

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND ICT

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Lecture-17

Module-17: Barriers of Communication

Hello dear learners, welcome to SWAYAM-NPTEL course on Educational Technology and ICT. I am Dr. Sarita Anand from the Department of Education, Vinaya Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, West Bengal, India. I am the course coordinator for this course, and now the barriers of communication, is Module 17 and Lecture 17. Today, before going to the topic, we will talk about the concepts covered. We have already covered the communication concept, its nature, process, and modes.

The process of communication, we have already discussed the six components of communication and the modes of communication and I had mentioned that the barriers of communication would be dealt with separately. So, today we will talk about the barriers of communication. The effectiveness of the factors that either facilitate or hinder the flow of communication depends on their role as intervening variables. These factors influence the communication process by acting between the communicator (the independent variable or the source) and the receiver (the dependent variable). As a result, they can enhance or diminish the communicator's effectiveness.

The strength of the communication medium, the receiver's capacity to understand, and the overall quality of the message depend on their specific nature and characteristics. So, from common experiences, we recognize the influence of physical and psychological factors present in the environment during communication. Favorable conditions, such as a calm and quiet atmosphere, tension-free interactions, suitable climate, and adequate multimedia facilities, significantly enhance the effectiveness of communication. Conversely, Unfavorable conditions such as noise, lack of discipline, inadequate physical facilities, absence of necessary aids, interpersonal conflicts, tensions, or adverse climate conditions can severely disrupt or impair the communication process.

There are a few types of barriers which we will discuss in this lecture. As we know, communication barriers are obstacles that hinder the effective exchange of information between individuals or groups, and they can arise from various sources, significantly impacting the clarity and accuracy of messages. These communication barriers may be of the following types.

The first one is physical barrier: Physical barrier refers to tangible and environmental factors that hinder the smooth flow of communication. These obstacles can occur in various forms, such as noise, distance, and physical obstructions, which disrupt the transmission or understanding of the intended message. For example, noise. Loud noise, sound, or background chatter can make it difficult to hear and understand the message. Especially in class, when all the students are shouting and talking to each other, the teacher's lesson will not be explained or understood well.

It is a significant barrier that can range from environmental sounds like traffic or machinery to technical interference such as static in phone calls or malfunctioning microphones. It distorts the message and often requires repetition, leading to inefficiency in communication. Distance is another critical barrier, especially when the sender and the receiver are physically far apart and the medium of communication is inadequate to bridge the gap. Physical distance between the sender and the receiver can limit communication effectiveness, especially in face-to-face interactions. Poor connectivity, outdated tools, or the absence of amplification in large spaces or classrooms can exacerbate this issue.

For example, during a meeting in a large auditorium, the lack of a microphone can result in some participants being unable to hear the speaker clearly, leading to confusion and disengagement. The next barrier is physical abstraction. These physical abstractions, like closed doors, partitions, poorly designed workspaces, and inadequate lighting, can create barriers to communication. These barriers create isolation or discourage interaction, especially in environments where open communication is essential. Cluttered layouts, inadequate seating arrangements, or malfunctioning equipment such as projectors can further complicate the process, delaying the transfer of information or creating misunderstandings.

So, what is the solution? To overcome these barriers, it is essential to create a conducive environment by reducing noise, optimizing space, and ensuring the proper functioning of communication tools. Addressing these barriers is crucial to ensuring the message is

transmitted effectively and that the communication process remains efficient and productive.

The psychological barriers; the second most important barrier are the psychological barriers. Psychological barrier factors play a significant role in how messages are received and interpreted. Barriers such as personal biases, preconceived notions, emotional states, or lack of interest can hinder effective communication. These barriers also arise from the mental state of the sender or receiver, or both. They encompass internal factors that can distort the communication process. Premature judgment, inadequate attention, and emotional factors can all distort the communication process.

For example, a person in a negative emotional state such as anger or sadness might misinterpret a neutral message as hostile. Similarly, biases or stereotypes about the communicator's background may lead the receiver to disregard or undervalue the message. Further, when the receiver is uninterested or distracted, they may fail to engage with the message, rendering the communication ineffective. The examples of these psychological barriers are, first, premature judgment, which I have already mentioned.

Jumping to conclusions or forming opinions before fully understanding the message can lead to misinterpretation or misunderstandings. Inadequate attention. Listening halfway and deciding fully is an example of inadequate attention, where distractions, multitasking, and lack of focus can prevent the receiver from fully engaging with the message. The next one is emotional factors, such as stress, anxiety, anger, or other emotions, which can cloud judgment and hinder clear communication. The third type of barrier is physiological barriers.

