

Developing Soft Skills and Personality
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Lecture - 33
Barriers to Communication: Interpersonal Transactions

Hello everyone, welcome back to IIT, Kanpur's NPTEL new course on Developing Soft Skills and Personality. This is week 6, we are on module 6 and this is lecture number 33. In this week as you are aware I have been focusing on communications skills and in the last lecture I started introducing to you about barriers to communication and this lecture also I am going to continue with barriers to communication with the focus on interpersonal transactions.

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Highlights

Highlights of the Last Lecture

Barriers to Communication

Barriers act as **physical, mental, emotional, psychological blocks** and result in **failure of communication**.

Barriers arising from Sender/Receiver's personality

- > **Encoding/Decoding level** Sharing of a common code; language common frame of reference.
- > Sender—not clear about his/her objective or inappropriate use of language
- > Receiver-unable to understand & interpret the message properly
- > Personality barriers are Psychological in nature: People tend to take for granted "the commonality" in communication. Difference in backgrounds are overlooked Difference in perception and the factors which cause barriers were discussed.
- > Overcoming strategies such as use of empathy.

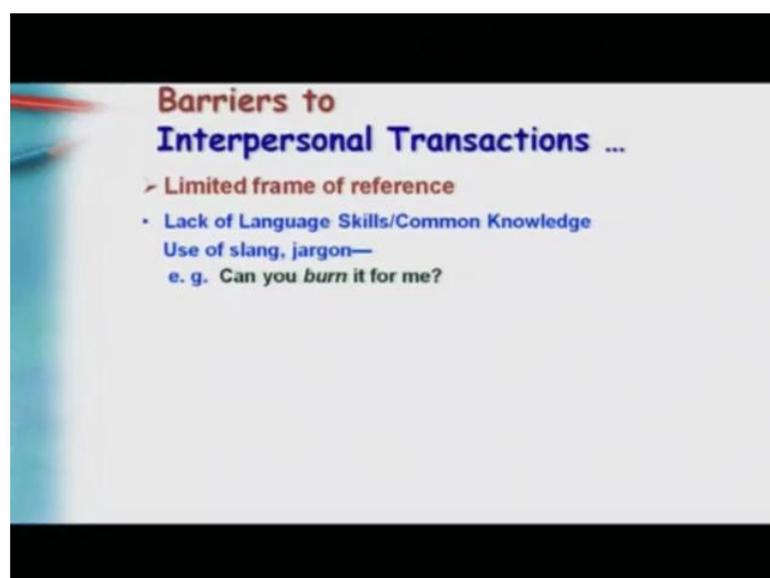
Before I start let us take a quick look at what I did in the previous lecture. In the previous lecture started with barriers to communication, barriers as you might have understood are obstacles to any good effective communication any kind of impediments which could be physical, mental, emotional, psychological, so they act as blocks and then they contribute to failure of communication or it can lead to miscommunication. In the following lecture we are going to look at miscommunication, but right now you understand that it can cause failure of communication.

We also looked at barriers arising from sender, receiver's personality specifically and then I discussed how those barriers can arise at what levels. We started with discussing about encoding, decoding level where if the sharing of a common code is missing. So, it could be a problem, people can understand it a different level. So, even language should have a common frame of reference. The common people may understand it in a different manner where if you take it to different group of people, scientist or people who are involved in spying, so the meaning can change.

The barrier can also cause because the sender, if he or she is not clear about his or her objective or makes use of inappropriate use of language. The same thing can happen with regards to receiver. I gave you the example of teacher-student where the teacher wanted to illustrate the ill effects of arrack, the negative effects of arrack and the student completely took it the other way because he was unable to understand and interpret the message properly.

Personality barriers are generally psychological in nature, people tend to take for granted the commonality in communication, difference in backgrounds are overlooked, difference in perception and the factors which cause barriers were discussed in the last lecture, and while concluding I also talked to you about the overcoming strategies with the specific emphasis on the use of empathy.

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Now, in this one let us focus more on barriers to interpersonal transactions. Now to continue with the previous concept I told you, it can also happen because of limited frame of reference, what does it mean? So, there is one contractual situation in which sometimes often you do not understand, what the common context is or you are not able to understand the language because somebody's using a slang; somebody's using a jargon, let me give a simple example.

