

Process of Communication

That you may be strong, be a craftsman in speech, for the strength of one is the tongue, and the speech of one is mightier than all fighting.

1.0 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this lesson is to make the students understand the basics of communication, its meaning and the process through which effective communication takes place.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Human beings spend more time communicating than doing anything else. Probably, they spend a large part of each day talking and listening. Even when they are not talking or listening, they are more likely communicating in other ways – reading, writing, drawing, gesturing or perhaps gathering information by seeing, feeling or smelling. All these activities are the forms of communication. And we all do them in our daily routine. This makes communication extremely important as we do it most of our time.

Communication is, no doubt, the lifeblood of any meaningful relationship, personal as well as professional. Research studies suggest that generally, in the process of communication, a person spends approximately seventy five percent of his/ her time speaking and listening; and the rest twenty five percent, reading and writing. Furthermore, about eighty percent of communication occurs at the non-verbal or body language level.

Ironically in our mass education system that is based on the three R's i.e. reading, writing and 'rithmetic, our students do not learn much about the most important aspects of the process of communication namely, speaking, listening and body language. The result is that he/she cannot understand the difference between speaking and communication, hearing and listening, and verbal and non verbal communication – something that is of immense importance in the present scenario.

1.2 COMMUNICATION DEFINED

Communication can be defined in a variety of ways. Some important definitions of communication are:

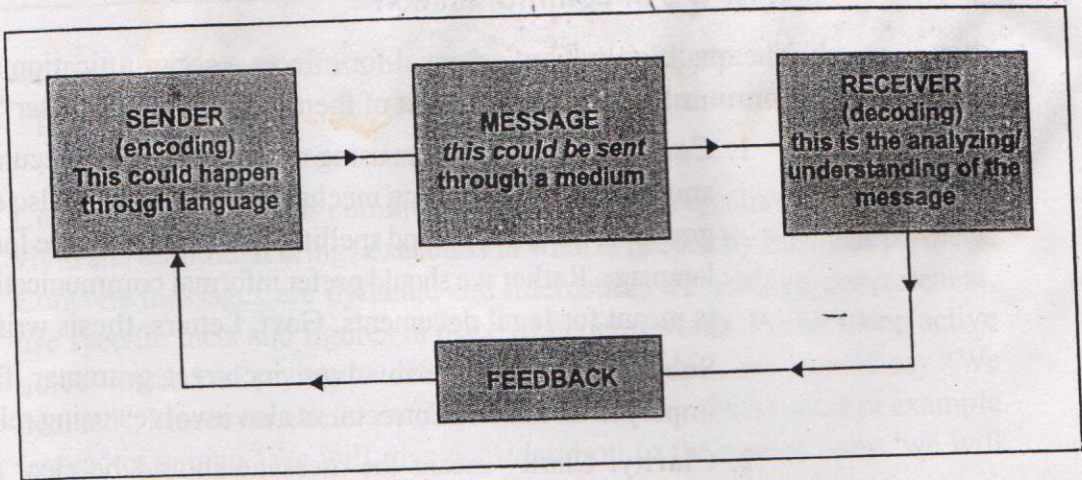
- Keith Davis - *Communication is a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another.*
- Peter Little -- *Communication is the process by which information is passed between individuals and/or organizations by means of previously agreed symbols.*
- Louis A. Allen - *Communication is the sum of all things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding.*
- Newman and Summer - *Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas opinion or emotion by two or more persons”.*
- Chappel and Read - *Communication is any means by which thought is transferred from one person to another.*
- I.A. Richards - *Communication is the exchange of meanings between individuals through a common system of symbols.*

Thus, Communication is a two-way act i.e. it gives information from both sides and it takes place with the help of different signs and symbols.

1.3 THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

The process of communication involves the following phases:

1. An **idea** originates in the mind of the **sender** that he wants to communicate.
2. He **encodes** this idea with the help of some **language**. The idea becomes the **message**.
3. The message is **transmitted** or sent through a **medium**. The choice of the medium depends upon the message and on other factors such as the location of the audience, the need for speed, and the formality of the situation.
4. The **receiver** receives the message. It is not a mere physical process but a mental activity wherein the receiver absorbs the message and understands its meaning after **decoding** it.