These arise from physical health conditions that affect the ability to communicate effectively. Examples include speech impediments, hearing loss, and neurological disorders. Examples of these physiological barriers are speech impediments or any kind of speaking disability. Conditions like stuttering or dysarthria can make it difficult for the sender to express themselves clearly. Many times, people speak so fast that the receiver cannot understand what he or she is trying to say.

Hearing loss, difficulty of hearing can prevent the receiver from fully understanding the message. Neurological disorders, conditions like Aphasia or dementia can significantly impact both the production and comprehension of the language. So, what is the solution? Overcoming these barriers requires empathy, active listening and ensuring the message is engaging and relevant for the listeners.

The fourth type of barrier is semantic barrier. This barrier is related with the use of language itself. Language is crucial component of communication we all know and the differences in language, dialects or jargon can create significant barriers. Misunderstanding may occur when the communicators and the receiver do not share a common language or when technical jargons regional slangs or specialized terminology is being used.

For example, in a workplace setting a manager is using industry specific term when confused employee who are unfamiliar with them leading to the misinterpretation of the instruction. The person who does not know the meaning definitely he will misunderstand the content. Similarly, in cross cultural interactions idiomatic expressions or colloquial languages might loss meaning when translated. These barriers highlight the importance of using simple, clear and universally understandable language to avoid the confusion in the receiver's end.

Examples of semantic barriers are jargon. Using specialized terminology that is not understood by the receivers can create confusion and hinder the communication process. Ambiguity: unclear or vague language can lead to multiple interpretations and misunderstandings. Differences in meaning. The same words or phrases can have different meanings in different contexts or cultures.

So, what is the solution? by addressing these barriers thoughtfully, communicators can create an environment conducive to clear, effective, and meaningful exchange of ideas using different languages. The fifth barrier is cultural barriers. Cultural diversity enriches communication but can also lead to misunderstandings due to differing cultural norms, values, and practices. Cultural barriers arise from differences in cultural norms, values, and beliefs among people.

They can significantly impact how messages are sent, received, and interpreted. For example, body language, gestures, or expressions considered polite in one culture might be offensive in another. Differences in attitudes toward hierarchy, formality, and communication styles can also create friction. For example, while direct communication is valued in some cultures, others may prefer indirect communication. Or subtle approaches, which might be misinterpreted as evasive or unclear to the receiver.

So, what is the solution of this kind of barriers? Overcoming cultural barriers requires cultural sensitivity, awareness and adaptability. If we are ready to adjust, adapt the environment, cultural differences, then there will be no cultural barriers in the communication. It is essential to respect the diverse perspective and strive for the

inclusivity to ensure the effective communication in the multicultural setting. The next barrier is technological barrier.

In the digital age, technology is essential medium for the communication and right now if you are listening this lecture that is only happening due to the help of this technological era but it comes with its challenges also. Technical barriers arise from the issues with the technology that can disrupt the flow of information such as poor internet connectivity, software glitches, incompatible devices or unfamiliarity with the communication platforms etc. For example, during the virtual meetings, audio or video lag can lead to misinformation, incomplete information, misunderstandings or frustrations among the participants or the learners. Remember, over-reliance on the technology can sometimes reduce the personal touch in the communication making messages feel impersonal.

So, what are the examples for these technological barriers? The first one is poor internet connectivity. Maybe you all remember that at during COVID-19 when you were attending the online classes most of the students were saying that there is no network, no network So, these were the due to the poor internet connectivity. Slow or unreliable internet connection can hinder the transmission of messages especially in digital communication.

The second one is software glitches. Technical problems with the software or hardware can disrupt the communication channel and lead to data loss. Incompatibility: many issues with incompatible devices or software can prevent effective communication and data sharing. So, what is the solution? To address these kinds of technological barriers, it is essential to ensure that the chosen technology is reliable, accessible, and user-friendly, along with providing training to the users.

Unfamiliar with the digital tools. So, training is also important, and awareness of these kinds of gadgets and technological advancements is also the solution for the technological barrier. So, these were the six barriers. Now, we will talk about another type of barrier mentioned by S. K. Mangal. This is a prominent work by Mangal.

He categorized two types of barriers: internal barriers and external barriers. We can enlist these two types of barriers as follows. The first internal barrier has many types toward the receiver, like the root of the internal barrier of communication lies in the sender and the receiver of the messages. So, these are poor physical health or illness, poor background in terms of previous learning, and general knowledge about the subject of the communication.