One student got a very good opportunity in a multinational company in the United States of America and then she just landed on the first day, then she was very happy, she wanted to impress the boss. So, she went to the boss again and again asked whether she can do some job and the boss said be cool there is no problem. So, if there is some work I will call you and then after some time in the afternoon he called her and then they were in very busy meeting and then people from so many other companies have come. There was some legal dispute and something going on. So, in his complete busyness he was complete immersed in discussing with people.

He just asked her and whether she can burn a document for him and then he gave that document to her she took the document and she went to her cabin, she thought that why is he asking me to burn it. So, he wants me to destroy it may be very safely. So, she took a match box and then she burnt it and then she even ensured that the ashes were completely destroyed and then put in the trashcan properly and then she sat having done her first job very nicely. After half an hour the annoyed boss called her and ask what happened, you have not burnt it yet. So, she said I burnt it long before sir, then where is it, where is the copy.

Now, then it struck her that may be burnt here means something different in the office parlance just like the way in nowadays, you use burning CD, burning DVD. It actually means take a photocopy, take an image of this make a replica of this. Now, needless to say the boss got so angry because that was the document they are preserving for about 50 years and he just trusted her and in one single movement, she completely destroyed the goodwill built by the company and needless to say she was thrown out, fired off from the job on the very first day she joined. Now, all because of one small lack of knowledge with regards to the slang that was used and which she did not understand because of her limited frame of reference.

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Barriers to Interpersonal Transactions ...

- **Limited frame of reference**
 - Lack of Language Skills/Common Knowledge
Use of slang, jargon—
e. g. Can you *burn* it for me?
- **Emotional interference**
Emotional Reactions, negative attitudes,
& wrong timing
- Display of intense emotion is likely to distort
the message (love, hatred, jealousy, anger,
joy, sorrow)

Now, we can look at more examples, but while we look at more examples you should also know about certain other aspects of barriers with regard to interpersonal transactions, particularly the emotional interference. Most of the times in interpersonal transactions, it is the emotions which will act as a major barrier emotional reactions, negative attitudes and wrong timing. Somebody is not prepared to receive something and then you go and talk about that thing that is the person is least interested. So, it can create an emotional barrier, display of even intense emotion is likely to distort the message. It could be love which is positive, but it could be hatred, jealousy, anger, joy, sorrow all can act as interferences.

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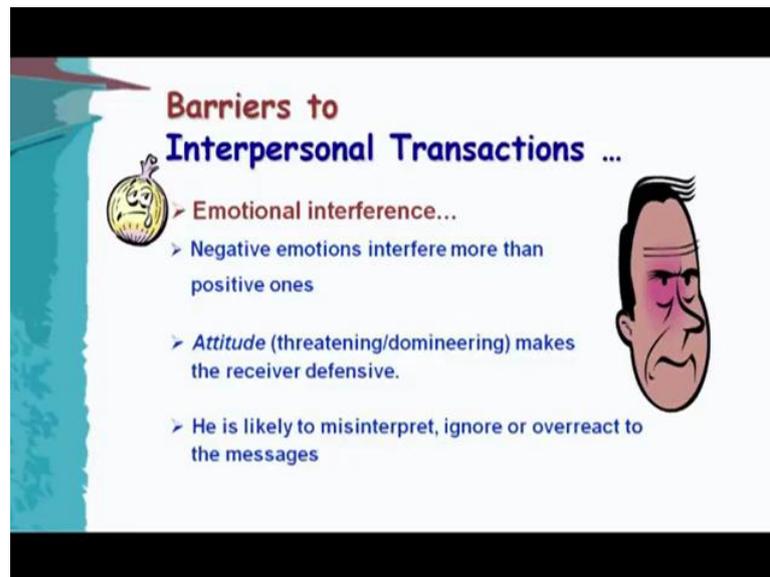


Emotional Barriers

- Hidden/open emotional gestures are culturally given
- But– negative emotions act as barriers
- Fear, apprehension, misgiving
- Anger, bitterness, hatred, jealousy
- Suspicion, disbelief, distrust
- Anxiety, low self-esteem, distress, stress
- Fatigue, ill-health, pain, disability

