UNIT 1   THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Structure

1.0   OBJECTIVES

In this unit we will introduce you to some basic concepts in communication, its importance in business organizations, different types of communication, different modes to be used, and their comparative advantages and disadvantages. We shall also give you insights into strategies that are used for effective face-to-face communication.

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 of 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 e.g. the knowledge of the subject, topic, addresser-addressee relationship, knowledge of the code, the physical and social context, etc.

Let us consider the following utterance:
"Mr. Gupta is not coming".

The textual 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'. Think of some more functions and compare your list with that drawn up by others in 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. Cose 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 business 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.   **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 bases:-

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, but they can communicate with ordinary people only by using commonly understood actions and gestures e.g. asking for water by cupping your hand near your mouth.

In business, communicating in writing is the most popular form of communication. It can take various forms such as letters, circulars, office memorandums, telegrams, fax messages, 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 business 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 business situations as well in similar circumstances or when verbal communication is impossible e.g. in the factory where the notice 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 & Informal Communication

In business, 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 authority 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 also 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.

But it has certain disadvantages also. 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/she 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.

In the business world, 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 others in your 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 a letter 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 that function involved in expressing social relations and personal attitudes is called *Interactional*.

(1)   (a)   A: There's no message for you   (Transactionl)
                   B: OK.
         (b)   A: How are you?   (Interacional)
                   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 in business 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 conversation is that if I ask you a question, whatever you say will somehow be interpretable 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 themselves. 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, in the business world 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 he following examples of adjacency pairs:

(a)   Greeting-Greeting   A: Hi
                                     B: Hi

(b)   Compliment-Acceptance   A: That's nice hat.
                                     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:Johny!
                                     Johny: ………
        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 baby
                                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 nice hat.
	(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:	Mr. 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 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 car dealer and a customer looking for a small family car. 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 CONVERSATIONAL PROBLEM OF SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE USERS

The maxims and rules for conversation differ from culture to culture and hence pose problems for non-native speakers. There may be different conventions operating in the mother tongue and target language. We have already hinted at some of the problems while describing the maxims and rules above. Let us consider some more problems and how we can overcome them.

Can you recall what we said above about non-native use of maxim of quantity. Non-native speakers may provide less information than is expected of them. Another crucial problem could be to interpret the intended speech act appropriately. Consider what is wrong with the following interaction:

A: Hello!
B: ABC Distributors. Good Morning.
A: Can I speak to Mr. Malhotra?
B: Yes, you can.

Evidently B has misunderstood A's question as a question rather than a request to bring the person on the line. What do you think would be the right response?

Check Your Progress 12

Supply an appropriate response for the following:

A: Would you mind closing the door please?
B:

Adjacency pairs is another crucial area which poses problem. Questions, particularly yes/no type questions are not always *Requests for information* but may be *requests for action*. The problem arises because you are taught to reply to yes/no questions with yes or no plus repetition of the verb or auxiliary used in the question, e.g.

Customer: Do you have oranges?
Shopkeeper: Yes, I do.

The response may be grammatically correct but does it sound natural to you? Practicing only yes/no plus repetition of the verb/auxiliary often leads to such short stilted replies which while grammatically correct may be conversationally inappropriate. What you need is a large stock of adjacency pairs and practice in using them in a wide range of situations.

Think for a moment how the inquiry in your mother tongue would have been responded to by the fruit seller. What you require is to practice other adjacency pairs, such as Request-Grant/Challenge, etc:-

Customer: Do you have oranges?
Fruit-seller: Here they're. How many do you want? All fresh and Cheap too. The likes of these you'll get nowhere in the market.

Native speakers often consider non-native speakers overly passive in conversation. There are two reasons. One that nonnative speakers tend to provide only second pair parts leaving all first pair parts to their interlocutor, answering questions with 'yes' and 'no' e.g.

A: What is your name?
B: Mohan. Mohan Srivastava. (Silence follows)
A;   Are you working with ABC company?
B: Yes
       (Again long stretch of silence)

This leads to non-native speakers initiating all questions which rarely happens in natural social conversation. Instead of simply answering a question, you must learn to answer a question, give some extra information and ask another question as in the customer-fruit-seller's conversation given above.

Openings and closings are also problematic for foreign language learners. The learner may not know what to say and hence may just transliterate from his/her own mother tongue as in the following example:

(Context: A customer comes into the store and seems to be looking for something. The shop assistant comes to him to help him)

Shop Assistant: What do you want, Sir?

The customer does not seem to feel pleased and leaves the store.

What do you think has offended the customer? What should have the shop assistant said to help the customer?

Another important and very difficult area for the second/foreign language learner is topic development. Here you must practice nominating or introducing topics about which you are prepared to speak. You ought to practice predicting questions: elaborating topics, seeking clarifications, shifting topic, undertaking repairs through words and gestures, and several other conversational skills. We will come back to these skills in subsequent pages.

1.9   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 it is likely to happen and provide for any possible misunderstanding and unclarity 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 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 conveyancing 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.

1.10   SUMMARY

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 mode 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.

1.11   SUGGESTED READINGS

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1.12   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

In fact, all normal conversation requires gestures to be effective. "Yes" and "No" are very common messages through gestures.

(You could suggest other messages from your own experience).

Check Your Progress 7

1. (a)   Telephone conversation
   (b)   written (e-mail attachment, fax)
   (c)   written
   (d)   e-mail, written (memo)
   (e)   Telephone Conversation

2. Open-ended depending on your situation. Preferably a memo should be sent.

Check Your Progress 8

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

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

-   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

Open ended

Check Your Progress 12

-   Not at all. (Closing the door)