The process of communication

5. If all goes well, the message is interpreted correctly; that is the receiver assigns the same basic meaning to the words as the sender intended and responds in the desired way.
6. Till this point, it is a **one-way process**. The communication is incomplete till the receiver gives his feedback in order to complete the process.
7. **Feedback** is the final link in the communication chain. After understanding the message, the receiver responds in some way and sends that response to the sender.
8. The feedback may take the form of a smile, a long pause, a spoken comment, a written message, an action of some sort and so on.

Feedback is very important in the communication process because it enables the sender to assess the effectiveness of the message. Without the feedback, communication is incomplete. Thus the process of communication involves all the above factors. What makes the process difficult, among other things, is the fact that there could be problems at every stage in the process of communication.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communication takes place when the receiver understands your message, exactly the way you meant it to be understood. However, we often experience the opposite. The receiver sometimes tends to misunderstand us and this distorts the communication process. Nevertheless, if a message is communicated with respect and consideration for the opposite person's feelings, then even if your point of view varies from the other person's, your message will not be outright rejected; the receiver will definitely give it a thought. This ensures continuity of the process of communication wherein you are able to put forth your idea, even if it is different from the person who you are communicating with.

1.4.1 C's of communication

The qualities that are essential for effective communication are called the **C's of communication** because most of them begin with the letter 'C'. These are:

1. **Correctness:** It involves using correct language, accurate facts and figures, and an acceptable writing mechanics. Correctness also depends upon proper grammar, punctuation and spelling. We should not use formal and substandard language. Rather we should prefer informal communication. Formal language is meant for legal documents, Govt. Letters, thesis writing etc.
Substandard language involves, incorrect grammar, faulty pronunciation, improper words etc. Correctness also involves using reliable statistical data.
2. **Clarity:** Clarity means the message should be clear at the first instance. Clarity creates understanding and brings accurate feed back in messages. It means that the message is actually understood by the receiver. For achieving clarity, use precise and familiar words. Avoid using technical terms, while communicating with a person, who is unaware of the terminology. Use simple, commonplace words that everyone can easily understand. Also use short and simple sentences and proper punctuation in written messages
3. **Conciseness:** Conciseness is very important for effective communication. Conciseness means using fewest possible words without sacrificing other principles of communication. A concise message is complete and brings emphasis by eliminating unnecessary words. It saves time and cost for sender as well as receiver. Conciseness can be achieved by (i) leaving out unnecessary words, (ii) leaving out unnecessary details, (iii) using word substitution for long sentences, (iv) Avoiding repetition of words and information.
4. **Courtesy:** It involves respecting the perspective feelings of others. Courtesy arises from sincere attitude. For attaining courtesy in communication messages, be tactful, thoughtful and appreciative. Courtesy involves using expressions that show respect as also supplying prompt feedback. Also, select non-discriminatory expressions to help to build goodwill. Asian cultures appreciate polite approach in communications. Avoid irritating expressions like, 'I do not agree with you'. Questionable humour should be omitted because laughter to one person may be sorrow for another. Further, when using names, treat each gender with respect.
5. **Consideration:** We must show consideration for the receiver in our communication. This can be achieved by the following steps:
 - By adopting You-attitude i.e. giving importance to the feelings and viewpoint of the other person.
 - By avoiding gender bias i.e. giving due consideration and respect to women in particular.
 - By emphasizing on positive and pleasant facts and avoiding the negativities.

Even if we have to refuse or say 'no' to somebody, we should say it with politeness.

- By writing only what we sincerely feel to be correct.

6. **Concreteness:** It means communication should be objective, clear, specific, vivid and definite. It brings exactness in what is needed by business partners. Concrete messages are dynamic and interesting. To achieve concreteness, use specific facts and figures in place of general words. Prefer using active voice. Instead of saying 'a decision has been made', we should say 'We decided'. Moreover, prefer putting action in verbs not in nouns. For example instead of saying 'We will give consideration to the matter', say 'we will consider the matter'.
7. **Completeness:** In communication, completeness of facts is absolutely necessary. Incomplete communication leads to irritation and misunderstanding. We should organize our message in such a way that the receiver has no doubts about anything contained in it.