Now, some of the hidden, open emotional gestures are culturally given even like hugging somebody in some place just to give warmth, shaking hands or even just smiling and saying 'Namaste'. So, these are all culturally given, but negative emotions act as barriers irrespective of the fact where you get them. Some of the negative emotions like fear, apprehension, misgiving, leading to misunderstanding, anger, bitterness, hatred, jealousy, suspicion, disbelief, distrust, anxiety, low self-esteem will also act as a block distress stress as such and then in terms of health, fatigue that is if somebody is over worked the person is again not able to emotionally commit to the communication that is before him. Ill-health, pain some kind of body pain, somebody is in fever, some kind of disability again it will affect the person internally psychologically the person will not be able to interact with the one who is just before him or her.

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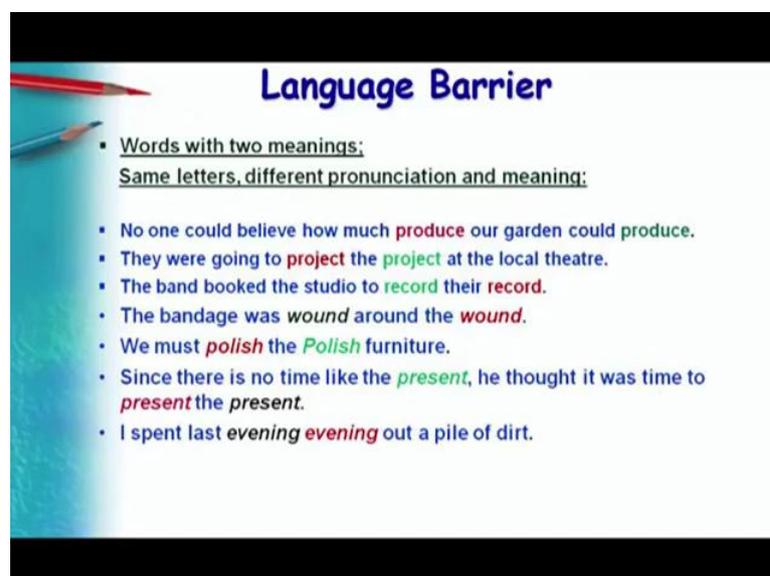
Barriers to Interpersonal Transactions ...

- Emotional interference...
 - Negative emotions interfere more than positive ones
 - Attitude (threatening/domineering) makes the receiver defensive.
 - He is likely to misinterpret, ignore or overreact to the messages

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Now, the other interesting aspects about emotional interference, negative emotions interfere more than positive ones. So, you generally need not bother much about positive ones because they are not as harmful as the negative emotions, for example, the attitude itself, if somebody goes with the threatening attitude, domineering attitude it makes the person at the other side become defensive. The other person is likely to misinterpret, ignore or overreact to the messages. The person will become defensive and think that he is trying to attack me; he is in an oppressive kind of situation. So, I should be defending myself, so that again acts as a barrier in communication.

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Language Barrier

- Words with two meanings:
Same letters, different pronunciation and meaning:
 - No one could believe how much **produce** our garden could **produce**.
 - They were going to **project** the **project** at the local theatre.
 - The band booked the studio to **record** their **record**.
 - The bandage was **wound** around the **wound**.
 - We must **polish** the **Polish** furniture.
 - Since there is no time like the **present**, he thought it was time to **present** the **present**.
 - I spent last **evening** **evening** out a pile of dirt.

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Then the language that is used can act as a major barrier. This is a funny thing about language, you know all the time we play language games and then we do not tell things directly, we do not want people to even understand it correctly. We know that communication is working out with lot of presumptions and assumptions and shades meanings with limited frame of reference often, but still we enjoy using words with two meanings.

Sometimes the same letters are there, but the pronunciation and meaning are different because they are grammatically different categories may be verb and noun as some of the examples I have put here. So, then you understand that sometimes if you do not understand the grammatical category, this situation the place where the word is used the way it is pronounced again you may misunderstand what is being said to you. Look at some examples I have given where the same word can be used with different pronunciation and different meaning.

