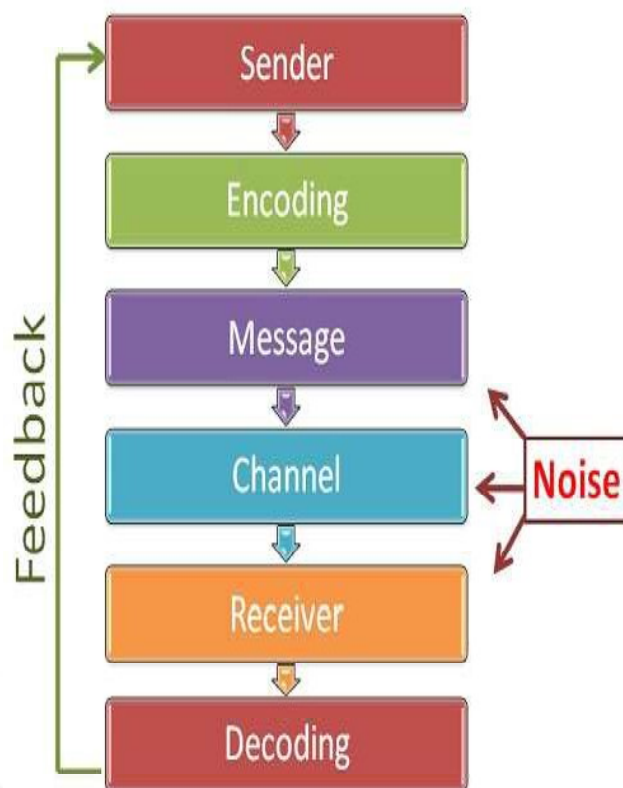

UNIT 1 THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction: What is Communication?
- 1.2 The Process of Communication
- 1.3 Barriers to Communication
- 1.4 Different Types of Communication
- 1.5 Written vs. Oral Communication
- 1.6 Different Types of Face-to-Face Interactions
- 1.7 Characteristics and Conventions of Conversation
- 1.8 Difference between Conversation and Other Speech Events
- 1.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.10 Suggested Readings
- 1.11 Answers



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

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.'

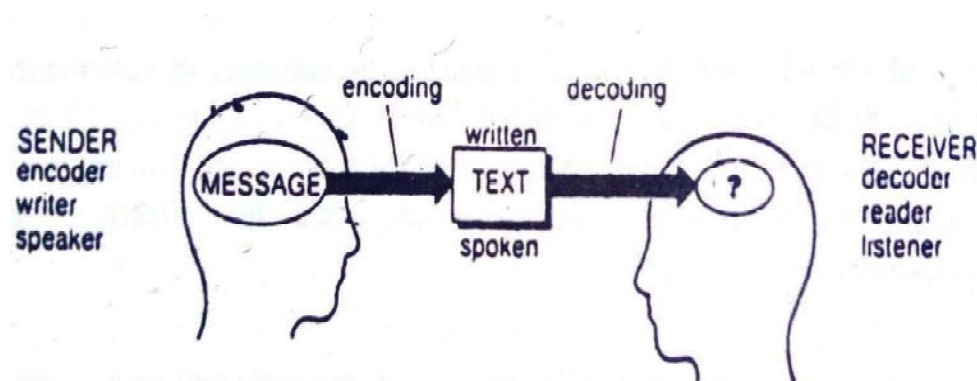
As human beings we have the ability to express ourselves and share our thoughts and feelings in many ways. We could live in isolation, never communicating with another person, but that would not create value. We can keep feelings to ourselves or we can share them. Each person has his or her unique view 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.



- b) **Vocabulary:** *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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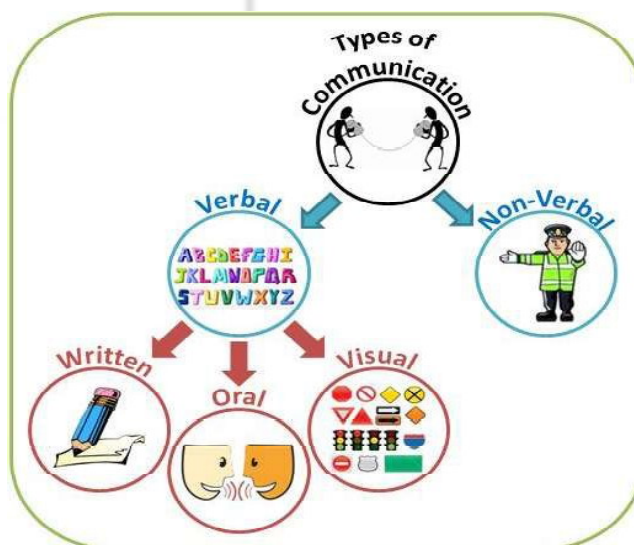
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1.4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNICATION



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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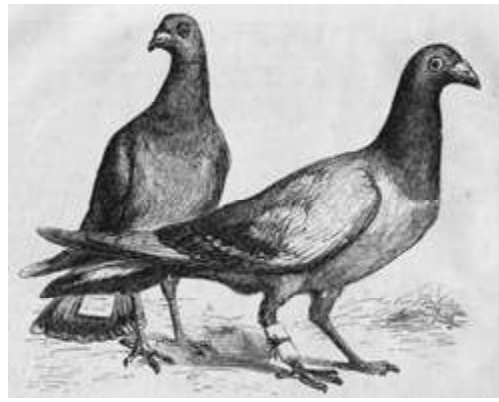
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1.6 DIFFERENT TYPES OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS

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.

