rajamundry and Vishakhapatnam on a map of India. Find out the distances between these places.

Look for a road map and a rail map of India. Find out how these places are now connected. What route would you now take to go from Tiruchi to Vizag?

Is it possible to take a plane now from Tiruchi to Vizag? How long would a plane journey, a journey by road, and a journey by train take? Plan a journey from Tiruchi to Vizag, keeping in mind the time as well as the money you can afford to spend.

2.4 THE STORY OF HUMAN COMMUNICATION AS A DAY IN OUR LIVES

The communication facilities that we take for granted today actually represent a very recent achievement in the history of humankind. Just how recent they are is dramatically described by Frederick Williams in an essay, "The 360-century Day".

Let us suppose that the cultural history of human beings begins around 360 century ago. Biologically, of course, human beings or Homo sapiens are thought to have evolved much earlier: about 200,000 years ago, spreading out of Africa 100,000 years ago. But from around 34,000 BCE to 10,000 BCE, we find Homo sapiens making the cave paintings found in France, Italy and Spain, and in parts of India such as Bhimpetka near Bhopal. (Note: BCE = Before Common Era; CE = Common Era) The author of the cave paintings was "Cro-Magnon" man of the Paleolithic period. These were Stone Age people, cave-dwellers and tool-makers; and it has been conventional in Western thought to begin the cultural history of humankind with the Cro-Magnon human, going back 360 centuries. Let us take these 360 centuries of our cultural existence, then, and "map" them onto one day of twenty-four hours — let us pretend that 360 centuries can be seen as a single day in the existence of human beings. We would thus get "a day in the history and evolution of communication" among humans. What does this day look like?

We begin our day at midnight (as is the convention: 00 hours). (Imagine that "the first human baby" was born at midnight.) From the beginning, at midnight, we have language, in the form of speech. We also have pictures, as we have already mentioned — the cave paintings of Stone Age people, drawn and used perhaps for magic rituals, for protection and good luck during the hunt. But we do not yet have writing.

The origin of writing is commonly taken to be around a mere 5000 years ago. So the journey from speech to writing takes 31,000 years or 310 centuries, from

360 centuries ago to 50 centuries ago. In terms of our Communications Day of 24 hours, it takes 20 hours and 40 minutes.' (The "first human baby" is now 20 hours and forty minutes old, and it is late evening on the first day of its life.)

New Day	12:00 Midnight	Homo sapiens, language (speaking) 34,000 BCE
	8: 00 a.m.	Cave paintings
	12:00 Noon	Nothing
	6:00 p.m.	Nothing
	8:00 p.m.	Sumerians, writing, 4000 BCE

Table adapted from Williams 1982:25

Check your progress 3

1) What communication tool did we have "at midnight" in "a day in our communication history"?

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2) How long ago did human beings learn to capture speech as writing?

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3) Did they draw pictures much before they learnt to write? How do we know?

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4) Where can you see the cave paintings of early human beings?

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5) What do "BCE" and "CE" stand for?

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What is the next great leap forward in communications? Let us say, printing. This happens in 600 CE in China, but in 1453 CE in the Western world, with the Gutenberg Bible. Now let's look at our clock: it is already nearing midnight again – its 11:38 p.m.

The telegraph appears at 11:53 p.m., in the year 1855 CE, and for the first time, as McLuhan points out, a message can travel faster than the messenger. And then, the last five minutes of the day "explode with new communications technologies. We are on an acceleration curve of communications inventions".

11:55:02	the telephone	1876 CE
11:56:48	commercial radio	1900 CE
11:57:04	sound motion pictures	1912 CE
11:57:40	prototype electronic computer	1942 CE
11:57:50	xerography	1946 CE
11:58:02	colour television	1951 CE
11:58:32	first commercial satellite	1962 CE

Williams makes the point that "the greatest growth in communications technologies has been in our lifetimes and it is still accelerating. This is in remarkable contrast to the approximately 180 lifetimes which separate the invention of writing from the invention of printing in our communications history".

Frederick Williams was writing in 1982, so many of the technologies that have evolved during your own lifetime are not mentioned by him! Notice that he does not mention the personal computer, the laptop and the palmtop, the Internet, or the cell phone... His list of inventions perhaps looks old to you already. So let's do the following activity:

Check Your Progress 4

1) Arrange the following communication technologies in their order of appearance. *Radio, printed books, telephone, television, photocopy machine*

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    Add your own technologies to this list. Try to find out the dates of their first appearance.

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2) Why do we say that there has been a "communications explosion" in the last hundred years or so?

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3) What does it mean to say that with the invention of the telegraph, for the first time "the message could travel faster than the messenger"? *Hint:* Think of how messages were sent by the kings in history, and in mythology. Were the messengers always human?

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4) Williams says writing and printing were separated by about 180 "lifetimes". How many years is each "lifetime", on this account? [How many years separate the invention of printing in the Western world, and the invention of writing?]

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2.5 COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Communication theorists maintain that periods of human social change correlate with changes in communication technologies. The human has remained essentially the same for unimaginable stretches of time, because biologic change is evolutionary change, which takes place over millions of years. But change in communications, we have seen, can occur very rapidly, within a single lifetime. Such communication changes have brought about social changes that seem to fundamentally alter the kinds of learning that our brains must adapt to. They also alter our perceptions of nation, society, family and values. Can you think why this would happen?

Let's take one example. The invention of printing made possible a transition from oral to literate societies. Before printing, most people were illiterate: it wasn't expected that everyone should be able to read and write, because the materials in reading and writing were not available cheaply and plentifully. Books were handwritten and illustrated by hand, and very precious because there were no cheap copies. It was printing that made the idea of universal literacy feasible. It was printing that led to the expectation that every human being should be able to read and write, and attend school!

Earlier, when the transmission of knowledge was oral, the idea of "distance education was unimaginable. Both teacher and taught had to be physically present, and each teacher had only a few pupils; knowledge was imparted through interaction between teacher and taught, and perhaps this is what gave rise to the *guru-shishya parampara*, or the Socratic mode of education through dialogue. (Today we can return to oral education and combine it with distance education, because of the availability of media that carry the spoken word across distances: radio and television!)

When education (and communication) was primarily oral, there was a great emphasis on memory, and speech skills. Memory was the technology that preserved information and passed it on from generation to generation, in the absence of books, audio or video cassettes, CDs and DVDs. Both a grammar of Sanskrit (by Panini) and a dictionary of Sanskrit, the *Amara Kosha*, have been preserved in this way for generations by memorization, for example. This is why it was important to memorize things accurately. Speech was the medium through which information was passed on; so it was important to recite what you knew clearly and exactly. The importance of memorization in education has steadily decreased, as we depend increasingly on books and reference documents, and calculators and cell phones, to store information such as facts and figures, or phone numbers and addresses; or to perform simple arithmetical calculations. The idea is that in this way we can use our mental energy, in more creative ways.