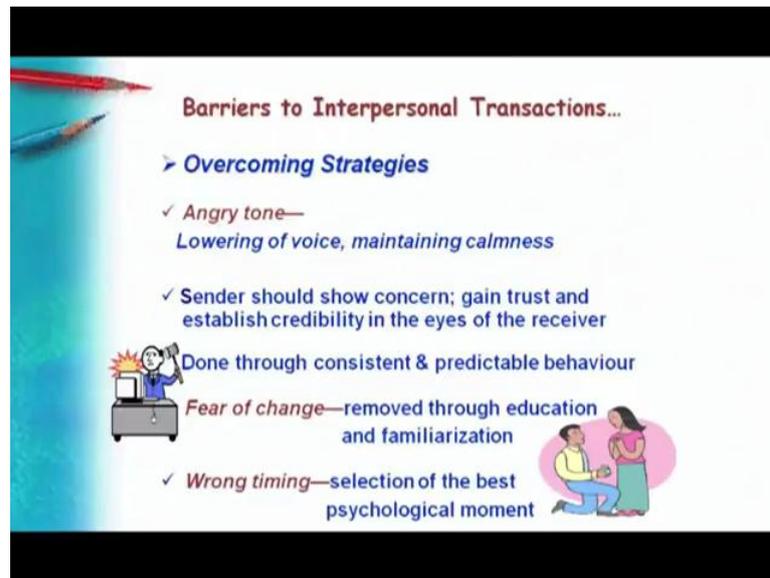
Look at the first example; no one could believe how much produce our garden could produce. So, produce or the yield the products, our garden could produce that is the activity how much it can grow. Look at the next one, they were going to project, the project at the local theater may be in the form of power point, maybe in the form of a video. They were going to project that is showing it on a projector, the project that is the written part, and the survey that is done at the local theater. The band book, the studio to record their record; record is a kind of storage of their activities; record is actually trying to record it at that movement.

Next one is equally interesting, the bandage was wound; wound is like rounding it and then winding it around something, around the wound, wound is the hurt, the injury. Another interesting example, we must polish the Polish furniture. So, polish you know you put the shine, but polish the furniture which came from Poland from the Polish people. Since there is no time like present that is the present movement he thought it was time to present, give the present. The third present is gift, first one is the current time indicating present, second one is the act of giving and the third one is referring to the gift itself.

You can see the same word presents in spelling, but how it can function with three different meanings and the last example I have put, if you look at it again it is funny, I

spent last evening, the next one same spelling, but it is not evening it is evening from the word even, when you even out something you try to make it smooth, you try to flatten it, you try to remove certain things which were uneven and then you straighten them out, you sort them out. So, I spent last evening, evening out a file of dirt.

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I hope you could see now, when if people are using it in a different sense. Obviously, the language can also cause this problem. So, how can we overcome some of these issues? Now, for example, when somebody is using angry tone, as I have said in various instances before whether on telephone or in person when we resolve conflict, you need to lower the voice and you need to maintain calmness. The sender should show concern, gain trust and establish credibility in the eyes of the receiver especially, before introducing something and this can be done only through consistence and predictable behavior, which means you have to gain trust in communication over a period of time and then when you say something people will believe you, for instance if you are the higher authority and then you want to introduce something in your work place, company and people are afraid that you are introducing this.

Let us say it is a new machine or you are saying that your entire office will be automated and new software will come and new computers will come, and they should be using everything only through the computers within a week's time. Now, people will have fear of change, people will resist. Now, you can remove that only through education and

familiarization, you have to educate them, you have to give them training courses, you have to show them on videos, you have to have orientation programs, you have to show them, familiarize them give them first hands on experience and then they accept that this is harmless, the technology is fine it is going to help me. So, then you will be able to convince them.

Similarly, wrong timing can also be very worst barrier to interpersonal transactions. So, one has to select the best psychological movement. Now, the worker wants to ask an increase in salary, the boss has already lost millions of rupees and then he is so sad and then he lost in one single transaction, he lost lots of money and then this person goes in and then he ask for promotion and some increment and this things obviously, the boss is likely to get angry.