1.4.2 Objectives of Communication

The primary goal of communication in general is to create a common understanding. Within an organization, this objective can be further broken down into the following goals:

1. **Building relationships:** Strong relationships are critical to business success. Companies accord a high value to long-term relationships with clients and customers and put much effort into building these relationships. Strong relationships among the company's employees are also necessary so that people can work together effectively. We require communicating, that too, effectively to build relationships.
2. **Reducing conflict:** When we are aware of the things that might cause conflict, we can work around the problems. For this also we need to master the art of communication. Good communicators help reduce conflict by giving instructions clearly and concisely. They are open about what they expect of others but tactful in expressing it. They avoid hurting the feelings of others.
3. **Sharing information, ideas, and feelings:** When most people think of communicating, they think of sharing information, ideas and feelings, which is, of course, the main reason for the development of language. Words give meaning to information and ideas, but feelings are often transmitted nonverbally, as well.
4. **Dealing with customers:** Organizations interact with customers through communication of one form or another. Even the price tags on products are a form of communication. Sales letter and brochures, advertisements, personal sales calls, telephone solicitations and formal proposals are all used to

stimulate the customer's interest. Communication also plays a part in such customer-related functions as credit checking, billing and handling complaints and questions.

5. **Persuasion:** Persuasion is an important goal of business communication. It is the art of influencing the views and opinions of other persons. Management tries to persuade their employees to put in their best efforts. Persuasion requires good communication skills. It involves efficient use of oral and written communication abilities.
6. **Decision making:** In an effort to achieve the goals, organizations make and implement many decisions. They collect facts and evaluate alternatives and they do so by reading, asking questions, talking things over with one another and just plain thinking. This again requires competency in communication.

1.4.3 Types of Communication

Communication is of two types:

1. Verbal Communication

It is communication that uses words to express feelings and thoughts. This is further of two types:

- (a) **Oral Communication:** Oral communication involves speaking and listening. A great deal of our time in business is spent speaking - for example, using the telephone, attending meetings, negotiating and making presentations. All require good oral communication skills. It is again of two types - (i) **Speaking** (ii) **Listening**. Good speaking and listening skills enable us to communicate better with others. Through good listening, we can help speakers improve the quality of what they want to say.
- (b) **Written communication:** Written communication - letters, memos, reports and other types of documents - are essential to modern business. Managers spend approximately 45 percent of their time reading and writing. Employees at all levels must also be able to write to express their ideas and document their decisions and actions and they must be able to read to communicate with others inside and outside the organization. Written communication involves (i) **Writing** (ii) **Reading**.

2. Non-verbal Communication

A great deal of our communication is of a non-verbal form as opposed to the oral and written forms. Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice, body posture and motions and positioning within groups. It may also include the way we wear our clothes or the silence we keep. In person-to-person communications, our messages are sent on two levels simultaneously. If the nonverbal cues and the spoken message are not understandable, the flow of

communication is hindered. Right or wrong, the receiver of the communication tends to base the intentions of the sender on the non-verbal cues he receives.

TS TO REMEMBER

1. Communication is the key to success in any human relationship interaction.
2. Communication is a dynamic process...through this process we convey a thought or feeling to someone else
3. Remember, whosoever you wish to communicate with may have other things on their mind. Your job is to help them to focus on what you are saying.
4. The first step to establishing rapport or making the initial contact is that you need self-confidence.
5. How you say, what you say also plays an important role in communication,
6. Making the initial contact or establishing the single most important factor to success in any communication.
7. You must understand people. You must have an insight into people. Having an insight into yourself is an excellent start.
8. Be enthusiastic...if you are bored it would show in your writing as well as in your speech.
9. Make eye contact and make sure that your verbal and non-verbal messages are in agreement.
10. Be interested in your audience, and convey your positive attitude to them.
11. Treat all human beings, in your words and actions, with consideration and regard for who they are and how they think.
12. Be sensitive about the words you use while communicating, they could either make or break the communication process. For example, if you are aware that someone needs to be motivated, say things like 'you are a wonderful person', 'I appreciate you for who you are', 'that is a great effort but you can certainly do better', 'I believe in you', and so on.
13. Involve people you care for in the decisions you make, take their opinion and listen to their viewpoints. This helps you in two ways-one, others may come up with an option that you would not have considered and two, it makes the people you care for feel that they matter and are important to you in everything that you do. They feel empowered rather than over controlled.
14. Avoid using sarcasm or negative statements while talking to anyone. Sarcastic statements and negative connotations only result in making the receiver feel either hurt or doubtful about your intentions, or the receiver might even consider ending any further association with you.
15. Shouting at someone does not help in getting your point across. It only distracts the receiver from paying any attention to what you actually want to