- 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

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Verbal Communication: Oral and Written Modes

3.2.1 Where is the Oral Mode used?

3.2.2 Where is the Written Mode Used?

3.2.3 Where are Both Modes Used?

3.3 Non-verbal Communication

3.3.1 Advantages of Non-verbal Communication

3.3.1.1 Signs

3.3.1.2 Symbols

3.3.1.3 Graphs, Charts and Flow Charts

3.4 Body Language and Silence

3.4.1 Eye Contact

3.4.2 Posture

3.4.3 Distance

3.4.4 Silence: Its Role in Communication

3.5 Barriers to Communication

3.5.1 Semantic and Linguistic Barriers

3.5.1.1 Ambiguity in Expression

3.5.1.2 Homophones

3.5.1.3 Contextual Meaning and Speech Acts

3.5.1.4 Stress and Intonation

3.5.1.5 Word Shift

3.5.1.6 Style

3.5.1.7 Register and Jargon - Acronyms

3.5.2 Socio-psychological Barriers

3.5.2.1 The Attention-span of the Listener

3.5.2.2 Laughter, the Best Medicine!

3.5.2.3 External Disturbances and the Wrong Medium

3.5.2.4 Personal Bias and Strong Feelings

3.5.2.5 Selectivity, or The 'I see only What I Want to See' Attitude

3.5.2.6 Cynicism and Negativity

3.5.2.7 Perceived Benefits

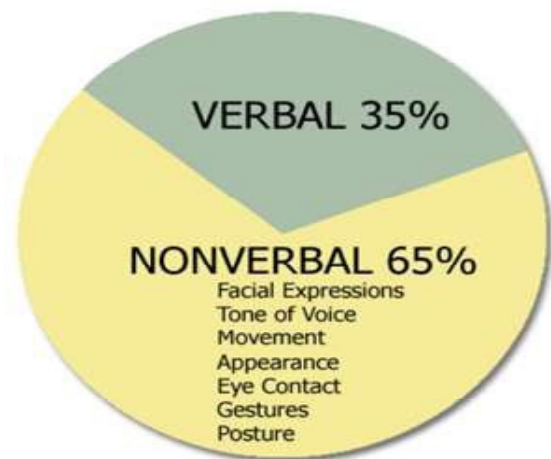


Image from <https://ubisafe.org/explore/felling-clipart-non-verbal-communication/>

3.6 The Six Wh-s That See You Through as a Communicator

3.7 Let Us Sum Up

3.8 Further Readings

3.9 Answers

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- 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

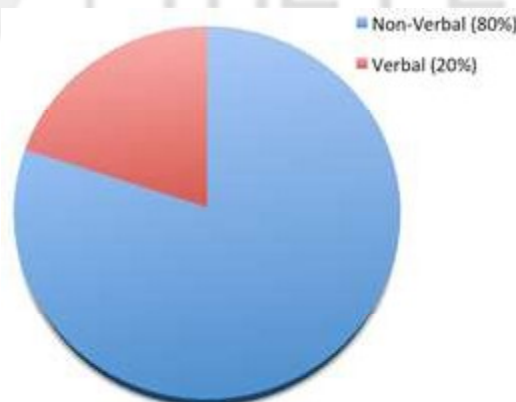
3.1 INTRODUCTION

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 isway 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?
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- 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.
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- 5) Grammaticality and precision are not insisted upon incommunication.

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

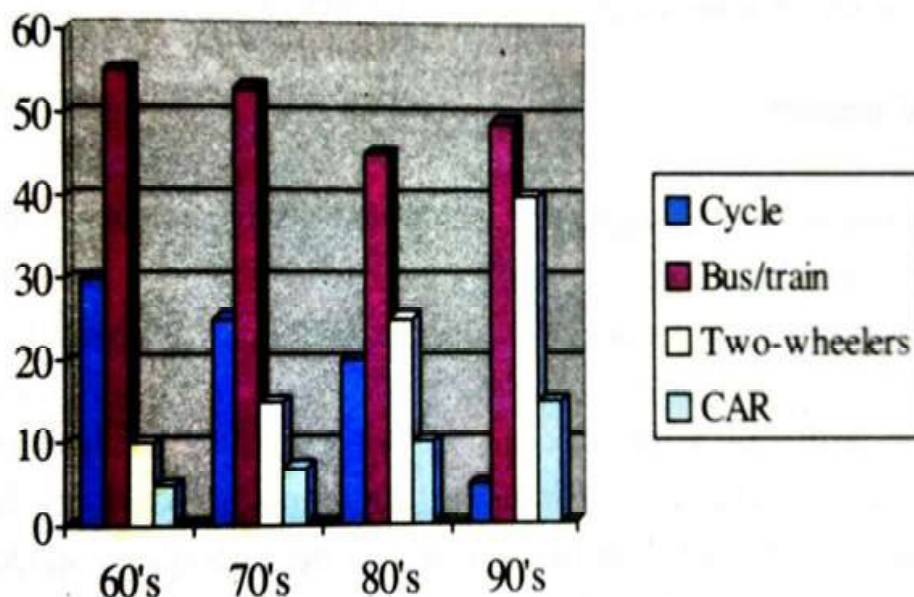
Some symbols are universal and easy to understand. They are popular and convey the same message in almost all cultures. A heart signifies love. A dove with a twig in its beak, or a white flag, indicates peace or surrender.