But the same boss there was a business success then he earned lot of money, then he is very happy and that is time this person enters and say, Sir and then he ask what and then the boss himself appreciate that I am very happy that you helped me in this project and then you did it extremely well. So, what is it that you want and then the person says, Sir I need one vacation and then I had applied for increment and promotion, if you can consider that. So, boss will say that will be done, you can go you enjoy the vacation.

So, that choosing the right time, selection of the best psychological movement that is also very important. I remember movie in which the hero proposes to the heroine after lot of eye to eye contact and then smile and then after that he musters up courage, and he clearly feels that she is actually interested in him, then he gives a card and then says that he likes her and he would like to have her as his life partner, but then the girl does not say anything for about three days and then she does not turn off for the next three days.

Now, the hero develops severe heart pain because the heroine is not saying anything and then later we are told that the heroine really like this person, but she did not express it because just the day he gave it and she thought of expressing. On the next day her sister committed suicide and the father was terribly angry that the sister eloped and then since the father did not accept her choice. So, she decided to commit suicide that affected her, that left her in a trauma and she was completely confused whether to accept this or not. So, the time was needed for giving her some maturity to accept the relationship and the best psychological movement was not the one in which he actually give the proposal. So,

it is very important that you select the best psychological movement in all kind of human interactions. So, that it becomes successful.

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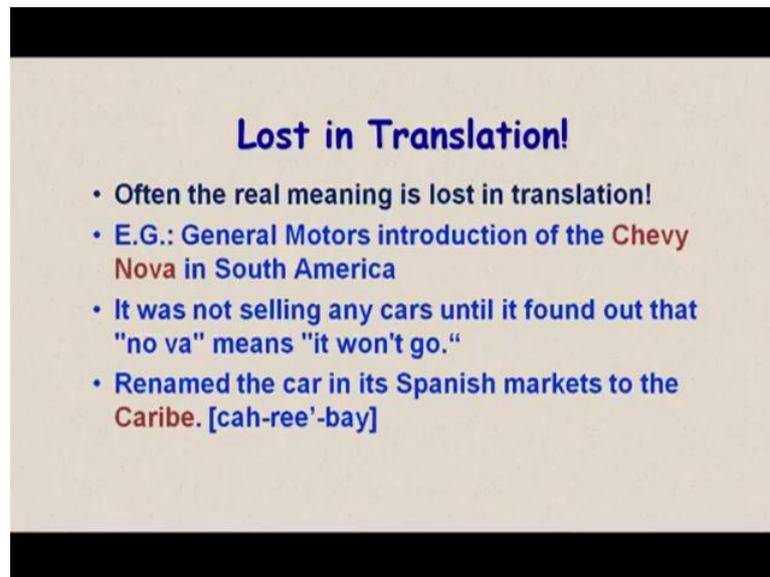


Language Barriers

- The same words can mean different things in different cultural contexts to different language speaking people
- E.g. **Coca-Cola** in China was introduced as **Ke-kou-ke-la**. In Chinese it means "**bite the wax tadpole**" or "**female horse stuffed with wax**" depending on the dialect. Later—changed to: "**ko-kou-ko-le**," "**happiness in the mouth.**"

Let us look at some more language barriers and see how you can overcome this. One more examples on how the same words can mean different things in different cultural contexts to different language speaking people, one example like coca-cola in China was introduced as ke-kou-ke-la, now in Chinese it means bite the wax tadpole or female horse stuffed with wax depending on the dialect. Now, later they changed to ko-kou-ko-le which meant happiness in the mouth. So, when they changed this the people started buying it much more because it meant something completely different to them culturally and then it gave them a feeling, they were really having happiness in the mouth instead of the other negative communication that was given before.