Certainly, the kind of globalization that we are witnessing today would not be possible without the electronic communication technologies that have been discovered just in the last half-century or so. Imagine that you lived over a hundred years ago, before the invention of the aero plane, in a time when telephones were still few and far between, and not very efficient. If you sailed away, as some of our countrymen and women did, to a country in the South Pacific, or Africa, or South East Asia, and would soon lose touch with the world and the people you had left behind. Today, however, we have people on different continents who keep in touch by "chatting" on the Internet, which is equipped with a "webcam" or camera, and these people form "virtual communities"! These virtual communities exist for not only personal or familial reasons — a son or daughter keeping in touch with parents, spouses keeping in touch with each

other — but also for business reasons, as you are perhaps well aware. The Information Technology industry has opened up an entire new line of work in our times, made possible by the instantaneous communication links between continents via computer and satellite.

David Graddol tells us (in The Future of English, page 31), "Cost has been, traditionally, a major barrier to long-distance calls. But the cost of communication has lowered dramatically… The first transatlantic telephone cable, laid in 1956, allowed 36 simultaneous conversations; the latest undersea fibre-optic link is capable of carrying 600,000." Telecommunications technology has therefore moved towards a "communication network" in the shape of the Internet, where a personal computer connects directly with another personal computer, instead of going through a hierarchy of "gatekeepers". (Older people may remember a time when all telephone calls were mediated by an "operator," and for a long-distance call, whether national or international, you would talk first to the local "operator", who would speak with the "operator" at the destination, who would speak with the person you wished to talk with — so there were two "mediators" between you and the person you called! Today you can just dial the number and speak on.) Graddol continues: "This shift towards a communication network rather than a hierarchy allows dispersed 'discourse communities' to emerge, based on shared interests such as hobbies, (gardening, exotic fish), criminality (terrorism, pornography) or support (ulcerative colitis sufferers, parents of children with Down syndrome). Diasporic cultural and linguistic groups can share concerns, ideas and decision making as never before." The word *diaspora* means 'a spreading of people' (from a nation or a culture); *diasporic* is its adjectival form. We often hear of the *'diaspora'* of Indians in Britain, Fiji, etc., who form a market for Hindi films. With the Internet, there can be communities that are spread out, but linked by a specific common interest, such as a language or a hobby. These diasporic communities are also sometimes called 'virtual communities' that exist in a 'virtual reality' created by the Internet.

Check your progress 5

1) Fill in the blanks:

   a) When education was…………… there was a great emphasis on memory, and speech skills.

   b) Memory was the…………… that preserved information and passed it on from generation to generation, in the absence of books, and audio or video cassettes, CDs and DVDs.

   c) Both a………….. of Sanskrit (by Panini) and a………….of Sanskrit, the *Amara Kosha*, have been preserved in this way for generations by memorization.

   d) The importance of memorization in education has steadily

…………….as we depend ……..on books and reference documents.

e)   The idea is that in this way we can use our …………….in more creative ways.

f)   When the transmission of knowledge was oral, the idea of "………………….." was unimaginable.

g)   The invention of …………made possible a transition from oral to literate societies. It was printing that made the idea of ……………feasible.

h)   Today we can combine oral education and distance education, because of ………..that carry the spoken word across distances: ………. and …………..!

i)   People on different continents who keep in touch by "…………on the Internet, with a "…………….." or camera, can form "………………….. …………. "

Activity

Keep a diary of a day in your life, noting down the communication technologies that you use. You may use the technologies mentioned in this section as a guide; you may also add your own technologies to this list. Now find someone or some people in your neighbourhood who is or are more than 60 years old. Ask them which of these technologies they use; and whether they find it easy or difficult to use them. What do they think about these technologies - do they make life easy, or do they simply lead to a waste of time ...? Note down their responses.

Can you think of life without a photocopying machine? How and in what way do you use Photostat copies today? What did people do for these purposes when they couldn't make Photostat copies? (for example, we make copies of important documents like marks, memos or ration cards, and submit these where they are required. What did people do earlier?)

Play this game: Have you ever played this game, which shows how easily a spoken message gets distorted or twisted out of shape? Form a circle with at least four or five players. Whisper a message just once into the ear of your right hand neighbour. Let this person in turn whisper it to the next person, and so on, until the message comes back to you. What was the message? What is the message that comes back to you? Compare them. The larger the circle, the more fun you'll have! The story goes that a General once sent a verbal message from the front lines of battle to his Headquarters:

"We are going to advance. Please send reinforcements.

The message the Headquarters received was:

"We are going to a dance. Please send three and four pence."
(three and four pence = three shillings and four pence, the older currency of the U. K.)

2.6 LANGUAGE AND THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Coming to writing, today the "short messaging service" or sms is reshaping written English (because of the time and space requirements imposed by this medium) in ways that some of us find strange. But we should remember that the medium has always shaped the message. Writing systems have arisen in response to the need of communication (on the one hand), and of the materials available for writing (on the other).

Thus we find parallels to the *sms* strategies in the "story of writing", of how writing began and changed to the system we know today. Early writing systems had a primitive writing technology (the material on which they wrote, and the stylus with which they wrote). So it was important to them that the written message be brief and economical, just as it is to the *sms* message writer today.

The Semitic languages left out vowels in their writing, because these were predictable from the context; we now find *sms* messages doing the same. Pls for please, bk for back, snd for send, are examples where the vowel sound has been left out: Pls snd bk immdtly.

Before the invention of the "alphabet," which assigned sounds to symbols uniquely (that is, there is approximately one spelling for each sound), there was a stage of writing called "rebus writing." Rebus writing made use of "homophony" in language, that is, words that sound similar but mean different things. (For example, sun and son in English; also knot, not, nought; be and bee, and so on.) The Sumerians, who invented writing, used the symbol of an arrow, the word for which was pronounced "ti," to denote a word "ti" with the same sound but a very different meaning. As we can now see, the use of '2' for 'to', or 'be4' for 'before,' is a kind of rebus writing. So the sms messenger of today is actually falling back on strategies for making a message short and easy to write that were used by her forebears, the inventors of writing, some millennia earlier. Indeed, linguists say each generation re-invents language, although adults think children "imitate" or "copy" them.

Check Your Progress 6

1) Pick out the homonyms (words which sound alike): our, air, road, which, here, hour, witch, heir, hear, rode.

2) Can you read these?

    Bread'n butter, Fr yr eyes nly, Hppy Bday, wash'n wear

2.7 LET US SUM UP

Our world is now connected by the instantaneous flow of information between any two points. So our world of experience has the immediacy of life in a village a "global village".