If you do not know the previous chapter, in the next chapter you will definitely feel the lack or the helplessness to communicate regarding the content, poor mental health, and improper psychological makeup such as prejudices, non-attention, feelings of insecurity, anxiety, depression, and dissatisfaction, which have already been discussed in the psychological barriers. Handicap in understanding symbolic expression, verbalism, graphic representation, etc. These are internal barriers according to Mangal. Then, the external barriers- the root of the external barriers in communication lies in the environmental conditions prevailing at the time of communication.

These external barriers are related to the environment. These conditions are noise and other similar distractions, polluted environment, invisibility, environmental and physical discomfort, improper functioning of the communication channel, involving audio, visual materials, and equipment. Non-cooperative or unhealthy rivalries and competitions among the participants. Lack of proper motivation, incentives, zeal, or enthusiasm needed to remain active on the part of the sender and the receiver.

These are the external barriers according to S. K. Mangal; removing these barriers enhances the flow of information, reduces misunderstandings, and fosters better interpersonal, organizational, and cross-cultural relationships. Ultimately, the key to successful communication lies in recognizing and addressing these obstacles while striving to create an environment of understanding and collaboration. Now, the communication situation.

There are many types of situations that arise in our lives where communication depends on the situation. Various situations or environments can arise during the communication process involving two or more individuals at different times. These can be classified or grouped into the following categories. The first one is one-to-one communication. One-to-one communication occurs between two individuals, and as the name suggests, it is the most common form of both informal and formal communication in daily life.

For example, conversations between a husband and wife, a couple, a shopkeeper and a customer, two relatives, two friends, colleagues, or even two strangers fall under one-to-one communication. The second one is small group communication. Small group communication takes place either formally or informally among members of a small group consisting of more than two individuals. For example, this includes communication between family members, within a family, among students in a class or section, or among passengers in a bus, train, or coach.

Additionally, communication can occur between groups. These groups are small groups, such as neighboring families or units within a locality, sector, or community. The third type is large or public communication. Public communication involves addressing a large group of people, either as individuals or as groups, and it is typically organized or formal in nature.

For example, it includes communication during a school's morning assembly where you have to share the news of the day or co-curricular activities held in an open space or assembly hall, religious discourse or sermons delivered at worship places or religious gatherings, public ceremonies, honoring individuals, and speeches by leaders at political gatherings and events. These are all large-group or public communications. The fourth situation is Organizational and institutional communication.

Organizational communication occurs within institutions or organizations such as factories, industries, establishments, government offices, secretariats, police, military, hospitals, and professional or educational institutions. This type of communication is characterized by its formal nature. It is systematic, planned, and well-organized in nature. The last one is mass communication. This situation is for the masses.

Mass communication has a broad scope and extensive application. It is conducted using various mechanical tools and mass media such as radio, television, video, cinema, films, books, newspapers, magazines, bulk emails, the internet, teleconferencing, and satellite transmissions, which you have seen on Swayam Prabha or the Swayam platform. While there is no direct face-to-face interaction between the sender and the receivers like right now, I am giving the lecture, and you are receiving it, direct face-to-face interaction is absent, yet thousands of students or learners are receiving the message. This mass communication is an effective and economical way to deliver meaningful, informative and educational messages to large audiences, like right now, I am doing here in this lecture.

Organizations, institutions, or individuals can share their ideas, feelings, intentions, and programs with vast groups of people almost instantly through mass media, contributing to the globalization of humanity. Right now, I am teaching beyond four walls, and thousands of learners are listening to me. They are getting the knowledge and information through this educational technology and ICT course, and this is the source of mass communication to the learners. Modern technologies enable communication with audiences anywhere in the world in a moment.

Disadvantages have facilitated the development of effective channels for distance education and dissemination of essential information to those who need it. Also, the audiences can provide feedback to the source through written responses or demonstrate the impact of the message through their actions and behavior. So, the conclusion of the whole lecture is, we can say that the barriers to communication are inevitable in any form of interaction but can be effectively managed and minimized through awareness and proactive strategies.

Language differences, psychological barriers, technological challenges, and cultural differences all pose significant obstacles to effective communication, yet understanding these barriers allows communicators to adapt their approaches to deal with these barriers. Addressing both internal and external barriers requires proactive efforts, including improving self-awareness, fostering empathy, ensuring clear language, and creating a conducive environment for communication. By overcoming these barriers, individuals and organizations can improve the quality and effectiveness of communication, fostering stronger and more productive interactions. These are the references for your further reading, and you can take the help of these references.

Thank you.