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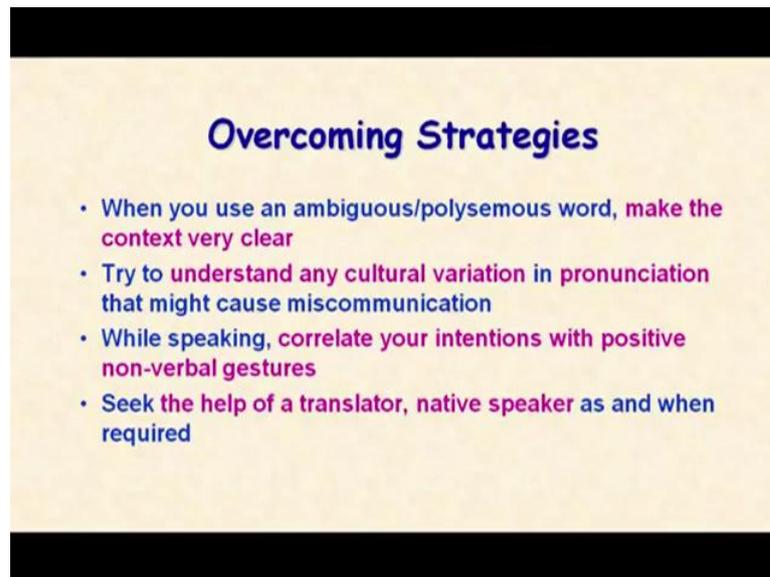


Lost in Translation!

- Often the real meaning is lost in translation!
- E.G.: General Motors introduction of the **Chevy Nova** in South America
- It was not selling any cars until it found out that "no va" means "it won't go."
- Renamed the car in its Spanish markets to the **Caribe**. [cah-ree'-bay]

Similarly, sometimes in translation the meaning can be lost. Take this example when General Motors introduced the Chevy Nova in South America, the car did not sell initially and then they found it out that nova which actually means something new, something innovation there it actually meant in translation, it would not go. So, it was ironic because who will buy a car that would not go and then they realized the mistake they made and then they renamed the car in its Spanish markets to Caribe. So, indicating that it is Caribbean, it is part of their culture and they can own it with pride. So, that changed the entire market and then people started buying it happily. So, once again how would you sought out these issues when it comes to language? How can we overcome?

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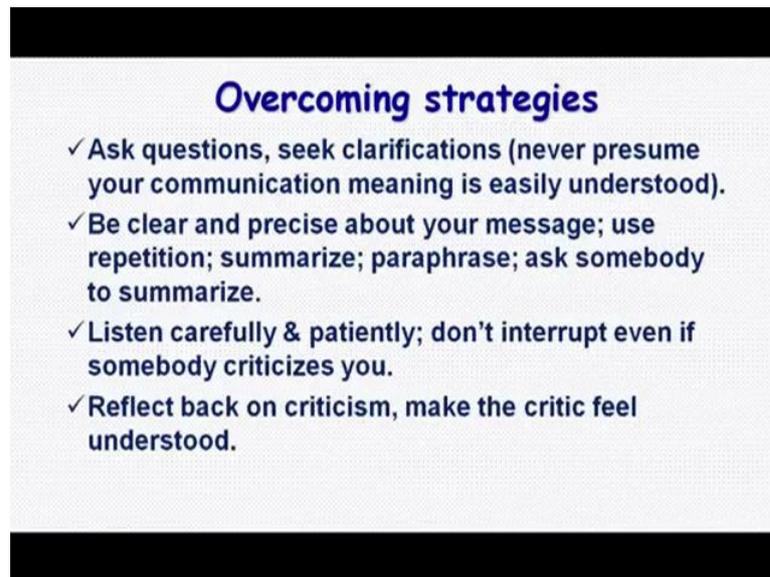
Overcoming Strategies

- When you use an ambiguous/polysemous word, make the context very clear
- Try to understand any cultural variation in pronunciation that might cause miscommunication
- While speaking, correlate your intentions with positive non-verbal gestures
- Seek the help of a translator, native speaker as and when required

When you use an ambiguous or polysemous word; polysemous word is one word that has many meanings. Now, make the context very clear what meaning is the one in which you use it when you are telling the other person, please make it clear and try to understand any cultural variation in pronunciation that might cause miscommunication while speaking correlate your intention with positive nonverbal gestures.

We are going to spend some more lectures on non-verbal communication as such, but right now you remember that your body language can also communicate exactly what you want to say. So, that actually will make the other person understand that you are saying something positive, it is not something negative. By your hand gesture they should be able to understand and if needed in a culturally different scenario where even you do not understand the language, seek the help of a translator or a native speaker as and when required.