*   The railways similarly altered our world a century ago, although today we think of a journey by train as a slow way of travelling.

- The communication facilities that we take for granted are actually a very recent achievement in the history of humankind.

- If we take the 360 centuries of our cultural existence as a "360-century Day", the beginning (at midnight) we have language, in the form of speech. We also have pictures – the cave paintings of Stone Age people. But we do not yet have writing.

- The origin of writing is commonly taken to be around a mere 5000 years ago. So the journey from speech to writing takes 31,000 years or 310 centuries.

- The next great leap forward in communication is printing: in 600 CE in China, but in 1453 CE in the Western world. Our clock is nearing midnight again!

- The last five minutes of the day "explode with new communications technologies. We are on an acceleration curve of communications inventions".

- The greatest growth in communications technologies has been in our lifetimes and it is still accelerating.

- Periods of human social change correlate with changes in communication technologies.

- The invention of printing made possible a transition from oral to literate societies. It made the idea of universal literacy feasible.

- When education and communication were primarily oral, there was a great emphasis on memory, and speech skills. Memory was the technology that preserved information and passed it on from generation to generation.

- The importance of memorization in education has steadily decreased, as we depend increasingly on books and reference documents, and calculators.

- The globalization we are witnessing today is possible because of the electronic communication technologies discovered just during the last half-century.

- Dispersed 'discourse communities' have emerged that communicate through their computers, based on shared interests such as hobbies or support. These communities are sometimes called 'virtual communities' that exist in a 'virtual reality'' created by the Internet.

- Today the "short messaging service" or sms is reshaping written English. But we find parallels to the sms strategies in the "story of writing." Early writing system had a primitive writing technology, so it was important for the message to be brief and economical, just as it is to the sms message writer today.

- So the sms messenger of today is actually using strategies to write that were used by the inventors of writing, some millennia earlier.

2.8 FURTHER READINGS

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2.9   ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Marshall McLuhan, a Canadian, was a professor of English literature, a philosopher and a communications theorist. He noticed that our world is now interconnected by the instantaneous flow of information between any two points on the globe, however distant or remote. Events in one part of the world can be experienced from other parts as they happen, "in real-time". So our world of experience has the immediacy of life in a village — except that our "village" is now the entire world.

Check Your Progress 2

2) It took three weeks to travel from Tiruchi (Tamil Nadu) to Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh) in 1892, because there was no direct train between these places. People first had to go out of their way to Guntakal. Then they traveled by construction train and canal boats to Rajahmundry. Finally they rode for four days in a cart pulled by bullocks to reach their destination.

Check Your Progress 3

1) We had language in the form of speech. We also had pictures, the cave paintings of Stone Age people, drawn and used perhaps for magic rituals, for protection and good luck during the hunt.

2) The origin of writing is commonly taken to be around 5000 years ago.

3) Yes, they did. We know this because there are cave paintings drawn by Stone Age people.

4) Cave paintings are found in France, Italy and Spain, and in parts of India such as Bhimpetka near Bhopal.

5) BCE = Before Common Era; CE = Common Era.

Check Your Progress 4

1) Printed books; telephone; radio; photocopy machine; television

   Add your own technologies to this list. Try to find out the dates of their first appearance.

2) Please give your own examples, contrasting these with the previous 359 centuries.

3) Until the telegraph was invented, a human messenger, or perhaps a bird like a pigeon, had to physically carry the message. So the message and the messenger were inseparable, and traveled together. With the invention of the telegraph, the message went from one place to another, but the messenger did not have to go with it, carrying it.

4) Writing was invented about 5000 years ago, or about 50 centuries ago. Printing was invented in 1453 CE in the Western world, about 5 centuries ago. So 45 centuries must correspond to "180 lifetimes". 45 divided by 180 is 0.25, which means Williams is calculating 25 years as "a lifetime".
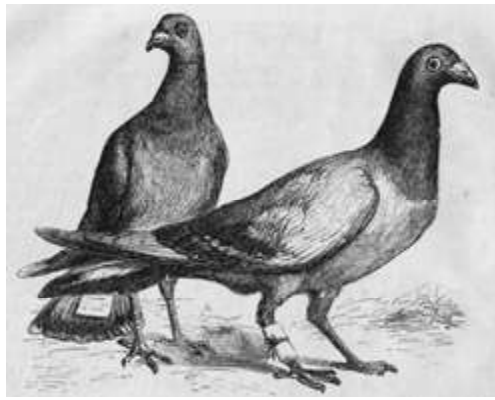
Check Your Progress 5

1) a) oral b) technology c) grammar, dictionary

   d) decreased, increasingly e) mental energy,

   f) distance education, g) printing, universal literacy,

   h) media, radio, television i) chatting, webcam, virtual communities

Check Your Progress 6

1) our, hour; air, heir; road, rode; which, witch; here, hear.

2) Bread and butter, For your eyes only, Happy birthday, wash and wear.

UNIT 3   VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Structure

VERBAL 35%

NONVERBAL 65%
Facial Expressions
Tone of Voice
Movement
Appearance
Eye Contact
Gestures
Posture

Image from https://ubisafe.org/explore/felling-clipart-non-verbal-communication/

3.0   OBECTIVES

- to understand that communication, often understood mainly as verbal communication, can also be non-verbal,

- to understand some features of verbal communication in the oral and written modes,

- to understand some features of non-verbal communication: signs, symbols, gesture and body language; and

- to consider some barriers to communication

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will discuss various means of communication, i.e. through different modes. It is important to note that communication can be through words, oral or written but also through other means. Most of our communication is also through body language and it is this that adds effect to our oral communication. You might wonder which mode is better. The answer is - all modes are good, but we should know when to use what. In the following sections we will talk about the advantages of- each mode and the occasions for their use.

3.2   VERBAL COMMUNICATION: ORAL AND WRITTEN MODES

Communication is often understood mainly as verbal communication. But it is also non-verbal, as we shall see in the next section.

Verbal communication is communication through words. This can occur in either of two modes, oral or written. Oral communication is more natural and spontaneous and we use this mode most of the time. A great percentage of our communication is oral communication. But in formal situations, written communication is required, and not everyone can communicate effectively in writing. This may be because of psychological barriers, or lack of technique. We will discuss these barriers to effective communication a little later.
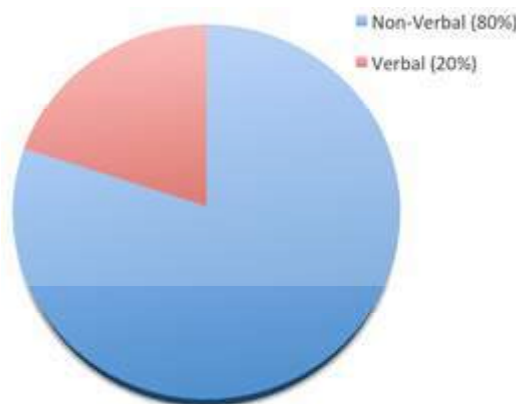
It is important to understand which mode to select for communicating effectively. Let's first discuss where the oral and written modes are effectively used, and where a combination of the two is required.