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.

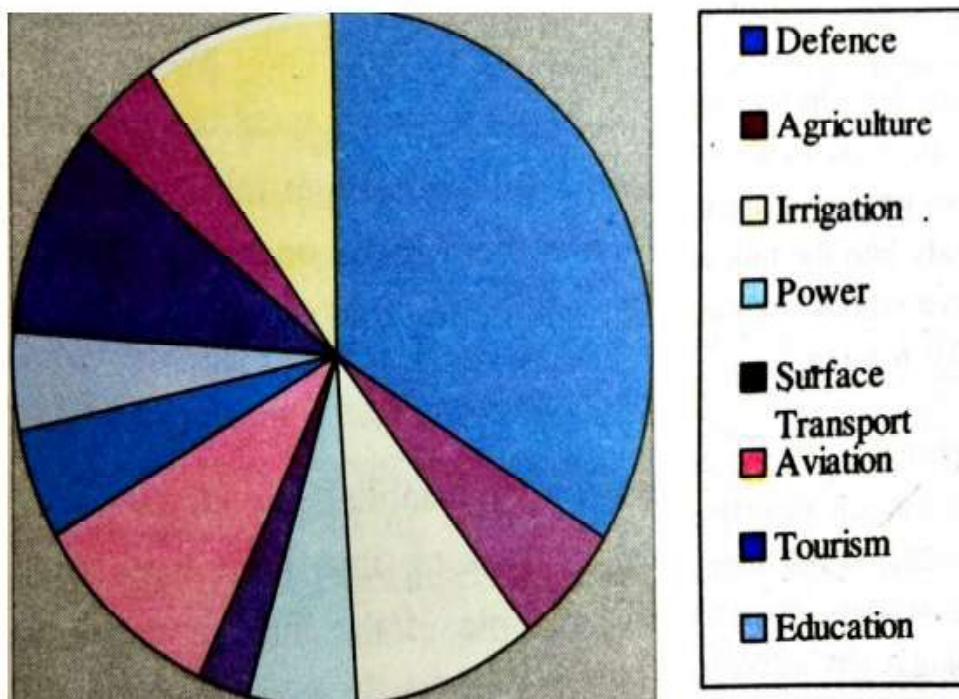
3.3.1.3 Graphs, Charts and Flow Charts

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
<i>Eyes, face:</i>	
Maintaining eye contact	Keeness 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?
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- 2)can be used as an effective tool in negotiations.
- 3) "Theare the windows to the soul". Do you agree with this? Discuss.
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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.



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 grammar. 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?'

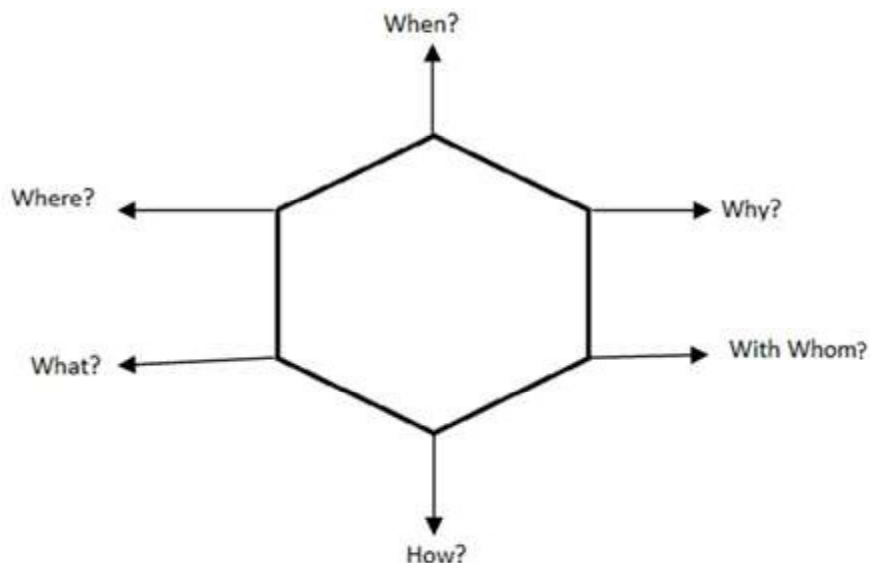
Young man: Well, I can't see why not!