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Overcoming strategies

- ✓ Ask questions, seek clarifications (never presume your communication meaning is easily understood).
- ✓ Be clear and precise about your message; use repetition; summarize; paraphrase; ask somebody to summarize.
- ✓ Listen carefully & patiently; don't interrupt even if somebody criticizes you.
- ✓ Reflect back on criticism, make the critic feel understood.

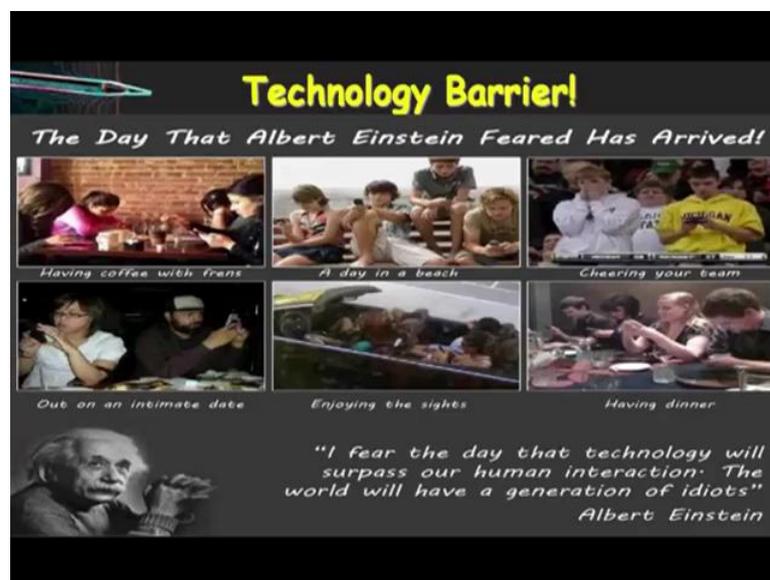
So, this will again help you to overcome situations where you are like to commit errors because of your own ignorance of the language or the limited framework in which you try to operate, you can also ask questions overall whenever you think that there is a kind of fiction or misunderstanding in interpersonal relationships, interpersonal communication, ask questions just like the way you do when you are an active listener, seek clarifications, never presume your communication, meaning is easily understood, remember this is the common misgiving, most of us have thinking that we said something and we have communicated it hundred percent effectively and that is the elusion we have.

So, never presume your communication, meaning is easily understood, you correct it and whenever you say, be clear and precise about your message, do not use superfluous words which are not required at all, use repetition; beginning you said something in between you can say, the same thing again. While concluding you can repeat for emphasis, summarize like in between you try to summarize paraphrase, if they do not understand it put the difficult ones in simple words that is paraphrasing and if you cannot summarize, you ask somebody to summarize it for you and as an active listener listen carefully and patiently, do not interrupt even if somebody criticizes you because if you are really interested in developing your soft skills and personality you should understand that you will benefit so much from your critics than your friends because friends generally, you are polite and then they do not want to criticize you that much and then it

is your enemies or the critics who will staunchly criticize you and then tell you the negative qualities in you.

The limitations in you which you can overcome and whenever a criticism is given reflect back introspect and when you reflect back before them the one who is criticizing will feel understood that the person, who is giving you the suggestion will feel that you are very intently listening to the other one and you will gain by whatever criticisms have been forced on you.

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Now, towards the end just a quick recapture of what I said in terms of technology and communication. I refer to the quote from Einstein, where he says that “I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots”. Now, this picture which is available on the net it shows how people have become mobile addicts and how technology has completely permeated all forms of communication, whether having coffee with friends or spending a day in beach or cheering your team in any kind of sports activities or even on intimate movements or when you are on a tour and you are enjoying the site seeing or when you are having dinner with close people.

Now, all the time you are looking at mobile and then you are not looking at human beings, you are not maintaining eye contact. Now, this technology has really reached this level and then it is causing lot of barrier.

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Overcoming Strategies

- ✓ Use technological aids for communication to the minimum.
- ✓ Use appropriate media (spoken, written, non-verbal) and channel (face-to-face, one-to-one, one to group, telephone, radio, tv, letters, e-mail, sms)
- ✓ If you can use face-to-face communication, do not send SMS/E-Mail.
- ✓ Avoid overuse (sending too many/long e-mails; long phone calls); misuse (asking confidential matter using SMS); Using FB/What'sapp inappropriately.