3.2.1 Where is the Oral Mode Used?

- Personal authentication is needed. e.g., between an officer and her personal secretary; a journalist and her source ("I heard it from a reliable source")

- Social or gregarious needs must be met. e.g., speaking with a visiting delegation

- warmth and personal qualities are called for. e.g., group or team interaction

- Exactitude and precision are not vitally important. e.g., brain-storming for ideas

- Situations demand maximum understanding. e.g., sorting out problems or differences between individuals, or between two groups such as administration and students

- An atmosphere of openness is desired. e.g., talks between management and workers

- Added impact is needed to get receiver focus. e.g., a chairperson of an organization addressing the staff; a presidential or royal address to a nation

- Decisions or information have to be communicated quickly. e.g., officers issuing orders during natural disasters such as floods or an earthquake

- Confidential matters are to be discussed. e.g., exchange of positive or negative information about an organization or an individual. In the process of appointments, or promotion or selection of individuals, a period of open discussion may precede the final decision that is recorded in writing.

3.2.2 Where is the Written Mode Used?

- Where Information has to be stored and retrieved. e.g., official records

- The reliability and validity of an idea are important. e.g., decisions taken by a group, to be acted upon

- The verification and authentication of an idea are important. e.g., a memo from a superior about new accounting practices

- Objective references are important. e.g., a research article or informative article

- Written communication supplements oral communication. e.g., the minutes of a meeting

- Crucial decisions and actions are to be considered. e.g., plans and proposals

- Communication is subject to review and reconsideration. e.g., goals, performance appraisals

- Personal presence is not required. e.g., circulating a list of holidays for organizations to choose from; routine good wishes at the new year

- The communicator needs to extend himself in time and space. e.g., a letter from a company head to all its branches in a country, or around the world

> *Go home tonight and put your great idea on paper. If you can't do that, then you haven't really thought it out.*
>
> Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defence in the Kennedy administration

> *...the discipline of writing something down is the first step toward making it happen. In conversation, you can get away with all kinds of vagueness and nonsense, often without realizing it.*
>
> Lee Iacocca, President of American car companies Ford and Chrysler

3.2.3 Where Both Modes are Used

- When people are expected to 'carry home' ideas. e.g. *after a brain-storming session, individuals or teams are asked to develop plans*

- When follow-up activities are necessary. e.g. *after a consultative meeting*

- When optimal understanding is needed. e.g. *a joint communique about international trade agreements*

- When both clarity and impact are needed. e.g. *a new product is launched in the market*

- When the presentation is exploratory. e.g. *a team member presents ideas for a new product*

- When audience participation is desired. e.g. *the presentation of building development plans for a city*

- When abstract or 'remote' ideas are to be communicated. e.g. a presentation at a science congress or academic conference

"If you want to give a man credit, put it in writing. If you want to give him hell, do it on the phone". — a regional manager of a company.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Two cars are going in the opposite direction in a narrow lane. One of the car drivers blinks his lights to ask the other driver to wait. This is …………..way communication.

2) What are the modes of verbal communication?

3) Sometimes, teachers give handouts in addition to teaching a class. Why do you think this is done?

   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....

4) A person gets a prestigious appointment in a reputed company. His friend's secretary sends a letter conveying her bosses' congratulations, as the boss is very busy. Do you think this is proper? Justify your answer.

   ....
   ....
   ....

5) Grammaticality and precision are not insisted upon in ……………communication.

3.3   NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

All communication that conveys a message need not be verbal. We can convey our feelings through a smile, a frown, or silence. Non-verbal communication is communication that is not conveyed through words. Albert Mehrabian, a professor of psychology, estimates that 55% of the impact of a message is through the non-verbal mode. Non-verbal communication may be visual or auditory.

Symbols, signs, sounds, eye contact and facial expression, body postures, gestures, and physical appearance — all these constitute non-verbal communication. Silence too falls under this category. In olden days, when communication media were not well-developed, drums and fire were used as a mode of communication. People would communicate through a relay in the beating of drums. There were different lengths and notes of the drumbeat for different purposes.

Symbols and signs are used where one-way communication is adequate and effective. For example, it is enough to give a picture of a petrol pump or a telephone on a sign post for a driver on a highway to know what is available nearby. Similarly a school bell gives information to the children to assemble or disperse. The language barrier can easily be overcome with non-verbal signs, which is why signs are used instead of words like Exit, Stairs, or Toilet at all major national or international public places such as airports, railway stations or tourist centres.

Do you know these common signs?

This is a chart of common public symbol. You may not have seen all of them, but you may still be able to make a good guess at what they convey. The key to these symbols is given at the end of the Unit.

Similarly communication can be made with gestures. A cricket umpire makes gestures to the scorer and players about the runs, their nature and also to declare them out. A foot-ball referee warns the players about a foul through colour cards.

Judicious selection of the right mode of communication for a purpose is the crux of effective communication. In business communication, the non-verbal mode includes using audio-visual aids or media that supplement or support oral

or written communication, especially during formal presentations. Thus non-verbal communication is very important and complements verbal communication.

Certain signals work very well as they are fixed and commonly understood. Traffic lights and road signs are easily understood by every one. Election symbols are easy to pick out on a ballot paper especially when the number of candidates is large –it is easier to look for a symbol than read a big list of names of candidates. These are popular modes of communication when the message is of a limited nature. It is only when the communication becomes more complex and varied that we need language, and non-verbal communication relegates itself to a complementary, if not secondary, role.

Studies suggest that about 45% of our communication is supplemented through the non-verbal mode. It acts as a stimulus to effective communication. Verbal and non-verbal communications are supportive and complementary.

3.3.1 Advantages of Non-verbal Communication

Visual communication is very advantageous when quick communication has to be made to a large group, or a person has to understand a short, simple message in a fleeting moment.

3.3.1.1 Signs

Consider the role of signals. Anybody who sees red light automatically stops the vehicle without conscious thought, almost. The danger sign of a skull with two crossbones instantaneously communicates a warning. The waving of a green or red flag by a railway guard or a station master passes on a clear message to the driver and to the people on the platform. A flare from a boat is easy to pick up for a rescuing plane.

3.3.1.2 Symbols

Some symbols are universal and easy to understand. They are popular and convey the same message in almost all cultures. A heart signifies love. A dove with a twig in its beak, or a white flag, indicates peace or surrender.