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

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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

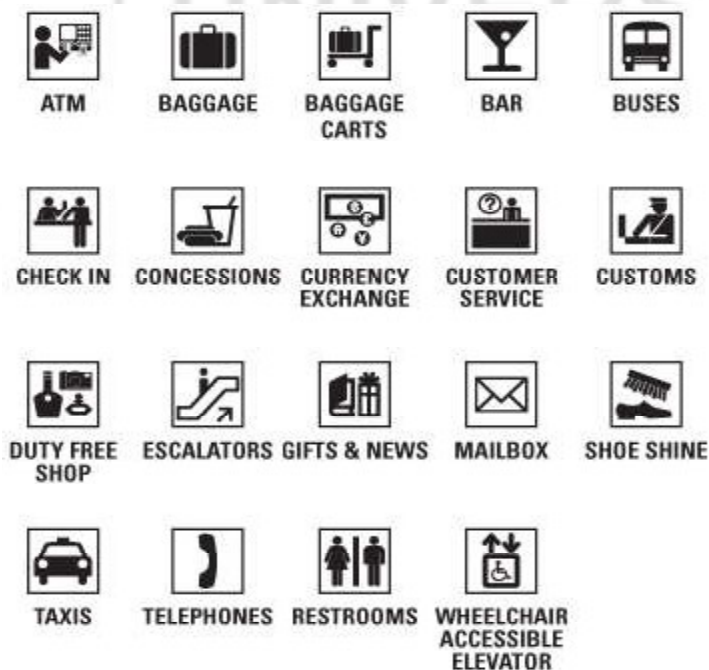
- 1) A way of communication without using words.
- 2) Silence
- 3) Eyes.

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:



UNIT 1 INFORMAL INTERPERSONAL FUNCTIONS

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Greetings
- 1.3 Introducing Oneself and Others
- 1.4 Extending Invitations: Accepting, Declining Invitations, Taking Leave
- 1.5 Small Talk
 - 1.5.1 Talking about the Weather
 - 1.5.2 Personal Matters
 - 1.5.3 Food
 - 1.5.4 Entertainment
- 1.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.7 Answers

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through the unit, you should find it easy to:

- Start casual conversations
- Introduce yourself and others,
- Bring a conversation to an end,
- Take leave of others, and
- Pronounce the sounds represented by the letters ‘a’, and ‘o’ especially the weak forms.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous block you learnt about some basic concepts for communication in English. In this unit, you will get acquainted with some of the ways in which you can express yourself informally with friends, classmates or colleagues in English. You may have to do this, if the people around you speak a language different from your own. There are times when you may be in a group where the common language for communication is English.

The tips in this Unit will help you get prepared to communicate well in such situations. We cannot really predict what you will need to talk about, but we can help you with some commonly used phrases and expressions.

In the past, conversation was considered an art. A good conversationalist was the light of social gatherings. Talking about the affairs of the everyday world in an interesting and entertaining manner was a cultivated talent. Communication is not always an exchange of information. Sharing ideas on everyday events can be a great source of pleasure and satisfaction.

Though conversation is not viewed as much of an art today as it was in the days of yore, the ‘gift of the gab’ is still thought desirable for maintaining cordial relations with people around us. Even in formal situations like meetings, the participants do not abruptly begin to talk about business. They first warm up with a few comments about the weather, the journey, food, sports, or current events, before broaching the subject matter.

We also provide you with samples of conversation from fiction, as one form of exposure to the conventions of everyday speech. You can in addition observe others speaking and notice some of the ways in which things are said. A colleague remembers how as a small child she waited with great curiosity to see what a group of visitors to her home would say as they took leave.

As you work through the suggestions in this block, you can similarly note the equivalences and differences between the kind of expressions you use in your other languages, and English. You can also watch movies or television serials and chat shows in English. Remember, what you say should be appropriate to the situation you are in and the kind of relationship you share with the people you speak to.

1.2 GREETINGS

Let us first look at a sample taken from a novel of a conversation between two old friends meeting after a long interval of time:

‘Hello, Raj!’

“Welcome Prashant...take a seat”

“You startled me, Raj. When did you grow such long hair? You look like one of those ancient sages living out in the jungles”,...

“Whether I look like a sage or not is debatable. That New Delhi is a jungle, is not!... Come tell us about good old Mumbai, which I miss so much. But first, tea or coffee?

[The Return of Vaman]

‘Hello!’ is a common form of greeting among friends.

- There can be variations in the tone in which it is said, depending upon the emotional state of the speaker and the degree of intimacy between the people engaged in the conversation. In this case we can see that the two friends are overjoyed at meeting each other. The comment on physical appearance reflects the degree of intimacy between the two. There is also a reference to Raj’s feelings of nostalgia about the days he spent in Mumbai.



The next move in the conversation is the offering of a drink. Notice that this is not a full sentence. “But first, tea or coffee?” Expanded it means “Will you have tea or coffee?”

- Informal speech usually has half-sentences and phrases but because the speaker and the listener are face-to-face, much of the conversation is understood through facial expression and gestures.

Here is an exchange of greetings between a librarian and a library member:

“How are you this morning, sir?”

“All right, thank you. And how are you?”

“Fine. Here are some new arrivals. You’d really be interested in this new book by Parnuk.”

“Thank you very much. I read his Nobel Prize speech and I am really eager to read all his works.”

- Notice the respectful tone of the librarian and the politeness of the member’s response to it without being overfriendly. “How are you?” is responded to with “All right, thank you”. Or more commonly, “Fine, thank you”, This could be followed by “And how are you?”

Let us now look at a slightly more formal exchange of greetings between two neighbours:

“How do you do, Mr. Mehta?”

“How do you do Mr. Trivedi? I’m sorry I didn’t notice you.”

“Well, I haven’t seen you for quite some time - well almost a week now.”

“I was out of town.”

“Is everything all right with you, Mr. Mehta?”

[*A River With Three Banks*]

- “How do you do?” is a common greeting, especially among the British. “How do you do?” is not a question. It is a greeting. The response to “How do you do?” is “How do you do?” This example shows the kind of exchange that could take place between two neighbours used to seeing each other regularly. It also reflects concern felt by one for the other.

Now look at this example:

“Hi!”

“Hello.”

“Why, what’s the matter?”

“Nothing”

“Come on; get it off your chest.”

“Thanks, it’s nothing really.”

- Notice how the effusive greeting “Hi!” by the first speaker is responded to with a stiff “Hello” by the second. Notice that the exchange is not open.

The second speaker obviously is not in a mood to talk freely.

- “Hello” is less informal than “Hi!” We use “Hi” with very close friends, not generally with older people or people who are superiors at work.
- The word “Hello” is also the most frequent greeting with which one receives a telephone call.
- “Hello”, “Hullo”, “Hallo” are variations of the same word.

Other ways of greeting are:

“Good Morning” “Morning!” In the second instance the word ‘good’ is not uttered aloud but is understood.

“Good Evening”

“Nice to see you!”

“Hello, seeing you after a long time.”

“Nice to see you after so long”

“Hi, it seems ages since we met! How are you?”

“Delighted to see you!”

Activity 1

Write down five other greetings you hear being used by people around you or on television or any English movie.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

1.3 INTRODUCING ONESELF AND OTHERS

How do we introduce ourselves to people whom we have never met before?

“I’m Vinita Shukla. How do you do?”

“Hello. I am Naresh Tripathi from Convensys. Nice to meet you”.

“Have we met before?” I’m Renu Vyas.”

“Tarun George. I have a vague feeling we have met somewhere”.

“Was it at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore?”

“That’s right. I did my Master’s there 2014-2016”.

“That’s it then. I was doing my research there, same time”

“I’m Sudhir Shah. Come for the interview?”

“Yes. My name’s Dina Vakil. You’re from?”

“Surat. And you?”

“Vadodra. Are we too early?”

“It’s better this way than late”.

“I agree”.

These are some of the ways in which we introduce ourselves to others. Notice we do not refer to ourselves as Mr or Ms or Dr.

Do not say. “I’m Mr Sudhir Shah.”

While speaking we use contracted forms:

“I’m” “I am”

“My name is” “My name’s”.



Check Your Progress 1

List 5 contracted forms of verbs and give their expanded forms:

.....

.....

.....

1.4 EXTENDING INVITATIONS: ACCEPTING, DECLINING INVITATIONS, TAKING LEAVE

Now read this conversation and notice the way these two friends talk to each other. Notice the welcome, the introductions, the way an invitation is extended, accepted and declined.

Is Mr. Dhawan there, please? “Please do come in.” “I’m sorry to barge in like this.”	It is generally considered impolite to barge into someone’s house without intimation. In the first section the visitor excuses himself for his unannounced visit and is welcomed by the hostess.
“Hello, Bob! What a surprise!” ... “This is my afternoon round of rum.” “How about joining me?” “Too early for me.” “Look, you don’t have a phone and I didn’t note your address the last time I was here.” “Ah, the explanations and apologies.” ... “Back to your Englishness - appointments, phone calls. You’re welcome here any time, Bob” “Still...”	Compare the formality of Bob with the informal tone of his friend Berry. In the second section he is greeted effusively by his friend asking him to join him in drinks. Bob refuses politely, apologizes for dropping in unannounced.
“And that’s my bride. Married seven years now. ...” “Pleased to meet you Mrs. Dhawan.	Berry introduces his wife to him. Notice the expression “Pleased to meet you.” This is the response when somebody is introduced

	to you. Other expressions are: “Glad to meet you”. “Pleasure meeting you”. These are not full sentences but phrases. “I am pleased/ glad to meet you”, “it is a pleasure meeting you” would be the implied sentences. This is another example of how we leave out some very common words, easily understood from the context, when we speak.
“Well, I’m in a hurry. I just came to ask you, Mrs Dhawan and Gautam...” “Sonali is the name.” ... All right... I should be delighted if both of you and Gautam could come to my party next Saturday... I am not so sure about Sonali. You see, she may have to visit her ailing aunt that evening. And Gautam’s away at Allahabad. But I’ll come.” “I’m sorry, my aunt has not been keeping too well, lately.” “What a pity!... I hope she gets well soon.”	The visitor signals that he wishes to leave with the words, “Well, I’m in a hurry.” He begins stating the purpose of his visit when Bob interrupts him commanding him to drop the formality with his wife and address her by her first name. Next, Bob invites Berry and his wife for the party. “I should be delighted...” Other expressions could be: “It would be lovely if...” “It would be great if...” This is the way in which one could excuse oneself or someone else from accepting an invitation. Apologizing for non-acceptance. Polite response. [A River with Three Banks)

Here are some ways of leave-taking. Notice the polite responses by the hosts.

“He hasn’t come yet”. “I think I should leave.”

“Do sit for a little while more. You have waited for so long. He should be back any minute. Can I get you something to drink?”

“No thanks....”

“Did he know you were coming?”

“No, I thought I would take a chance. **I’ll go now.**

“Oh, I’ll tell him you came. Would you like to write down a message?”

“No, I’ll call later. Thanks.” “I must leave now.”

“It’s getting late. You have a long way to go.”

“Yes. Hope you get well soon.”

“Thanks. Thanks for coming to see me.”

Check Your Progress 2

Grade the following expressions according to their level of formality/informality. Use ranks 1-6: 1 for least formal and 6 for very formal.

- a) “Well, I think I should leave now.”
- b) “That was a pleasant evening, indeed. Thanks. Good night”
- c) “It was nice spending time with you. See you soon.”
- d) “Well, thanks for the great time. Look forward to spending more such occasions.
- e) “Bye then. Hope to see you soon.”
- f) “May I take leave of you now?”
- g) “See you.”

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Read these extracts from the novel *Not a Penny More Not a Penny Less* by Jeffrey Archer. Say which situation each extract describes i.e.

“leave-taking or parting, greeting, or greeting and extending an invitation. Can you guess what the social relationship is between the speakers?

- i) ‘See you in the morning, Professor. Thanks for a great evening.

‘My pleasure. I’ll pick you up at 10 a.m. Sleep well — you have a full day ahead of you tomorrow.’

- ii) ‘Good morning, David.

“Good morning, Bernie. I thought I ought to let you know I spent the evening with a friend at Oxford, and he may invest some money in the company.

“That’s fine, David, keep up the good work.’

- iii) ‘Good morning, Mr. Silverman.”

Bernie, please call me Bernie. Take a seat.’

- iv) (on the telephone) ‘Hi, Lloyd. Didn’t know you were in Monte ...why don’t we get together? ...8 p.m.? Great, I’ll see you then.’

- v) ‘Well, that seems to be all. Thank you for your cooperation. We may be in touch again some time in the future. We’ll keep you informed of developments, and I hope you’ll do the same for us.

‘Of course, Inspector. I do hope you have a safe journey back to town.

- 2) *Comment on the situations described in these extracts from Jamila Gavin, The Wheel of Surya. Say who the speakers are and what they do (apologize, introduce themselves or others, etc.)*

- i) “I’m so sorry to intrude like this”, said Tom awkwardly. “Let me introduce myself. My name is Tom Fletcher. I’m a teacher in India, but over on leave (in England) to see my parents ...”

ii) ‘Are you Jaspal Singh?’ she demanded.

Jaspal nodded.

‘Come with me then’, and ... she marched him over to one of the line-ups in front of the class teachers.

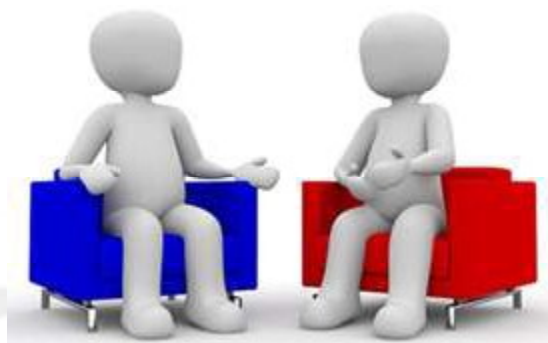
‘Class 6’, announced the teacher. ‘This is a new boy. He comes from India. His name is Jaspal Singh.’

1.5 SMALL TALK

In the sections below we will discuss how conversation is carried on about topics like the weather, food, entertainment etc.

1.5.1 Talking about the Weather

Weather is a very easy subject to start a conversation. This is because all participants in a conversation share knowledge about the weather. The weather is ever-changing, and so can direct the course of the conversation for a brief while at least. The topic is, moreover, neutral in nature — there is no danger of getting too personal, or of holding offensively strong opinions about this topic. The British are legendary for making remarks about the weather, and are the subject of many jokes in this regard.



Now read this sample of a conversation about the weather:

“Terribly hot isn’t it?”

“The temperature has touched 42 degrees according to the weather report today.”

“We are just in the middle of May. More than a month to go.”

“But the news reports say the monsoon will be early this year. It’s expected to hit the Kerala coast around the 28th of May.”

“Hope that’s true!”

Notice that the shared information of the two interlocutors makes it easy for them to take turns.

- Turn-taking is very important for the smooth flow of conversation.

As a response to what one speaker has said the second speaker continues or adds information. This implies that good listening is important to maintain the flow of conversation. If one of the participants is distracted — if s/he is not listening, the flow of conversation will be disturbed and uneven, because s/he will not be able to respond. Similarly, a person who doesn’t allow the others to “get in a word edgewise” in a conversation is a bore!

Check your progress 4

1) Arrange the following utterances made by two speakers, Arvind and Bina, about the weather into a coherent piece of dialogue. The first two sentences which is an exchange of greeting, is given:

Arvind: Morning!

Bina: Nice, pleasant morning!

Arvind: It's lovely. There's a nip in the air.

Arvind: How far are you going?

Arvind: Hope this weather continues for some time.

Arvind: That'd be simply great. I'll be with you in a minute.

Bina: Just right for a good long walk. Care to join me?

Bina: But the days are warming up.

Bina: Just up to the Nature Park, and a brisk walk by the poolside to look at the dew on the leaves and the buds before it heats up.

Activity 2

- A) Try speaking to a friend in a similar way about the weather
- B) Watch the weather forecast of a television news programme. Note down some of the words and phrases used by the presenter.

1.5.2 Personal Matters

People and what they do are interesting topics for conversation too. While the word 'gossip' does have a derogatory sense, it would be a very drab life indeed if we didn't talk about others and ourselves. Most encounters begin with enquiring about the welfare of one's family members. If we are among friends, it is also quite usual to talk about the activities of other common friends. This is also one way in which people keep up with others who have moved away.

We might also happen to meet strangers. While some people may find personal questions embarrassing, they often serve to forge a friendly bond between two human beings.

Read this conversation from a short story. Here we see two strangers exchanging not only personal information but also their views on life,

thyme = time, even native speakers of English may have accents peculiar to particular regions. The beginning of this story gives us a clue to this speaker's accent:

I SIGHTED him on the bench outside the lone cafe overlooking Rydal Water, the placid idyllic lake behind Wordsworth's Rydal Mount Cottage in England's enchanting Lake District He was dressed in grimy black clothes and it must have been months since he had shaved or showered.

"What's the thyme?" he called out.

"What?"

"The thyme", he said, pointing to the wrist.

"Oh, the time is 5.20," I said, trying hard to place his accent. Was he Scottish or Irish?

and the changing times:

“You seem sad. What’s the matter?”

I hesitated. Should I confess to a stranger?

Then I decided to drop my guard. “I lost my job. Three weeks ago.”

“Ha!” he snorted, as if he had heard a joke, “So that’s the problem? Don’t worry. After the war, I thought I had lost everything. A couple of years later, I was back on my feet, hale and hearty. When my wife Rose... Rosemary died, I thought I was a goner. I roamed here and there. But I am okay now. Thyme is the greatest healer. Thyme will pass. You will get a new job and you will forget you were out of one.”

“None of my business, but why did you lose your job?” he continued, slurping the lemonade.

I shrugged. “They told me I couldn’t relate to the youngsters... the new generation. I was a disciplinarian, an ogre to this generation’s junkies. I couldn’t stand their coming late, their clothes, their flirtations. So I got tough. It was a question of them or me. The management decided to get rid of me.”

“Ha!” he snorted again. Much to my consternation. I could see no humour here.

“The thymes, they are a changin,” he sang merrily. “Mister, you gotta change too. Can’t remain the same. Don’t worry. You will, you will. It will just take some thyme.”

“What do I do till I get a new job?”

He scratched his beard. “You know what? Confronting thyme — pure, uncommitted, unoccupied thyme — is a terrifying experience for a human being. But once you learn it, it does good for the soul. Imagine no TV, no movies, no pubs, no theatre, no distractions at all. For example, being out in a place like this. What can you do but stand and stare? At the water, at the geese and the ducks. Sometimes nothing moves for hours. That’s what I am trying to do. Confront thyme. It does good for the soul. It tells us worrying isn’t any good.”

(From the Hindu)

Activity 3

Look up the dictionary to understand what the underlined words mean:

I thought I was a goner.

You gotta change too.

Check Your Progress 5

Find out the meanings of these expressions. You may consult a dictionary or ask a friend. Look under the word ‘foot’ in the dictionary:

Be back on one’s feet:

Find one’s feet:

Put one’s feet up:

Fall on one's feet:

Have both feet on the ground:

1.5.3 Food

Another favourite topic that lends itself to small talk is food, whether it be talk about the new or popular eating places in town or the fruits of the season.

In the following piece of conversation, an offer of fruit leads to a conversation about personal tastes and nostalgic memories that the fruit evokes in the participants

“Fresh guavas from our orchard.”

“Really! They seem to be just ripe.”

“Yes with guavas you want them just right; not too raw nor too ripe.”

“Here's some salt and pepper. Sprinkle some.”

“Reminds me of times back in the village. We would perch ourselves on the branches and merrily munch away, story book in one hand.”

“Glorious days. You don't really get that natural taste now, with all these artificial manures and pesticide sprays.”

“Mmm. Anyway from your orchard... That makes it special.”

Notice the turns in comment and response. Each comment links itself up to the next in a chain, generating a cluster of ideas triggered off by the first offer of fruit.

The subject of the first sentence is guavas.

The exclamation “Really” is a response to the first statement, an expression of wonder and acknowledgement. “They” is a pronoun substituting ‘guavas’ in the first statement.

The last word ‘just ripe’ is taken on for comment in sentence 3.

Sentence 4 adds an instruction.

Sentence 5 triggers a memory.

Sentence 6 “glorious days’ refers to the times back in the village”.

The last utterance links up with the first rounding up the exchange. The word that links it to the first is “orchard”.

The conversation might have ended in two utterances, if the second speaker had accepted the fruit with just a “Thank you”. It is part of the art of conversation to find something to say that pleases the other person, here, a comment on the fruits being just ripe enough to be at their most tasty. Again, the other person keeps the conversation going by agreeing. If learning to disagree and to pick weaknesses in the opposition's argument is the art of debate, the art of conversation would appear to be learning to be pleasant and agreeable.

This is what is called the ‘co-operative principle’ in conversation.

Activity 4

Respond to these comments:

“I love pineapple juice on ice cream.”

“My brother is allergic to oranges.”

“Are you a vegetarian?”

“Coconut water in these dog days is such a relief!”

“The Chinese food we get in Indian restaurants is not really Chinese!”

1.5.4 Entertainment

Like weather and food, entertainment in a village, town or city is usually talked about a great deal. This again is shared information and leads to the strengthening of bonds. People talk about the places they have visited or events they have watched either to inform others or to comment on shared experiences. Cricket, football and tennis matches also provide food for conversation.

Read this conversation:

A) Match has got interesting.

B) What rubbish! We need 12 runs in the last over.

A) Don't be stupid! We have got our best batsman at the crease.

B) But you can't trust the other. He is a bowler!

A) Daniel won't need to do much. Sridhar will hit a four or a six.

B) That's downright silly! He never plays well under pressure.

A) Hurray! Here is the six. We will win this match.

You will notice that in informal conversation, speakers usually drop the polite tone. Expressions like “Don't be stupid!”, “That's downright silly!” etc. are used without really meaning to be rude.

Check Your Progress 6

Underline the expressions that are colloquial (used only in informal conversation) in the following sets of dialogue. First has been done as an example:

a) “Where're you off to?”

“To get myself some food. Coming along?”

“Nope. Plenty to do here.”

b) “What shirt are you going to put on?”

“What shirt? It doesn't matter. A white shirt.”

“You're not going to wear a suit? Wait, I'll bring you an aspirin.”

“I don't want an aspirin.”

“But you yourself said you had a headache.”

“Leave me alone.”

“Well, it's your health, not mine.”

- c) “Hello, Doctor! don’t you recognize me, eh?”

Doctor looks unsure.

“You’ve forgotten! Weren’t we neighbours? We used to play tennis occasionally at the Community Club.”

“You still don’t recognize me, eh? Take a good look! It’s Freda, the daughter of Mr. P. L. Joseph!”

1.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we looked at some of the ways in which we greet, introduce, welcome, invite, accept or decline invitations and take leave.

The phrases given in the Unit need not be learnt by heart but indicate ways in which everyday communicative functions are performed.

You would have noticed that conversation does not begin or end abruptly. Politeness principles suggest gradual beginnings and endings.

In this unit we looked at some examples of ‘small talk’. This could be about the weather, common acquaintances, sports or entertainment or current events. You also got familiar with some informal expressions used in everyday speech.

1.7 ANSWERS

Activity 1

- i) ‘Can’t believe it! How nice to see you after such a long time!’
- ii) ‘Good evening! So glad to see you’
- iii) ‘How lovely! You are just the person I was thinking of.’
- iv) ‘Shweta! How are you? So good to see you.’
- v) ‘Good morning! Vintex Consultants.’ (on the telephone)

Check Your Progress 1

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| i) I don’t | I do not |
| ii) I wasn’t | I was not |
| iii) They don’t | They do not |
| iv) I couldn’t | I could not |
| v) Let’s not | Let us not |

Check Your Progress 2

g1, e2, c3, d4, a5, b6, f6

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Social relationship is between the speakers:
 - i) [Leave-taking or parting] [A professor and his guest, perhaps a professional colleague]

- ii) [Greeting] [Colleagues at work: Bernie is David's superior or senior]
 - iii) [Greeting] [A boss and a newly appointed person]
 - iv) [Greeting and extending an invitation] [friends]
 - v) [Leave-taking or parting] [An Inspector and a person who has helped him in his inquiries]
- 2) i) Tom is a teacher. He is speaking to someone who doesn't know him, so he introduces himself and apologizes for his unexpected visit to their house. He is a little embarrassed.
- ii) Jaspal is a new boy from India, and this is his first day at a school in England. A teacher takes him to his class teacher, and the class teacher introduces him to the class.

Check Your Progress 4

Arvind : Morning!

Bina : Nice, pleasant morning!

Arvind : It's lovely. There's a nip in the air.

Bina : But the days are warming up.

Arvind : Hope this weather continues for some time.

Bina : Just right for a good long walk, Care to join me?

Arvind : How far are you going?

Bina : Just up to the Nature Park, and a brisk walk by the poolside to look at the dew on the leaves and the buds before it hots up.

Arvind : That'd be simply great. I'll be with you in a minute.

Activity 2

Do it yourself.

Activity 3

Do it yourself.

Activity 4

Do it yourself.

Check Your Progress 5

Be back on one's feet: Well or successful again after being ill or having problems.

Find one's feet: to be able to act confidently and independently

Put one's feet up: to rest or relax

Fall on one's feet: to have good luck after a difficult period.

Have both feet on the ground: be practical

Check Your Progress 6

- a) "Where're you off to?"

“To get myself some food. Coming along?”

“Nope. Plenty to do here.”

- b) “What shirt are you going to put on?”

“What shirt? It doesn’t matter. A white shirt.”

“You’re not going to wear a suit? Wait, I’ll bring you an aspirin.”

“I don’t want an aspirin.”

“But you yourself said you had a headache.”

“Leave me alone.”

“Well, it’s your health, not mine.”

- c) “Hello, Doctor! don’t you recognize me, eh?

Doctor looks unsure.

“You’ve forgotten! Weren’t we neighbours? We used to play tennis occasionally at the Community Club.”

“You still don’t recognize me, eh? Take a good look! It’s Freda, the daughter of Mr. P. L. Joseph!”