I gave lot of tips while we talked about mobile and telephone use as such, but as a concluding thought in terms of communication as such on the barriers, which will come because of the technology, what are the overcoming strategies that you can have, use any kind of technological aids for communication to the minimum, if few can actually meet someone personally and then you do not have to talk to the person on phone do that and use appropriate media. So, you know spoken form, written form, the non-verbal form all three are there.

So, when you have to speak you speak, when you can write something and send it to the person you write it and sometimes non-verbal gestures like let us say somebody is asking you a very embarrassing question, you can just smile and then indicating that you do not want to comment on that and the channel that you use. So, are you deciding to use face to face communication, one to one level or one to group, would you use telephone conference mode of telephone, when you are in group would you like to use radio for mass communication, would you use television or just letters typed or hand written or email or SMS. Now, you have to decide the appropriate medium that you want to use to the appropriate mode of communication that is required.

Now, most of the cases if you can use face to face communication, do not send SMS or e-mail and the vice versa. It is also true, if you can send something through email and you do not have to make pains to meet the person face to face. Here, especially if the

distance is longer and then taking appointment is going to be very difficult. So, in that case you can use even email, but the last important point is avoid over use, which means sending too many mails which we discussed a lot in the lecture on email etiquette and netiquette, but still remember do not send long emails, do not make long phone calls even if you do not mind paying for that, do not make long phone calls it is better you meet the person or you just be businesslike and then add some of your personal touch, if it is an intimate one, but then wind up, so that you save your time and then give respect to the other persons time.

Misuse of technology particularly phone, etcetera you have to look at it very carefully, for example, asking confidential matter, using SMS you have gone for an interview and then you send an SMS to the vice chancellor of the university or the head of the department asking, have I been selected in this interview, please respond. Now, almost 100 percent nobody will respond to this SMS, there are legal obligations, there are commitments which cannot be very easily said through SMS, even if you ask through email sometimes, there are certain things that cannot be disclosed even on phone, it cannot be disclosed. So, on those occasions especially confidential matter you have to be very careful, you should not even ask, Sir it does not look good when you ask it.

And contemporary times, nowadays the worst use is happening when you have Facebook messenger, Whatsapp messenger or any form of messenger in which you can message to the other person at the other end, just at the touch of some buttons. Then you type something and then send it. Now, you have to see whether you are using appropriately, sometimes you ask a person to come and inaugurate a program and then let us say he is a very important VIP, he has given the number because he respected your friendship, but when you ask the person can you come for this program on this day, at this time sending through Whatsapp or sending through Facebook, it will offend the other person because the normal decorum is on such cases, you go there in person, invite the other person find out whether the person is free then you fix the appointment or at least you call the person on phone, fix an appointment before going.

So, sending random messages, then asking somebody, whether you can do this or not. I recently received an interesting message on Facebook asking can you give a recommendation letter, I just messaged back by saying, I know you only as a Facebook friend for the past 3 months and then in the 3 months, I have only got frequent messages

from you and nothing academic I have got. So, all I can say about you is I know you as a Facebook messenger friend for 3 months, nothing else. So, you can understand the gravity of certain things, giving a recommendation letter or inviting somebody for an important event message is not the appropriate one and you should restrain yourself to use it and if you should, create appropriate time and the medium for actually doing these ones.

Sometimes, email itself is accepted as a formal communication, but more than that sometimes people expected that you call them, discuss with them or you even meet to them and talk to them. So, excess use just avoid and last I just want to leave with a motivating quote from a very motivating author Brian Tracy, this book is written, so many books on Personality Development, Time Management Goal, etcetera.

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And this is his famous quote on communication because most of you think even when I say this that you cannot develop communication, you cannot, you will have your own apprehensions; apprehensions as how you can become an expert, but understand as he says, “Communication is a skill that you can learn. It is like riding a bicycle or typing. If you are willing to work at it, you can rapidly improve the quality of every part of your life”.

So, I wish you that you develop this skill just like the way you develop other skills, whether like bicycle, cycling or swimming or even jogging. So, develop this skill, master

it and as I was about to tell you, I wish that you improve the quality of every part of your life and develop your personality along with that wish you all success and thank you for watching this video.