Logos are strikingly effective. In India, the moment one sees the insignia of three lions and the Ashok Chakra, one understands that the communication is from the government. Private companies spend time, money and effort developing logos that symbolize them and are memorable and meaningful. If you surf the Internet, you will find sites that challenge you to identify some common and not-so-common, known logos. Logos are recognized by children before they begin to read; and logos are also widely copied, sometimes with minimal changes, to trap the unwary and often illiterate consumer.

3.3.1.3 Graphs, Charts and Flow Charts

Graphs, charts, and flow charts are effective means of communication. Here let us consider a couple of quick examples. The details of the mode of transport preferred by office goers can be better represented as a graph than as a verbal description. Similarly the spilt up of expenditure of a country can be effectively shown through a pie-diagram. The organizational set up of a university can easily be shown through a flowchart. The first two examples are illustrated:

Modes of Transport used by office goers in Hyderabad
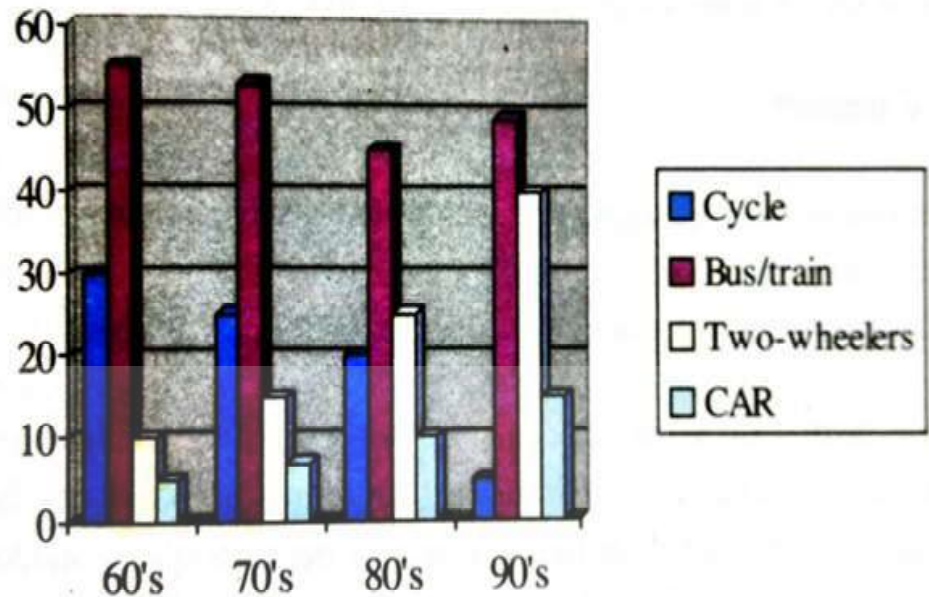
How the money is spent by the government
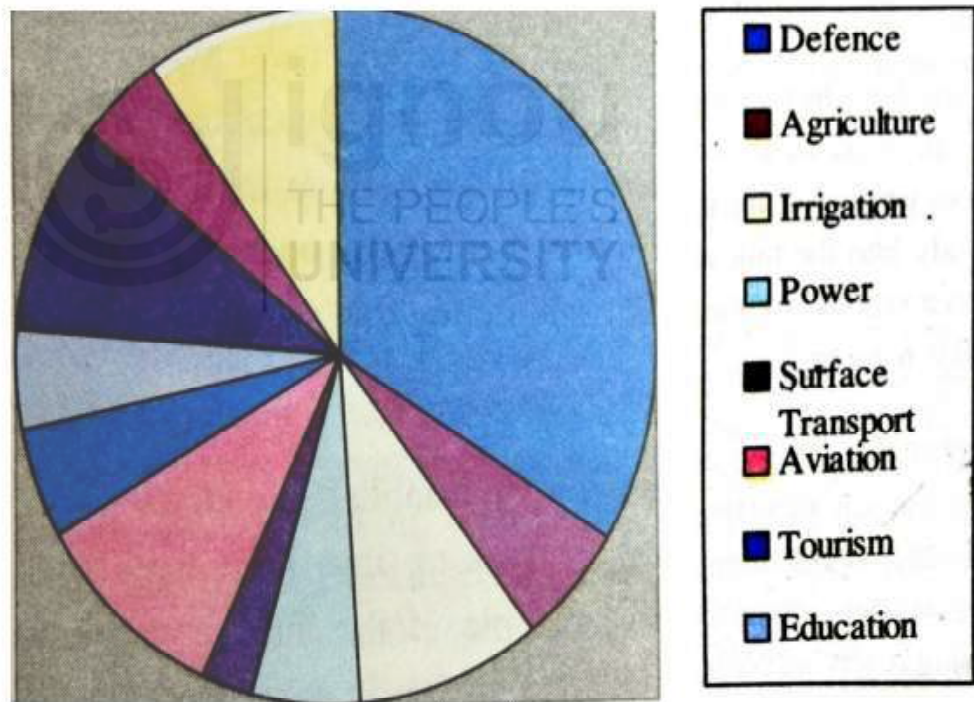
3.4   BODY LANGUAGE AND SILENCE

Facial expression is a fundamental contributor to effective communication, and sometimes referred to as the "visible code". "We talk with our vocal cords, but we communicate with our facial expressions, our tone of voice, our whole body", says a psychologist. During a television interview, a mayor denies any knowledge of a bribe paid by a visiting delegation — but the camera focuses on his hands, which are making nervous and tense gestures. "When people don't know whether to believe what they're hearing or what they're seeing, they go with the body language — it tells them the truth", says a management consultant. "You can

play fast and loose with words, but it's much more difficult to do that with gestures".

The scientific study of body language is called kinesics.

3.4.1 Eye Contact

Eye contact is one of the most important factors in effective communication. When we want someone's attention, we say that we're trying to "catch their eye". Conversely, we know that a person who doesn't look at us is trying to avoid us.

The eyes have been called the windows of the soul; they seem to reflect our nature. A speaker should always look at the listeners. He should not, because of his own nervousness, look down or look up, or gaze out of the windows while he is speaking. This will give the listeners an impression that the speaker is not interested in what s/he is saying.

When speaking to a group, look at all the listeners; avoid focussing on any part of the group, or on an individual. Some nervous speakers make this mistake, if some person or persons seem to keenly following their talk. It is for the speaker to bring everybody into the talk and make them focus on him or her. You may remember from your school or college days a feeling that some teacher always looked at particular boys or girls.

Remember that looking at someone to establish eye contact is different from staring at them (which is offensive) or looking into their eyes (which is reserved for lovers!). At an interview, for example, if the interviewee looks right back at the interviewer throughout the time a question is asked and answered, the interviewee may be thought to be aggressive, cheeky or disrespectful. In such situation the acceptable direction of the gaze is towards the interlocutor's face, without fixating on any particular feature; and the gaze is occasionally broken by looking away.

