

Communicative English

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Government Polytechnic Kendrapara
Odisha

Mr. Rajendra Kumar Behera
Lecturer in English

INTRODUCTION

What is Communication ?

Communication is as old as human life on the earth. Since time immemorial it has been an integral part of human life and society. The word 'communicate' is derived from the latin word 'commnicare' and the French word 'communis'. Both the words mean 'to give to another'. The Oxford Advance Learners' Dictionary defines communication as "The activity process of expressing ideas and feelings of giving people information". Social interaction which is the basic need of man is impossible without communication. To communicate with one another is a human need. Human relationship is impossible without human communication. So man is called not only a social animal but also a communicating being. He is the only animal gifted with the ability to express thoughts in words. Communication is the story of man and his efforts to express effectively. Human civilization would not have developed to this extent without communication. The ancient people long before they could invent language, communicated to one another through loud glottal sounds. Before invention of written script our forefathers communicated through pictures. These hieroglyphical pictures on the papyrus rolls of Egyptians or on the walls are the testimonials to the rudimentary stages of communication. The urge to reach out to others, to be listened to and to be understood has encouraged men, women and children from time immemorial to communicate with each other, individually as well as en masse. Hence communication can be defined as an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons through a common system of symbols.

Some definitions of Communication –

Communication is too broad a term to define. It is defined, understood and used in different ways by people from different walks of life and different institutions.

'Communication is the exchange of meaning between individuals through a common system of symbols' – *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

"Communication is a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another" – *Keith Davis*.

"Communication is a dynamic process that individuals use to exchange ideas, relate experiences and share desires through speaking, writing, gestures or sign language". – *Glen and & Smith*.

"Communication is the sum of all things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the minds of another. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding" – Allen Louis.

Communication can be described as "the successful transmission of information through a common system of symbols, signs, behaviour, speech, writing or signals".

Communication is the reciprocal sharing with individuals of written oral and non-verbal information according to a set of rules of language.

Types of Communication – Communication flows in different forms. To get success in business communication plays an important role. It maximises the possibility of success. The most common types of communication are –

- (a) Horizontal
- (b) Vertical
- (c) Interpersonal
- (d) Grape vine.

(A) Horizontal Communication – Horizontal communication is the transmission of information between people, divisions, departments or units within the same level of organisational hierarchy. It is different from vertical communication which is the transmission of information between different levels of organisational hierarchy. Horizontal communication is known as lateral communication. This is the primary method of co-ordinating the various units and departments of an organisation. It is essential to coordinate or integrate all the diverse units of an organisation to form smooth running and effective management. Horizontal or lateral communication needs to be effectively used to socialize people into the system of organisation and create a sense of belongingness among them. It helps to facilitate the process of problem solving and to promote friendly and cooperative spirit among employees of the organisation.

Examples –

- (i) Telephonic conversation
- (ii) Face to face communication
- (iii) Meetings
- (iv) Letters
- (v) Memos

Advantages – Horizontal communication has some advantages like –

- (i) It decreases misunderstanding between departments of an organisation.
- (ii) It increases efficiency and productivity and reduces conformation and confusion.

- (iii) It helps in better implementation of official orders for organisational development.
- (iv) It allows employees at lower level to coordinate with each other directly.
- (v) It facilitates team work in a better and effective manner.
- (vi) It helps to increase job satisfaction and motivation.
- (vii) It also helps in creating employee empowerment in an organisation.

→ Disadvantages –

- (i) It causes problems for management to control employees.
- (ii) It provides management much control and power with more flow of information.
- (iii) It creates conflict between employees by exposing each other openly.
- (iv) It consumes more time of an organisation.
- (v) It creates a lack of discipline without imposition of strict procedural rules.
- (vi) It brings rivalry, territoriality, specialisation and lack of motivation.

(B) Vertical Communication – Vertical communication or two way communication is the communication where the management can give directives and send information downward. It can also help to receive periodic information from subordinates about effectiveness of their directives and progress of the organisation. Vertical communication can be upward and downward communication. In this channel of communication messages don't flow directly from top to bottom or viceversa. They come through a correct channel. So vertical communication provides a proper channel to management to transmit ideas, information and instruction to employees. It enables to communicate their response upwards which is called upward communication.

Example – The following can be taken as examples of upward communication

- (i) Feelings ✓
- (ii) Attitudes
- (iii) Opinions
- (iv) Suggestions
- (v) Complaints

When a communication flows from a higher level of authority to a lower level of authority is called a downward communication. ✓

Example – Downward communication can be written or oral.

Written forms of downward communication are –

- (i) manuals
- (ii) hand books

(iii) notices

(iv) electronic news display

Oral media of down ward communication are –

(i) face of face conversation

(ii) Telephonic conversation

(iii) speeches

(iv) meetings

Definitions –

1. L.C. Bovee defines vertical communication as 'A flow of informations up and down in organisations hierarchy'.

2. Stoner and Freeman defines it as 'A communication which consists of communication up and down the organisations chain of command'.

3. According to Ricky and W. Griffin 'vertical communication is communications that flow both up and down the organisation along formal reporting lines'.

Advantages –

(i) **helps to convey message of sub-ordinates**

– The upward direction of vertical communication system helps the management to convey their suggestions, complains and recommendations to the sub ordinates.

(ii) **maintains positive relation between labour and management**

– The vertical communication is a systematic flow of communication which helps to create good relationship between authority and subordinates.

(iii) **Brings organisational discipline**

– The chain of command in vertical communication system develops a sense of discipline among the employees.

(iv) **Explains plans and policies**

– The vertical communication system gives the scope to upper level management to send policies and procedures to the sub-ordinates.

(v) **Effective decision making and decentralization**

– The information from subordinates help in decision making and decentralization of duties and responsibilities among departments.

Disadvantages –

(i) **Delays the process**

– Vertical communication system maintains a long chain of command in a large organisation which makes a delay in the process of work.

(ii) Disturbs discipline and reduces efficiency –

Any doubt of the sub-ordinate employees for the boss brings indiscipline and workers become inefficient.

(iii) Loss or distortion of information –

Information through this communication loose, its originality when it is fabricated by the employees.

(iv) affects relationship –

This communication system gives scope for misunderstanding between superior and subordinates.

(v) slow system and negligence of superiors –

As the slowest communication method, vertical communication passes through various levels of organisation for which the superiors sometimes neglect to send messages to subordinates.

(C) Interpersonal Communication :

Language is nothing but sub vocal speech. Communication is an ongoing process and it continuously takes place within us irrespective of the presence of audience. Interpersonal communication is the process by which people exchange information, feelings and the meaning through verbal and nonverbal messages. It is face to face communication. It is a transaction between people and their environment, which includes other individuals such as friends, family, children co-workers and even strangers. Interpersonal communication is not just about what is actually said and the language used but how it is said and the non verbal messages sent through tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and body language. Some kinds of interpersonal communication that are commonly used in formal settings within any business organisation include staff meetings, formal project discussions and employee performance reviews. Besides that there are a number of matrices of inter personal communication. These are –

(i) Empathy

(ii) Assertiveness

(iii) Cultural Sensitivity

(iv) Persistence

(i) Empathy – The ability to understand another person's feeling is called empathy. It begins with awareness of such feelings like pleasure and pain. Empathy enhances the sensitivity to relate with another persons expressed or unexpressed emotions by enabling you to put yourself in their shoes before taking action.