Here is a table of some actions and their common interpretations.

Action	Interpretation
Eyes, face:	
Maintaining eye contact	Keenness to talk, boldness, confidence
Looking away, shifting eye-contact	Disagreement, impatience, loss of interest, dishonesty
Looking down	Shyness, nervousness
Looking up over the interlocutor's head	Lack of interest
Closing the eyes	Lack of interest, hostility
Raising the eyebrow	Surprise
Widening of eyes	Surprise, threat or shock
Irregular movement of the eyeballs	Confusion

Lips:

Tight lips	Anger or low spirits
Biting the lips	Nervousness

Body language and posture:

A jutting-out Chin	Defiance, belligerence
Rubbing one eye	Boredom
Open palms	Openness
Foot tapping	Impatience
Folded hands resting on table	Attention
Leaning slightly forward, seated	Showing interest
Leaning back, seated	Relaxed

3.4.2 Posture

Proper posture is also important for good communication. Leaning backwards, swinging the legs, resting the head backwards in reclining chair or swiveling too frequently or playfully — are all bad manners. Bend forward a little, keeping the elbows at the side of the trunk of your body, to indicate that you are listening attentively.

3.4.3 Distance

The physical distance between people is usually a clear indication of the relationship between them. The idiom 'to keep someone at arm's length' clearly tells us that the more the distance, the weaker the relationship. The study of the human use of space within the context of culture is called proxemics, and is associated with the American anthropologist Edward T. Hall. Hall defined three kinds of personal spaces that surround individuals:

- Intimate space — the closest "bubble" of space surrounding a person. Entry into this space is acceptable only for the closest friends and intimates.

- Social and consultative spaces — the spaces in which people feel comfortable conducting routine social interactions with acquaintances as well as strangers.

- Public space — the area of space beyond which people will perceive interactions as impersonal and relatively anonymous.

Physical distance plays a large role in communication, and is normally achieved very intuitively. Gender sensitivity, cultural practices, and individual preferences all govern our ideas about how much personal space around us we are comfortable with.

In some cultures, a pat from a superior may give an employee a feeling of confidence and satisfaction that his work is being recognized or appreciated. Similarly, a warm hug or hearty handshake may let the worker know that the boss is open and sincere and wants a good relationship. A lecturer standing on an elevated platform can rarely strike a rapport with his students. One who goes closer to the students, walking in between the aisles, may strike the right chord

of intimacy. But too much closeness between a superior and his staff may be seen as intimidating.

Some people use the wrong body language when they are emotional or wish to express something forcefully. A raised hand and a pointing finger can always be construed as a threat. The author has personally observed such a gesture being made by an emotional advocate in the High Court. Naturally, the judge felt that he was being intimidated and admonished the lawyer. The client had to suffer for his lawyer's unintentional lapse.

3.4.4   Silence: It's Role in Communication

Silence is a powerful if intriguing medium of communication. It has a dramatic impact. It also has a detrimental effect — it shows power.

Silence can be interpreted in more than one way. Sensitivity is a pre-requisite for the effective use of silence as a communication tool. It could be effectively used to express one's protest. It can also provoke introspection in speakers as well as listeners.

Silence can have a dramatic effect in presentations or speeches to draw the attention of everyone — those who are chatting quietly, or even napping. However, if it is not used appropriately, it is open to misinterpretation as lack of preparation on the part of the speaker.

Silence can be appropriate or inappropriate depending upon the situation. It can be a very good tool in negotiations. When unrealistic demands are made by a party or workers' unions, a stoic silence can make the other party scale down their rates or demands. When someone is emotional, it is desirable to maintain silence until s/he lets out all the steam. It is easier to handle a person whose anger has cooled down.

Indira Gandhi is said to be famous for her silences at high-level meetings. The Japanese are also said to, use silence very effectively.

Check Your Progress 2

1) What is non-verbal communication?

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

2) ……………..can be used as an effective tool in negotiations.

3) "The …………………..are the windows to the soul". Do you agree with this? Discuss.

    ....

    ....

    ....

....

....

....

3.5 BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Everybody tries to communicate, but not all communication is successful. That is, there may be a difference between what is intended as the message and what is understood.

| Communicator | Barriers | Receiver |

The reasons for these barriers to communication are several, and may be classified under three broad categories: (a) Semantic and Linguistic barriers (b) Socio-Psychological Barriers (c) Cross-Cultural barriers.

We have already discussed some aspects of cross-cultural communication in this unit and in the previous one. We have seen that barriers in cross-cultural communication may arise from variation among cultures in the meanings attached to gestures, symbols or body language. We shall now speak about the first two categories of barriers to communication.

3.5.1 Semantic and Linguistic Barriers

Language is not a precise tool for thought. It needs to be handled deftly, accurately and carefully. (We shall return to this point in later blocks.)

3.5.1.1 Ambiguity in Expression

Every language has words that sound the same but have different meanings, or words that sound or look very similar but are very different in meaning. Ambiguity can arise because of such words or expressions, whether intentionally or unintentionally. An intentional use of such a word is commonly known as a pun.

Look at this example: They can fish here.

This can mean either (i) they are permitted to fish here, or

(ii) they put fish into cans here (for marketing).

The word 'can' in (i) is a "modal auxiliary"; in (ii) it is a "main verb" related in meaning to the noun (a) can. There is a well-known joke about the farmer, who said about his abundant harvest of tomatoes: "We eat or sell what we can; and what we can't, we can". By now you can easily understand how the farmer is using the word can in two meanings! Ambiguity can arise out of the careless use of pronouns, as the following riddle illustrates:

> *A carpenter was instructing his overworked and underpaid helper. "I'll hold the nail in place, When I nod my head, hit it hard with the hammer". What did the helper hit?*

The suggestion is that the disgruntled helper hit the carpenter hard on the head (instead of the nail), "because he asked him to"!

3.5.1.2   Homophones

Words that are pronounced similarly but have different meanings are called homophones. Here are some examples.

sea, see; cite, site, sight; eye, I; wait, weight; check, cheque; weak, week; loose, lose.

A proficient listener can easily make out the meaning from the context but a not-so-proficient or inattentive listener may have problems when (s)he listens to sentences like these:

It's a knotty problem.

It's a naughty problem.

Therefore, one should be careful in using such words, keeping the listener in view.

3.5.1.3   Contextual Meaning and Speech Acts

Language as used in communication has the property that much of the meaning is derived from the intention and the context of an utterance. Language is used to perform a "speech act" such as giving an order, extending an invitation, and so on. Thus the sentence, "Ram, the door is open" can be interpreted in at least 5 ways, depending on the context:

As an invitation — *Ram, come in.*

As a command — *Ram, close the door*

As a warning — *Ram, be careful!*

As a statement of intent — *Ram, we are open for discussions.*

As a dismissal — *Ram, you can leave.*

As an exclamation of surprise — *My god! Someone has broken into the house.*

As a warning — *Ram, don't do any mischievous things (lest someone should see you).*

3.5.1.4   Stress and Intonation

Stress — on a particular syllable in a word, or on a word in a sentence — can change the meaning drastically. In sentences:

They **stole** the fruit from the garden.

They stole **the fruit** from the garden.

They stole the fruit from **the garden**.

They stole the fruit from the garden.

The effective use of intonation — the "tune" in which something is said — can convey a meaning that is not actually said. If you hear the words "He's quite good' with a rising tone on good, commonly called "comma intonation", you get the impression that the speaker has left something unsaid: "He's quite good, but…" What is left unsaid is usually taken to be a negative comment!

3.5.1.5 Word Shift

The meaning of a sentence can change when the position of a word is shifted.

They rang up **the parents concerned**. (i.e. the parents connected with the issue)

They rang up the **concerned parents**. (i.e. the parents who were worried)

It snows here **only** in winter. (at no other time than in winter)

It **only** snows here in winter. (it does nothing but snow during winter)

It snows **only** here in winter. (nowhere else does it snow)

They want the report **only** on bond paper. (no other paper is to be used)

Only they want the report on bond paper. (no one else does)

They want **only** the report on bond paper. (other things need not be on bond paper)

3.5.1.6 Style

Our communication must be made in a style appropriate to the occasion. We shall distinguish mainly two styles: formal and informal. Using a formal style where the informal one is required may create a comic effect. An informal style where a formal style is expected could be misunderstood as rudeness or lack of etiquette.

A very formal and completely unambiguous style is required in legal statements, which have to be absolute, allowing for no other possible interpretation. For example, an ordinary sentence, "I did not borrow Rs 50,000 from Mr. Rao on June 6 could be made precise as follows: "I did not borrow Rs 50,000 or any other amount from Mr. Rao on June 6 or on any other day". But such statements should be used only in legal parlance. Their everyday use by a speaker puts him or her in danger of being labelled an eccentric!

The language of a speaker should vary according to the role he is playing. Look at the following statements, which more or less convey the same meaning of empathy:

I feel your pain. — A politician

I hear what you're saying. — Call centre staff

I see what you mean. — A businessman

3.5.1.7 Register and Jargon "Acronyms"

In certain fields certain words have a special meaning. Those not from the field may not know that "register", or the particular meaning of a word in that field, e.g., the word *'instrument'* in the field of banking is a cheque or a demand draft; a 'section' means a bundle of hundred notes of the same denomination.

Jargon consists of a set of words specific to a department, field or profession. Within its field, jargon does help in keeping communication short, yet effective and even precise. There is medical jargon, legal jargon, sports jargon, trade jargon and political jargon. For people not in the field, jargon may be confusing, irritating or misleading. A stock market derivative has little to do with a

mathematical derivation, and the silly mid-on and mid-off positions do not appear silly to the cricket lover!

Acronyms are words made by putting together the initial letters of a descriptive name. They are usually understood only within their context: STD, PAN, PIN, NGO are common acronyms in India. What we call a PIN code is a ZIP code in America. Some acronyms, however, have attained the status of words: the word radar was originally an acronym (Radio Detection And Ranging)

Check Your Progress 3

1) What does the symbol known as the 'swastika' mean in the Indian context? What does it mean in the German context? Are you aware of a move (in the year 2007) to ban the 'swastika' in Europe, and the reaction of Indians in Europe to this proposal?

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2) The saying "Time flies like an arrow" was input to a computer that had been programmed with a dictionary and the rules of English grammer. The computer came up with six different interpretations for this sentence!

   What is the common interpretation of the sentence — what does it mean?

   Can you make a guess at what the other interpretations offered by the computer were?

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3) Identify the barriers to communication in the following anecdotes.

   A German exchange student staying with a family in the US was invited to an alcohol-free party. His host family faxed his parents in Germany asking that they send permission for the student to attend. "No" came the quick reply. They did not want their son to attend any party where free alcohol was served.

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A man told the canteen boy to make a coffee for him with "less sugar". To his surprise he was served a cup of coffee without sugar. When asked, the canteen boy replied haughtily, "You only asked for sugarless coffee!"

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3.5.2 Socio-psychological Barriers

3.5.2.1 The Attention-span of the Listener

However interesting a topic, the time spent on it should not exceed the audience's patience or attention-span. On the telephone, brevity is essential. E-mails should always be brief. Brevity indicates an effort by the speaker to convey the essence of what (s)he wants to say in the best possible way. A classic example of brevity: when Gandhiji died, the writer and Nobel laureate Pearl S. Buck remarked, "Another crucifixion". In just two words, she conveyed the idea of Gandhiji as a prophet.

Student A: The last speaker at the seminar was very good.

Student B: Was he? What did he speak about?

Student A: Oh, about two minutes!

At an inaugural function, speaker after speaker had held forth, ignoring the audience's growing impatience and restlessness. Finally the master of ceremonies announced: "And now our chief guest will deliver his address". The chief guest — a reputed speaker — got up. "Ladies and Gentlemen", he said, "my address is 3, Park Avenue, Regency Road, Chennai". He sat down to a thunderous ovation.

3.5.2.2 Laughter, the Best Medicine!

Whether in teaching or talking, a smile always complements the message. Even a difficult concept can be conveyed through humour. Occasional jokes and anecdotes embellish the talk. Eye-contact and a smile give the listeners a feeling of togetherness.

When some people are clearly getting impatient, an appropriate joke changes the mood of the group immediately. Here is an example. *A member of an audience looked at his watch during a speech. The speaker quipped: don't mind if someone looks at their watch. But I do get offended if they hold it to their ear to see if it has stopped!"*

3.5.2.3   External Disturbances and the Wrong Medium

Noise from the surroundings or mechanical failures can sabotage communication. A school used to hold an annual drama week in its open courtyard in the evening. Music blaring from a local place of worship forced the rescheduling of the performances to the morning! People who use computerized presentations need to have a back-up plan in case their equipment is mismatched with the host's facilities, or in case there is no assured power supply during their presentation.

Each mode or medium of communication has its characteristic strengths and weaknesses. A talk filled with statistics is eminently forgettable if it is not supplemented with visuals such as the pie-diagrams and bar-graphs discussed. Think of our irritation when cricket scores are given verbally in the television commentary rather than being flashed on the screen!

3.5.2.4   Personal Bias and Strong Feelings

People who have strong feelings about certain issues or people may be ineffective listeners or readers. Their emotion will bias or cloud the message. Similarly, a speaker who have very strong convictions may tend to speak in absolute terms, or in a didactic tone.

3.5.2.5   Selectivity, or the 'I See Only What I Want to See' Attitude

This attitude is very dangerous, because the resulting miscommunication can remain undetected. The speaker may have spoken well, and the listener may even confirm that (s)he has understood something very clearly. But what has been understood may be quite different from what was meant to be understood. The following anecdote illustrates this.

A priest wanted to demonstrate to his congregation the harmful effects of alcohol. He half filled a glass with alcohol and dropped an insect into it, which struggled and died. The beaming priest asked a person in the gathering, "So, what can you infer from this?"

The man rose to his feet and replied, "If we take alcohol occasionally, the worms in the belly will die"

3.5.2.6   Cynicism and Negativity

The cynical and negative person is not open to new ideas.

'Counsellor: To gain sell confidence, you must avoid using negative words such as can't and not. Do you think you could do that?'

Young man: Well, I can't see why not!

3.5.2.7   Perceived Benefits

For good two-way communication, we need an attentive and interested audience. It is necessary for the communicator to ensure that the topic of the talk is of some relevance to the audience. If they do not perceive any benefit to them, the listener(s) may soon lose interest.

3.6   THE SIX WH-S THAT SEE YOU THROUGH AS A COMMUNICATOR

In a profession or may be even in life, six Wh-s hold the golden key to successful communication. These are complementary to each other and not mutually exclusive.
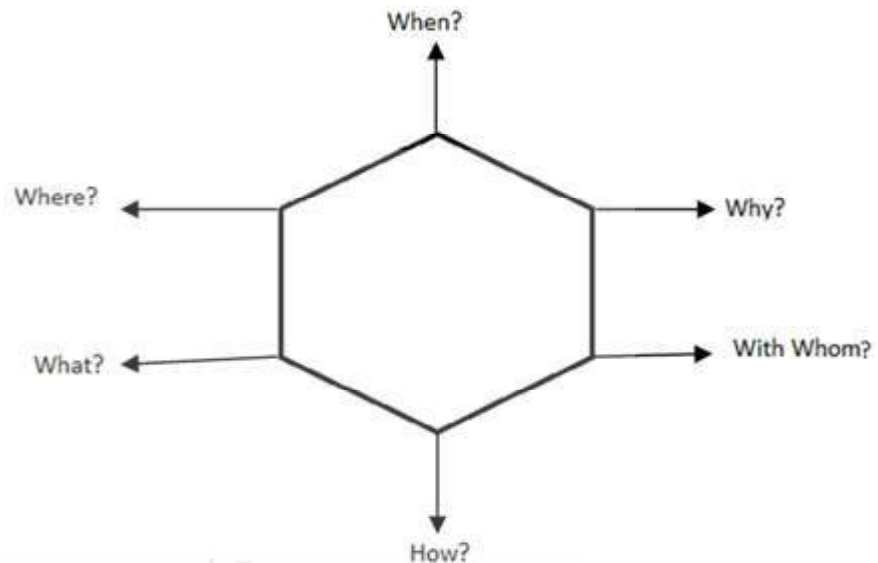
Before we should ask ourselves the following questions:
1)   Why am I communicating?
2)   With whom am I communicating?
3)   How should I communicate?
4)   What am I communicating?
5)   Where am I communicating?
6)   When am I communicating?

These questions are important because when the place changes our status too changes. We may not be treated the same way as we are treated in our place. Even a good thing said at a wrong time may not attract the other's attention, because the time is inconvenient to them or unsuitable to them. If the communication is purposeless or not required by the others, we may not interest them.

3.8   LET US SUM UP

- Communication can be classified into Verbal and Non-verbal communication.

- Verbal communication involves oral and written modes.

- Non-verbal communication does not use words.

- One way and two way communication are types of communication.

- In one way communication no response is expected. Two way communication works both ways. It is effective.

- We may use the oral mode or the written mode of verbal communication. On some occasions we have to use both the modes.

- Non-verbal communication cuts across language barriers. It is sometimes very quick to communicate. But it has the danger of not being understood or even being misunderstood due to variations in cultures.

- Symbols, visuals, dress code, postures, silence, eye contact, space distancing, body language — are some of the contributors for non verbal communication.

- Silence is also a kind of communication. It can be used effectively sometimes. It can be used to express dissent and also to create interest in the listeners. It is very important during negotiations.

- Despite being proficient in the language, communication fails or at least is not effective. The factors that act as barriers can be classified: (a) linguistic semantic barriers (b) socio psychological barriers and (c) cultural barriers.

- Some of the linguistic semantic barriers are: ambiguity, accent, pitch, use of acronyms, careless word shift, wrong intonation, use of jargon, idioms.

- Some of the socio psychological barriers are: choice of wrong medium, lack of humour, time constraint, inhibitions, no perceived benefit to the audience, absence of body language or wrong use of body language.

- Cross cultural barriers include: inability to understand signals in other cultures, attaching meanings as per one's own culture, not developing sensitivity to other cultures, space distancing, selectivity or "I see what I want to see" attitude.

- To be a good communicator, One should remember the six Whs - When? Why? With whom? How? What? Where?

3.9 FURTHER READINGS

Babu Rao, GSRK 2002. Business Communication and Report Writing: Himalaya Publishers.

Hall Edward 1959, *The Silent Language: Greenwich*.

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Pinker, Steven 1994. *The Language Instinct,* Penguin Books.

3.10 ANSWERS

Check your progress 1

1) One way communication

2) Oral and written modes.

3) They want their students to "carry home" ideas for optimal understanding.

4) Congratulations are conveyed to show personal warmth and the message should be conveyed personally.

5) Oral

Check your progress 2

1) A way of communication without using words.

2) Silence

3) Eyes.

Check your progress 3

1) The Swastika is a religious or auspicious symbol in India. In Germany it is associated with Hitler and Nazism. There was a furor when a young British prince wore a uniform with the symbol to a fancy dress party, and the Europeans wanted to ban the symbol. But for the Indians in Europe, this was quite unacceptable, as the symbol conveys good things to them.

2) The intended interpretation of this saying is that time goes by very quickly. The computer could come up with the following additional interpretations:

a) Time goes on as quickly as an arrow goes. (intended interpretation)

b) Measure the speed of flies just as you measure the speed of an arrow.

c) Measure the speed of flies just as an arrow measures the speed of flies.

d) There are flies that are like an arrow; measure their speed.

e) A particular kind of fly, called time flies like arrows.

3) "Alcohol-free" was confused with "free-alcohol" because the German speakers of English shifted the words around.

The canteen boy too did not make a distinction between "less sugar" "sugarless". He knew only one way of interpreting it.

Common signs: