

## Module 2

# Oral Communication

## 2.1. ORAL COMMUNICATION

### 2.1.1. Meaning of Oral Communication

The exchange of verbal information between the sender and the receiver is known as oral communication. This type of communication is more genuine and faster than the written communication but it is considered to be as informal. In case of businesses, more weightage is given to the verbal communication than the written one. Because according to a study, 70 per cent of the total time spent by an executive is spent in communication activities. 45 per cent of that time is devoted to listening activities, 30 per cent of it is spent on speaking, while reading and writing takes only 16 per cent and 9 per cent respectively. This is the reason why executives are given the suggestions to improve their oral communication skills (listening and speaking) as it comprises 75 per cent of the total communication.

An interaction that uses only the spoken words is referred to as the oral communication. In the present scenario, role of oral communication is becoming inevitable in business organisations. This type of communication is used in organisations at various instances like employee meetings, board meetings, discussions, project presentations, and other formal and informal conversations. The scope of oral communication is not limited to the organisations; it is also used outside of it by video conferencing, teleconferencing, voice calls, etc.

### 2.1.2. Characteristics of Oral Communication

An efficient oral communication must have the following characteristics:

- 1) **Instantaneous Two-way Process:** It is a quick method of connecting with each other. Verbal messages are sent and received in no time and due to this, it is considered as a highly interactive way of communication.
- 2) **One-off Exercise:** It is a one-time effort and cannot be repeated in exactly the same way as original. It cannot be used as a reference for any purpose because no written record of it exists.
- 3) **Day-to-Day Language:** In the day-to-day life, oral communication is considered to be the most effective method of communication because it facilitates the unconventional and common language in the most effective manner.

- 4) **Presence of Sender and Receiver:** In order to conduct the oral communication effectively, both the sender and the receiver must be present at the same place and at the same time.
- 5) **Set of Principles:** Oral communication follows a set of principles in order to ensure its effectiveness and to communicate in such a way that listener understands it in a best possible manner.
- 6) **Effect of Body Language and Speech Modulation:** Voice modulations (i.e., increasing or decreasing the pitch of voice) and body language (i.e., gestures of the speaker and listener during the speech) greatly affect the quality of oral communication.
- 7) **It cannot be Erased or Mended:** Words are always compared with the arrows. As arrows cannot be taken back once shot, in the same way, words cannot be erased or mended, once spoken.

In case of written communication, wrong words or sentences can be edited and errors can be rectified but in oral communication it is not possible. Hence, a thorough analysis should be done by the speaker before starting his speech.

### 2.1.3. Principles of Successful Oral Communication

Principles of successful oral communication are as follows:

- 1) **Brevity:** The information which is to be communicated must be concise and clear, it should neither cover too much content nor too less. Because, generally the audience gets disappointed with a speech which is either not proper in content or if it is too lengthy. So, one should avoid using ornamental language such as figures of speech and difficult vocabulary; instead, he should use simple words and phrases in order to communicate in an easily understandable way. This will not only make the communication effective but will also save the time of speaker as well as the audience.
- 2) **Clarity:** Before initiating the speech, speaker must be very clear about the ideas persisting in his mind. If it is not so, then the speaker should review his ideas again and again. Because, if he himself is not clear with the ideas, he cannot convey it effectively to the audience. Simple, short, and common words should be used to achieve the clarity in speech.



- 3) **Choosing Precise Words:** If a person chooses correct and appropriate words as per the context or the topic chosen for oral communication, then he will be able to forward the message in the same way as it was intended to be delivered. The use of precise and correct words conveys the actual meaning. Hence, one must avoid using complicated words or jargons. However, sometimes it is not easy to replace a word by its synonym because meanings of the two may slightly vary from each other. So, one must have a good command over synonyms and antonyms.
- 4) **Clichés:** Phrases which are quite common in use but have no clear meaning are known as clichés. Such meaningless words are becoming obsolete now; hence, an effective communicator should avoid using such words. However, if a speaker uses them unintentionally during a serious conversation then it is considered normal. 'Oh really', 'I mean', 'quite fine', etc., are some of the popular clichés.
- 5) **Sequences:** The matter should be consistent, continued, and logically organised. The speaker should neither deviate from the points nor should change the sequence without any logic. The way of speaking of the speaker is more important than the content of the speech.
- 6) **Avoid Jargons:** A speaker should not use jargons in his/her speech as these are specific words or terminologies related to different fields such as law, commerce, defence, sports, banking, etc. Such words can be understood only by the experts of respective fields and not by the common man. Hence, easy and common words should be used and jargons should be avoided while communicating.
- 7) **Avoid Verbosity:** Verbosity refers to the ability of using more words than needed. However, a speaker should try to avoid it because using too many words does not guarantee an effective communication. Instead, it sometimes blurs the clarity and diverts the attention.
- 8) **Prepositions:** One should avoid the irrelevant use of prepositions. For example, "The workers should abide by the safety regulations in regard to work". In this sentence, the preposition 'in regard to' can be replaced by 'about'. Similarly, some other prepositions which should be avoided such as 'with reference to', 'in connection with', 'with regard to', 'in relation to', etc.
- 9) **Adjectives and Adverbs:** A person should use adverbs and adjectives in his speech only when they are needed. They are used to realise the meaning of a word with a certain degree of importance, e.g., definite results, comparatively weak, positive decision, etc.

## 2.1.4. Modes of Oral Communication

There are various means of oral communication. Some of them are as follows:

- 1) **Informal Face-to-Face Talk:** These types of talks take place outside the purview of official or formal talks and do not adhere to the set norms. These take place at a short notice and no planning at hierarchical

level of the organisation is required. It serves many purposes altogether and works well in strengthening social relations among employees of an organisation. Sometimes it gives way to gossips and grapevine also.

- 2) **Interviews:** The literal meaning of this word is to develop an insight into other person's viewpoint. It gives an opportunity to two individuals to meet each other and understand each other's point of view. It is just the opposite of a face-to-face talk because it is more purposeful, directed, fruitful and serious.
- 3) **Group Communication:** Sometimes conversation takes place in a group. There may be two or more persons in a group discussion that would try to express their own opinion and try to influence others with it. These groups can either be formal or informal, depending upon the situation. If groups are formed by the organisation in the form of committees, task forces, quality circles, buying centre, etc., then these will be termed as formal groups. On the other hand, sometimes unofficial or informal groups also develop within an organisation without any intention to do any organisational task.
- 4) **Speeches and Presentations:** These refer to oral communication by a speaker in front of a big group of audience. With these types of communications, the speaker can influence the audience and change their opinion in a certain favourable way by being confident and enthusiastic. Delivery of speech involves formal approach and is reserved for some official occasions. On the other hand, presentations are short, concise, and slightly informal as they provide visual treat to the audience by using audio-visual medium and it also involves a session of live interaction with the audience in order to solve their queries then and there.
- 5) **Teleconferences:** It refers to a meeting or a conference which takes place through a telephone or a network connection between two or more persons present at different places, i.e., different branches of an office, different cities, etc. The live shows and programmes which are telecasted to different locations at the same time are also termed as teleconferences. Hence, it can be said that 'teleconference' is a wide ranging topic. The essentials that facilitate a teleconference are a good computer network, satellite facilities, participants at different and faraway places, and their communication with each other simultaneously.
- 6) **Press Conference/Press Meets:** This is a special meeting with the press persons in order to disseminate certain information to media and answering the queries of media persons. Generally, the media division or the top management of a company conducts this meeting with the press reporters. However, the media persons can be attracted only if the company has anything exclusive and sensational to share. Another purpose behind arranging a press meet is to acknowledge and resolve the issues related to public relations.



- 7) **Demonstration:** When a message is accompanied by some action or presentation of a particular situation or problem, then it is termed as 'demonstration'. This medium of communication is adopted by the strategists of corporate marketing. It helps a lot in selling a product to the target customers as the salesmen take its help to prove the utility of their product. It also helps in keeping the interest and curiosity of the customers toward the company's products. Demonstration can also be used to inform the citizens about their voting rights.
- 8) **Dramatisation:** It is an extended form of demonstration and it involves presenting the topic of communication by using the short plays, skits, visual acts, etc., during the oral communication. It is considered to be a good method of oral communication because it not only helps in informing the audience but also in entertaining them.
- 9) **Radio:** This form of mass medium is considered to have the widest reach. It is accessible even to the remotest parts of the country. It is the cheapest and most efficient method of conveying one's ideas, opinions, etc., to masses. With the help of radio, the urgent messages and warnings in the situations of emergency can be communicated more quickly than by any other method. Generally, it is a one-way communication but now-a-days in technically advanced countries radio conferences and tutorials have also been introduced. Radio only facilitates the audio communication.
- 10) **Recording:** This method also serves as a means of communication. The message being broadcasted or delivered directly to the listeners is often recorded on an authentic recorder so that it can be listened again whenever the need arises. Interview, official phone calls, etc., are generally recorded for future reference as well as for ensuring the transparency.
- 11) **Dictaphone:** This is a mechanical machine that dictates a message. This invention is the result of combined efforts of electronics and mechanical engineering and it serves as a means to record the voice. In this machine, the transcribers produce voice whenever it is required. These machines are useful for the recordings of interview sessions or conferences, dictation of correspondence, doing market research, etc.
- 12) **Rumours:** Rumours are the pieces of information that can be heard on a regular basis in any organisation, but neither the source is verified nor the content. It can evolve inside as well as outside the premise of the organisation and is generally called internal or external rumours, as the case may be. Some of these rumours may prove to be true later but most of them are generally false. Regardless of the authenticity, a rumour can still become popular if it is ambiguous, full of entertainment, and important.
- 13) **Oral Report:** Presenting or reading out a written matter in front of the concerned audience, is known as oral report. It requires effective oral skills. This method is quite popular in all the hierarchical level of an

organisation. A good planning and preparation is required for making such reports effective. An oral report must be written and read in such a manner that it covers all the points in easy and simple language as it is in an oral presentation. It is basically targeted towards a specific group and must cater to their needs. The writer of such reports, while writing it, must keep in mind that the report should be informative as well as logical. Last but not least, being a medium of oral communication, it also requires effective speaking skills.

### 2.1.5. Barriers to Oral Communication

Barriers to oral communication include poor expression, speed of delivery, and felicity of accent and lack of conceptual clarity and appropriateness of language.

- 1) **Poor Expression:** The power of expression of the communicator determines the quality of communication. To be effective, the message has to properly develop from idea. Barriers relating to expression result in poorly expressed messages. Lack of conceptual skills results in inadequate or incomplete shaping of the idea. Lack of clarity or ambiguity results from limited word power, improper organization of ideas and lack of coherence. If words and thoughts are not organised properly, the communication would suffer for want of structural balance or a sense of proportion. Such poor expression of thoughts and ideas leads to incorrect, incomplete or incoherent messages.
- 2) **Faulty Transmissions:** The process of transmission, essential for any communication, is susceptible to errors of omission and commission. In the organisational context, the person transmitting the message may be different from the person who conceived the idea. The intent and purpose of the message may not remain the same as it moves from the originator to the transmitter. Not only that, the person transmitting the message may bring in his own bias, feelings and perceptions, which the originator of the message would not have intended. Or else, there may be occasions when the originator of the idea expects the transmitter to detail, illustrate and elucidate the idea, which the latter may fail to do.
- 3) **Indifference or Lack of Interest:** This is indeed a very strong barrier in communication process. Organisations have to make considerable efforts to ensure that indifference to organisational communication is brought down to the minimum. Communication, to be effective, presupposes that the receiver of the message is also attentive or receptive. Attentive listening in oral communication, careful reading in written communication and keen observation in non-verbal communication are a must. Indifference or lack of interest on the part of the recipient, in turn, adversely impacts the enthusiasm of the communicator. When the students are not attentive, the teacher is likely to lose interest. On the other hand, when the speaker lacks expertise or credibility, the receptivity of the audience wanes. Indifference and lack of interest creates barriers to



communication, as a result of which the quality of communication suffers. The intended message is either not received at all or is incomplete and, worse still, is understood incorrectly.

### 2.1.6. Effectiveness of Oral Communication

Oral communication is considered to be the most popular means of communication because of the following means:

- 1) **Instant Feedback:** Oral communication helps in getting quick feedback and explanation from the concerned people. While listening to the speaker the audience can interact with him, raise their queries, make statements, and suggest additions to the information provided by him. The oral communication becomes livelier when both the speaker and the audience engage themselves in exchanging the information with each other.
- 2) **Better Relationships:** Oral communication fosters an informal relation between the superiors and their subordinates by engaging them in one-to-one oral conversation. Such conversations also help in nurturing a healthy relationship and atmosphere in an organisational set-up. Direct conversation between a superior and a subordinate enables the subordinate to feel important; this in turn helps the superior to have an insight into his subordinate's mind.
- 3) **Time Saving:** This type of communication saves time. In any form of written communication, a letter is typed through dictation, recorded in a diary, kept in an envelope and then sent to the address of the concerned people; thus it is a time consuming process. On the other hand, by using the means of oral communication, the same message can be put across to the concerned persons in a faster and quicker way. Oral communication has become a popular method and officials generally call their subordinates or meet their superiors to discuss the problems in no time. This not only saves the paper work but the labour or workforce also get the solutions quickly.
- 4) **Effective Tool for Influencing:** Oral communication plays a very important role in influencing the listener by giving them a sense of participation or involvement in the business. Its role is so crucial in sorting out the grievances that the process does not look possible without it. No conflict between two parties can be sorted out until there is direct interference by the top officials in the matter and a direct talk takes place with the concerned people. So, there can be no substitute of the oral communication for exchanging the ideas with each other.

## 2.2. CONVERSATION CONTROL

### 2.2.1. Introduction

A conversation can be channelised in a desired and positive manner through the ability of an individual to control it. The conversation can be prevented from deviating into

undesirable areas with the help of conversation control regardless of its application in a personal discussion or a business meeting. It can also help an individual to have a positive impact on the person with whom the conversation is taking place. Apt timing, good listening skills, and a substantial way of talking are the fundamental concepts of conversation control. It also includes:

- 1) Methods for modifying the course of conversation conveniently.
- 2) Ability of an individual to channelise the conversation in such a way that it consistently revolves around the key issues till it is concluded.

Skills pertaining to conversation control need to be applied in business situations which require an individual to know how to:

- 1) Buy or sell,
- 2) Negotiate,
- 3) Conduct interview,
- 4) Take part in a meeting,
- 5) Disagree in a polite manner,
- 6) Protest without offending,
- 7) Give compliment or praise, and
- 8) Respond to personal criticism.

According to Charles J Margerison, "Conversation control does not mean that you can control someone's conversation. What it does mean is that with practice you can control your own conversation, and in time be able to influence others, and encourage them to respond in a positive and relevant way".

An individual's oral communication can be enhanced through acquisition of following skills:

- 1) Persuasive interactions with other participants of a meeting.
- 2) Dealing with opposition on a suggestion or proposal.
- 3) Enhancing interviewing abilities.
- 4) Handling criticism confidently and positively.
- 5) Developing the ways of acquiring quick information.

The evaluation of the outcomes of well-organised personal interactions, which include meetings and discussions, show the merits of conversation control.

### 2.2.2. Conversation Control Techniques

Some of the conversation control techniques are as follows:

- 1) **Questioning:** Using questions to initiate a conversation is the most basic technique. Listening to their own voice and perceiving themselves as the facilitator of the conversation is appreciated by a majority of individuals. Individuals should be provided with adequate space to open up and open-ended questions must be asked. However, only general topics which the individual is willing to discuss should be included in the questions. The topics related to problems must be avoided.
- 2) **Compliments:** Words of praise, compliments, and appreciations can enhance an individual's mood positively and help in exercising greater control on the



conversation. A relaxed and tension-free conversation can be carried out through consistent compliments. Though these compliments make the individual feel elated and good about himself/herself, there is a thin line between complimenting and being fake or flattering. Too many compliments and fancy phrases might sound offensive to the other individual indulged in the conversation.

- 3) **Eye Contact:** Maintaining a continuous eye contact throughout a conversation not only helps in proving the reliability, honesty, and openness of an individual, but it also shows his/her fearlessness and confidence. A considerable level of dominance is shown over other individual when he tries to avoid eye contact or is not comfortable with it.
- 4) **Pauses:** Making the other individual uncomfortable is a very popular and successful technique of dominating him/her and exercising conversation control. The silence or pause between the conversations triggers the individuals to fill them in order to avoid discomfort. An individual can be made to feel eliminated from the conversation by stimulating him/her to fill in the pauses provided on regular intervals. In this way, one can determine the course of the conversation and dominate others involved in it.

### 2.2.3. Importance of Conversation Control

Following points highlight the importance of conversation control:

- 1) Develops the ability to handle opposition confidently.
- 2) Assists in rapid procurement of information.
- 3) Ensures persuasion during meetings.
- 4) Determines the direction of the conversation.
- 5) Helps in developing unique interviewing and appraisal skills.
- 6) Develops understanding of conversation dynamics to be used socially with friends as well as resolving issues.

### 2.2.4. Reflection & Empathy: Two Sides of Effective Oral Communication

'Reflection' is a very essential quality for effective oral communication. With this quality, one can make the other persons feel that he or she is sincerely listening to them. The feeling of being heard can impress the speaker. To make it happen and to foster this quality, the listener must listen carefully, pick the gist of the speech, understand the hidden feeling of it, and reproduce it in a different way.

For example, if one person says 'I think this organisation does not need me any more'. With the ability of 'reflection', the other person can recognise the frustration and feeling of rejection lying in the first person's mind. In such a situation, the second person may say to the first person that 'Do you feel that your performance is not given the due acknowledgement'. This response will stimulate the first person to dwell on the problems persisting in his/her mind.

Reflecting on somebody's comments is not an easy job; it requires an accurate understanding of the other person's thought process and feelings. It also requires the listener to talk in such a manner that the other person realises that his/her viewpoint has been taken seriously by the listener. Apart from this, 'reflecting' also requires one's command over his gestures. Moreover, seeing a problem from the other's point of view brings the two persons closer and enhances the confidence among them. This also leads the speaker to understand his own feelings and ideas with better clarity and accuracy. While reflecting, the listener should keep the sense and substance of speaker's words intact and he should not interrogate or evaluate the speaker's speech. Last but not least, the body language and gestures of the listener should also reflect that he is taking real interest in the speech, e.g., making eye contacts, leaning forward, etc.

The term 'empathy' refers to the capability of seeing the things from the perspective of others, and comprehending their feelings, emotions, and needs as well. Empathy is possibly the most advanced skill out of all other communication skills, yet it is misunderstood a lot. Similar to other interpersonal skills, empathy also originates among people naturally; if not then it can be developed as well.

For empathising with other people, the person needs to see the things from the viewpoint of others and this process requires good imagination power. He also needs to recognise that why the viewpoint of others is different from his own. The process of empathising becomes easy when one needs to empathise with people who are close to them and have similar viewpoints and mind-set.

## 2.3. LISTENING

### 2.3.1. Meaning and Definition of Listening

Listening is a crucial aspect of effective communication. While hearing is simply the act of perceiving a sound *via* the ears, listening involves hearing as well as understanding what is heard. The ability to listen means the ability to correctly receive and interpret messages. If one does not listen with attention, messages can easily be misunderstood. Listening is a skill that can be developed through patience and practice. The importance of listening extends far beyond personal settings into academic and professional settings. Taking care to actually listen to someone without constantly interrupting him indicates how much we value his views. Practicing good listening in one's everyday life with friends and family, in the office and in other social interactions builds good self-esteem, improves one's equations with friends, benefits other relationships, enhances social connectivity and also improves office work. The speaker can figure out if the audience he is addressing is listening carefully or not through their body language, facial expressions, posture, eye-contact and other non-verbal cues which do not involve direct speaking.



Listening also shows an understanding of and interest in the topic being discussed. Our personal assumptions and beliefs can often distort what we listen to. The listener, thus, should be careful to concentrate completely on what the speaker is saying to him. One way of indicating to the speaker that he is being genuinely listened to is to ask questions or provide him valuable feedback. The listener can paraphrase and summarise what the speaker has said after regular intervals and confirm with the speaker if that was what he meant by politely saying, "What I gathered from", "What you said is that..." or, "Correct me if I'm wrong, but...". Also, brief responses such as, "hmm... interesting idea", or simply nodding one's head regularly can encourage the speaker to talk more openly and freely and can assure him that the person he is speaking to is paying adequate attention.

According to M.V. Rodrigues, "Listening is a process of receiving, interpreting and reacting to the messages received from the communication sender".

According to Leland Brown, "Listening is an activity that can be turned on and off consciously and unconsciously. It starts with the receiver's becoming aware that they should listen and become attentive to what is being said".

One of the keys to ensure effective listening is to use jargon-free language, that is, language free of certain words or phrases used by a particular group of people, for example, engineers, which are difficult for others to understand. Effective listening is a skill that every leader or manager must possess in order to prosper. The ability to listen is such a crucial quality that many companies provide 'listening skills training' to their workers and managers. With their employees listening to their customers and to each other much better, companies can ensure not only greater client satisfaction but also a more productive workforce which freely comes up with new and inventive ideas.

### 2.3.2. Elements of Effective Listening

To improve our capacity to listen, we must be aware of and make choices regarding the level of concentration and how hard each time we listen to something. The elements of effective listening, arranged in the order in which they occur, are as follows:

- 1) **Hearing:** To hear is to perform the physiological act of perceiving sounds as they reach our ears. It is essential to be an alert listener in order to be a good listener.
- 2) **Filtering:** The removal of unwanted stimuli is known as filtering. The stimuli may be internal as well as external. Internal stimuli can be the work deadlines, information needed for decision-making, or headache, etc. The external stimuli can be spoken words or physical experiences that affect our senses, the things beyond our control, etc. Filtering enables a listener to listen only to the important stimuli.
- 3) **Interpreting:** To interpret the message means to make understand the sense of the message being sent. It is significant for the listener to understand the sense of the message which is sent by the sender.

- 4) **Evaluating:** The listener must assess the message, i.e., he must evaluate what is the essence of the message, what is being said in the message, whether it is partly or fully right or wrong, respectful or disrespectful, intelligent or stupid, logical or illogical, etc.
- 5) **Responding:** Having listened to what the speaker has to say, the listener must respond to him so as to indicate that he has comprehended what was conveyed to him.

### 2.3.3. Objectives of Listening

Listening serves the following purposes:

- 1) Develops and builds strong relationships. Listening allows individuals to know themselves and others in a better way.
- 2) Obtains and understands information.
- 3) Objectively evaluates the message, which involves estimating its correctness and also judging its relevance to a given situation.
- 4) People may also listen to something for their own delight, e.g., listening to a friend's experiences on a trip he had recently undertaken, listening to music or listening to birds chirping.
- 5) People may also listen to understand the problems of others who might want to share and lighten the burden of their sorrows. Someone may also listen because he wants some advice concerning the necessary action to take regarding a particular issue.

### 2.3.4. Essentials of Good Listening

Essentials of listening skills are as follows:

- 1) **Listen with Patience:** The speaker deserves a patient hearing, even if the listener does not agree with him. The listener can encourage the speaker to continue talking in simple ways such as nodding, or saying 'hmm...' or 'Go on'.
- 2) **Understand the Emotions of the Speaker:** It is important for the listener to understand the speaker both intellectually and emotionally. Effective listeners must concentrate fully on what a speaker is saying because many speakers are not able to express their emotions in a clear manner.
- 3) **Restatement and Summary:** The listener must reframe in summary form what the speaker has said to him, and should do so in such a way that it reassures the speaker and makes him go on talking. For example, when a speaker finishes complaining about how unhappy he is in his current job because of his manager's manipulative and dishonest behaviour, the listener can summarise his long angry speech by simply focussing on the crucial reasons of his dissatisfaction and say, "So what you are saying is that your manager is unfair and only promotes his favourites over others who work much harder than them"; but in doing so, he must keep his tone neutral and try not to force his own assumptions or conclusions regarding the issue on the speaker.



- 4) **Set Aside Time for Questions and Discussion:** Allotting separate time for questions and answers as well as discussion, when the speaker has finished talking, is always a good idea. This helps to separate formal from informal communication and makes the usage of language less cumbersome and more interesting. In other words, it does away with any officialise that might have otherwise been part of the conversation.
- 5) **Get Past Common Clichés:** If a speaker has the tendency to use too many worn out clichés or has a routinized and repetitive manner of expressing himself, but still has something valuable to say, the listener should overlook the negativities and pay attention to the crux of the speaker's message if he wants to learn something beneficial from it.
- 6) **Avoid Interrupting the Speaker:** An effective listener should not try to express his views while the speaker is expressing his own as this could repress what the speaker is trying to say.
- 7) **Talk Less, Listen More:** If two people have to communicate effectively, both of them should give more weightage to listening attentively as against offering lengthy explanations.
- 8) **Establish a Close Relationship with the Speaker:** It is good idea for the listener to try and form a friendly equation with the speaker based on trust and goodwill.

### 2.3.5. Types of Listening

Listening can be of the following types:

- 1) **Discriminative Listening:** Discriminative listening begins in an individual at a very early age. It is the most fundamental form of listening and does not involve comprehending the meanings of words, phrases, or sentences but simply recognising the different sounds that are produced. **For example**, it can be said that a child is listening discriminatively when he distinguishes between the sound of the voice of his father and of his mother. As we grow, our capacity to differentiate between sounds increases. We not only distinguish between different voices, but also notice nuanced differences between the ways sounds are made which finally contribute to our understanding of the meanings of these sounds. **For example**, a mature listener is able to identify emotions through the speaker's change in voice tone, their use of pause, etc.
- 2) **Comprehensive Listening:** After being able to distinguish between different sounds of a language, comes the task of making sense of them. To comprehend the meaning of a sequence of sounds which is either a word or phrase or sentence in a particular language requires having a good vocabulary and also the appropriate language skills such as all the rules of grammar and syntax by which we can understand what others are saying. While speaking, important words should be spoken and the words which are less important should not be selected for speech. Comprehensive listening is also called **content listening**, **informative listening** and **full listening**.

- 3) **Active Listening:** Active listening involves paying maximum attention to the words of a speaker to understand as much as possible of what he is saying.
- 4) **Passive Listening:** Passive listening means to listen to what the speaker is saying without reacting in between or interrupting him and not being involved in any other activity during this time.
- 5) **Biased Listening:** Listening in a prejudiced way occurs when someone listens only to what he wants to listen and neglects everything else. Such a person is unable to receive right meaning of what is being said since he makes sense of the messages he receives based on stereotypes and other prejudices.
- 6) **Evaluative Listening:** In evaluative listening, we try to assess and examine whether what is being said is in agreement with or against our own values, is logical or illogical, coherent or incoherent, consistent or inconsistent, what are the pros and cons of an argument and whether it is beneficial to us in any way or not.

**For example**, this kind of listening would come into play when one wants to find out if an employee's explanation for an error he committed is justified or not. Evaluative listening is especially relevant when someone is trying to influence us to change our point of view as it also importantly involves noticing the subtle ways in which language can be used to get one's point across. It is also called **interpretive**, **judgemental** or **critical listening**.

- 7) **Appreciative Listening:** Appreciative listening is at work within a person while he is listening to a great leader's speech, a fine musician's music or a great poet reciting his poetry. It means listening to things which he finds valuable and enjoys and would prefer to give time to over other things. **For example**, listening to a relative who shares his favourite amusing story each time the family gathers together.
- 8) **Sympathetic Listening:** Listening sympathetically to a speaker means the listener is concerned about him, listen to him with full attention, and feel pity and sad for his unfortunate condition.
- 9) **Empathetic Listening:** Listening empathetically means to move far from sympathy and share the feelings of the speaker. It requires a nuanced understanding of both verbal and non-verbal emotional signals. **For example**, if your best friend is talking to you about his painful divorce, listening to him empathetically would involve your being able to feel the pain he went through as it was happening. A further demonstration of your empathy towards your friend would be to give him advice regarding how he should get over his present depressing situation. For someone to trust us as an empathetic listener, we need to be able to show to him that we are sensitive enough to understand his situation.
- 10) **Therapeutic Listening:** Therapy is counselling intended to heal psychological problems. To listen



therapeutically means that the listener has to go further than empathising with the speaker and use the deep connection listener has established with speaker to aid the speaker evolve to a healthier state of mind. This happens not only when one goes to see a therapist but also in many other situations. **For example**, there are organisations where managers and HR people counsel employees to help them grow. For sportsmen, coaches and trainers perform the same function. Often, a friend or a mentor of someone can play the role of a therapist as well.

11) **Dialogic Listening:** 'Dialogue' as a word has its origins in the Greek words 'dia', meaning 'through', and 'logos', meaning 'words'. Thus, dialogic listening means people acquiring knowledge *via* talking to each other and exchanging ideas in such a way that each person actively seeks to learn more about the other person's point of view. Dialogic listening is, at times, also called 'relational listening'.

12) **Relationship Listening:** At times, the most crucial purpose of listening is to build a relationship. That is the reason why two people who love each other talk endlessly and pay careful attention to the smallest things they say to each other; however, those things would seem extremely meaningless to them when talking to someone else. Developing relationships *via* listening is also significant if you are a salesperson or a negotiator, where earning the trust of the customer or the person you are negotiating with is vital if you want to sell your product to him or persuade him regarding something.

### 2.3.6. Listening as a Communication Skill

Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. Listening is key to all effective communication, without the ability to listen effectively messages are easily misunderstood – communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated.

Listening is so important that many top employers provide listening skills training for their employees. Good listening skills can lead to better customer satisfaction, greater productivity with fewer mistakes; increased sharing of information that in turn can lead to more creative and innovative work.

Poor listening skills can interfere with the message between speaker and listener. There are many reasons to be good at listening. People listen to gather information and for understanding. It is a skill that can be developed through patience and practice. Some methods that can be used to develop listening skills are:

1) **Do not Interrupt:** To cultivate the ability to listen, one should first stop talking oneself and let the speaker to speak freely without being interrupted. One should only respond once the person who is communicating has finished speaking. Listening actively, that is, listening with full concentration

instead of talking too much leads to a deeper understanding of the subject being discussed. To train yourself not to interrupt people while they are talking and improve your capacity to listen, focus on and make notes regarding all the conversations you participate in for a day. For each conversation, jot down the topic of the discussion, note how many times you were tempted to or actually did interrupt the other speaker, who was more talkative during the conversation and what lesson did you learn from it.

2) **Ask Searching Questions:** To enhance his listening skills, the listener should ask thorough questions when a speaker has finished speaking. These questions may be ones which ask the speaker to elaborate on some parts of what he has already said, request him to provide further information on certain matters or ask him politely to go into greater depth regarding a few issues. Relying on searching questions is extremely useful in gaining greater understanding of a subject; it not only reassures the speaker that he was being listened to while he was talking, but also gives him the opportunity to go beyond the specific topic of discussion and clarify his views and feelings in greater detail to his listeners.

Such questions reflect a keen interest in and a desire to comprehend the topic of discussion. If the speaker's subject is a complaint or problem or need he wants to address, then searching questions enable the issues involved to be analysed with greater precision and prove to be an important means of finding solutions to such concerns.

3) **Statements of Confirmation:** Statements of confirmation also help to develop listening skills. A statement of confirmation offers a way for the listener to check whether he has accurately grasped what the speaker has been saying. It also gives the speaker an opportunity to put in additional information or clarify what he has already said. Statements of confirmation can be of four kinds:

- i) A straightforward confirming statement such as, "Let me see if I have understood you correctly..."
- ii) A summary of the main points to check if what has been said has been understood appropriately.
- iii) A question to check if the understanding is accurate. **For example**, "Have I followed what you have said so far?"
- iv) Ambiguity must be sorted out, if needed.

4) **Concentrate Fully on What the Speaker is saying:** While the speaker is talking, the listener should not divert his concentration by simultaneously worrying about how to respond to what is being said. The listener should focus on listening to the speaker clearly first. The listener should give the speaker complete attention and acknowledge that the former understands what the latter is saying by actions such as regularly nodding his head and looking directly into the speaker's eyes while he is talking. Things in the environment that could distract the listener should



be ignored completely. For example, when someone starts to speak, the listener should put down anything he is holding to tell the speaker that he has his undivided attention.

- 5) **Non-Listening Exercise:** Try a 'non-listening' exercise with a partner to get an idea of how it feels when you want to be listened to but you are ignored. Tell your partner to purposely lose his focus when you are talking and trying to convey a significant idea to him. Your partner could do this in various ways — by continuously looking at his watch, by repeatedly shuffling some papers lying close by or by regularly looking away from you time-to-time. Write down how distressed and angry you felt while being ignored so that you can remember and learn from it. Switch roles with your partner after every few minutes. This exercise will give you an insight into the emotion of frustration one feels when one is not being listened to and will help you become a better listener.

### 2.3.7. Approaches to Listening

- 1) **Appreciative** listeners simply enjoy the interaction and listen for enjoyment, humour, and to connect with others.
- 2) **Empathic** listeners listen to understand others better. They try to understand both the speaker's perspective and emotions.
- 3) **Comprehensive** listeners focus on the main ideas. They are naturally good at identifying problems and opportunities even when people are disorganised.
- 4) **Discerning** listeners pay attention to details others miss. They minimize distractions and listen for specific, detailed information.
- 5) **Evaluative** listeners listen for information that will help them evaluate or judge the accuracy of the speaker or the content. They verify facts and don't tolerate exaggerations or inconsistencies.

### 2.3.8. Process of Listening

The process of listening includes five elements. One of those is hearing and the other four include filtering, interpreting, responding, and remembering. As figure 2.1 shows us, the way listening works comprises five stages, which, in the order of their occurrence are sensing/selecting, interpreting, assessing, responding, and remembering. So as to listen effectively, it is important to understand all of these stages:

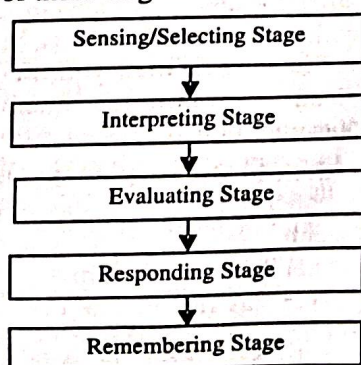


Figure 2.1: Process of Listening

- 1) **Sensing/Selecting Stage:** A number of stimuli surround the listener but he only chooses the relevant ones. He then transforms them into a message.
- 2) **Interpreting Stage:** During this stage, the listener tries to interpret or assign meaning to the message. In this process, the listener is confronted with many emotional, environmental, linguistic, semantic or psychological hurdles.
- 3) **Evaluating Stage:** At this stage, the listener evaluates the message of the speaker and examines it to form a point of view, ask himself what the crucial aspects of the speaker's argument are, infers conclusions from the speaker's comments and checks the correctness of information and facts for or against what the speaker has said. At times, previous experiences, sentiments, and beliefs disturb the listener and make the evaluation process hard for the listener.
- 4) **Responding Stage:** At this stage, the listener has interpreted and analysed the message and is prepared to respond to the speaker. The listener's body language and other non-verbal cues let the speaker know whether what he has said has made sense to the listener or not and also if the listener has been only pretending to pay attention.
- 5) **Remembering Stage:** This is the last stage of listening. If one listens effectively, one may remember the parts what one has heard. In fact, how much one remembers of a talk or a speech is often an indication of how much attention he paid to it, while the presentation was going on. It is unfortunate that regardless of how good a speaker is, most listeners can recall only 10-25 per cent of a presentation or speech. For this reason, a speaker who wants to make a good impression must always present his points in an organised way, aided by good visuals, so that his audience remembers what he has said when he is over with the presentation.

### 2.3.9. Barriers to Listening

Barriers to the process of listening may arise due to the speaker, the listener, or the circumstances in which communication is taking place. During oral communication, any interference in the listening process can create confusion and sometimes even lead to a communication breakdown. As shown in figure 2.2, barriers to the listening process are of the following kinds:

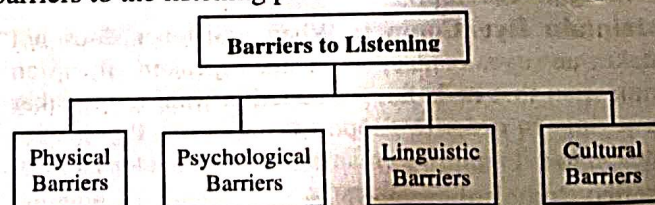


Figure 2.2: Barriers to Listening

- 1) **Physical Barriers:** The listening process is more prone to disruption by physical distractions and disturbances such as physical discomfort, noise, or any other physical factor. Any external sound that interrupts the process of listening can be termed as physical noise. The listening



process can also be easily disturbed by physical uneasiness since one cannot listen well if he is feeling physically tired or uneasy.

2) **Psychological Barriers:** Psychological problems, that is, problems resulting from an unstable state of mind, prove to be the most familiar hurdles to listening effectively. The activity of listening demands focus and a listener's unstable state of mind can obstruct it because an unstable mind results in lack of attention and interest. The listener's understanding of others' ideas is adversely influenced by the feelings of fear, anxiety, anger, sadness and frustration he is going through at the time of receiving the message or which are, in general, part of his psyche. Being swept away by too much emotion also negatively impacts a listener's capacity to comprehend a message.

3) **Linguistic Barriers:** During oral communication, if the speaker and the listener use different languages or different dialects of the same language, the message of the speaker could be erroneously decoded by the listener and lead to confusion and mistakes in interpretation. In such situations, the possibility of a communication breakdown occurrence is very high.

4) **Cultural Barriers:** Owing to an increasingly globalised world, the workplace is becoming more and more diverse and people from different cultures who inhabit the same space need to find ways to coexist and work well together. Each culture has its own set of customs, beliefs and standards when it comes to one-to-one interactions, and trying to communicate one's point effectively to a person belonging to another culture can indeed be difficult. When a speaker and a listener belonging to different cultures communicate orally, the speaker may assign meanings to the message from one cultural frame of reference and the listener may assign meaning to it from another cultural frame of reference. If these two frames of reference match, communication will not be a problem, but if they do not, it can create misunderstanding and confusion because of differences in norms and values. After all, they are the values which influence our thoughts and guide us to behave in a correct way, as per the situation.

### 2.3.10. How to be a Better Listener/ Overcoming the Barriers to Listening

The methods by which one can overcome obstructions to the listening process are:

1) **Maintain Eye Contact:** When a listener does not make an eye contact with the speaker, it is an indication that he is not interested in what the speaker is saying. In order to support the speaker, the listener must make it a point to maintain eye contact with him.

2) **Notice Body Language:** Non-verbal cues such as the listener's alert posture, or the listener's regularly nodding his head in acknowledgement of what the speaker is saying, or the suitable facial expressions of the listener in reaction to the message the speaker is conveying are crucial to indicate to the speaker that the listener is paying attention to him.

3) **Avoid Gestures of Distraction:** Actions such as repeatedly looking at the time in his watch or a clock close by, glancing at a newspaper, rearranging the bundle of papers, fiddling with a pen, doodling and other distractions on the part of the listener should definitely be avoided if he has to show the speaker that he is listening to him intently.

4) **Do not be Afraid to Ask Questions:** A good listener always has the questions to ask the speaker, after regular intervals of time since listening closely to the speaker will definitely generate issues which need to be clarified for proper understanding.

5) **Paraphrase and Summarise what the Speaker has Said:** To paraphrase what the speaker has said means to restate it in your own words whereas, to summarise what the speaker has said means to rephrase it briefly without altering its substance. Two major causes why paraphrasing and summarising are important are as follows:

i) It acts as a measure of how carefully the listener was paying attention to the speaker because unless one is listening carefully to what is being said, one cannot paraphrase and summarise it, and

ii) By rephrasing the message of the speaker in a concise fashion, one saves time and also ensures efficiency by saying the same thing in fewer words.

6) **Do Not Hastily Interpret the Speaker:** A good listener should not hastily pre-judge what a speaker is saying and assume that he has understood it before the speaker has finished his points.

7) **Do not Cut Short the Speaker:** If a listener does not have the patience to listen to a speaker in a disciplined way, he keeps cutting him short and asserts his own viewpoints over the speaker's. He will miss out the essence of the speaker's message and will only be speaking his own mind rather than understanding the thoughts of the speaker. Listening to and talking to the same person cannot happen together.

8) **Make the Speaker Comfortable:** The listener should let the speaker know, through his mental and physical attitude, that he is an attentive listener. Doing so will make the speaker comfortable in the listener's presence and he will be able to talk more freely.

9) **Do Not Quarrel with the Speaker:** The listener should not stop the speaker rudely in the middle of his speech with interjections such as, "How can that be possible..." or "Prove what you are saying...". It will only lead to unfruitful quarrels and no productive output.

10) **Remain Impartial:** The listener should not get too emotionally carried away by the content of the speaker's speech. He should not react instantly to what the speaker has said and make his comments when the speaker has finished and is ready to listen to his audience. The listener should attempt to understand the perspective of the speaker objectively.



- 11) **Remove Distractions:** The listener should not fiddle around with papers or pencils or doodle or indulge in any other activity while the speaker is talking. Turning off the radio or even shutting a door or a window while communication is taking place will also cut out unnecessary noise and help the listener to listen to the speaker more clearly.
- 12) **Acknowledge what the Speaker is Saying in Different Ways:** Responses from the listener such as "Yes" or "I see" or the listener's nodding his head while the speaker is talking tells the speaker that he is being understood. They do not necessarily mean that the listener agrees with the speaker on every count but just that the former is paying attention to what is being said by the latter.
- 13) **Maintain Cool Attitude:** Anger often makes a listener misinterpret the meaning of the words of a speaker and causes confusion. It is easy to lose one's temper while listening to a speaker, especially when one does not agree with what the speaker is saying. The listener should try to avoid this as it could provoke him to react beforehand without gaining a full understanding of what is being said. He should at least give the speaker a fair chance to complete what he is saying before coming up with a response.
- 14) **Respect Pauses or Silence:** Any good speaker would like to give himself sometime to think before he speaks; therefore, he may often pause during his speech. The listener must not fall into the trap of interrupting the speaker during these moments of silence.
- 15) **Respond Honestly:** When genuinely asked for his response, the listener should answer honestly if he wants something rewarding to emerge out of the discussion.
- 16) **Read between the Lines:** At times, what is not being said is also as important as what is being said. The listener must be alert to the mood, feelings, and attitude of the speaker which often reveals far more than the words he speaks. A strong feeling of empathy is needed from the listener for this purpose.
- 17) **Grasp the Total Meaning:** The listener should try to listen to and understand the message of the speaker in its totality. He should not make hurried assumptions or pass quick judgements regarding what is being said.
- 18) **Observe the Speaker's Gestures:** The listener should patiently and keenly watch out for or even note down the subtle, voluntary, or involuntary gestures of the speaker such as twitches of the face or movements of the hands or the tone or pitch of the speaker's voice as they could shed light on the speaker's honesty.
- 19) **Do not Pretend to Pay Attention:** If the listener is eager to learn something from the speaker's talk, he should be earnest and serious about grasping its essence. Just pretending to be a good listener by an outward show of listening silently and fake eye contact will not work for long and people who behave this way will miss out on the substance of the speaker's presentation. Moreover, if by chance the speaker questions such listeners at the end of his talk, they are in danger of being exposed and embarrassed.

- 20) **Do not be Prejudiced:** Listeners should keep aside personal prejudices about the speaker or his views and should analyse the subject matter of his speech on its own merit. For example, students often assume that lectures, especially by their teachers on topics from the syllabus, will necessarily be boring and do not pay attention to them. In doing so, they may miss out on learning something valuable from an expert on the topic.

### 2.3.11. Difference between Good Listeners and Poor Listeners

Basis	Good Listeners	Poor Listeners
1) Attention	Pays attention to the person who is speaking.	Interrupts the speaker.
2) Eye Contact	Keeps eye contact with the speaker.	Does not keep eye contact with the speaker.
3) Feedback	Gives feedback.	Does not give feedback.
4) Body Language	Use positive body language, facial expressions and verbal signals.	Use negative body language, facial expressions and verbal signals.
5) Questions	Listens with patience and then responds.	Asks no questions.
6) Ideas	Open to new ideas.	Resists new ideas.
7) Distraction	Fights distractions.	Can be easily distracted.

## 2.4. NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

### 2.4.1. Meaning of Non-Verbal Communication

Another special way of communication in which no words and sentences are used, is termed as non-verbal communication. It is also known by some other names such as indirect method of communication, communication by implication, or wordless communication. The sender can convey the message by using facial gestures and doing movements of limbs and body in a certain way. Such postures and signals also indicate the communication behaviour of the sender.

A communication that takes place without using any words or a language can be termed as non-verbal communication. Most of the communication that takes place among human beings is non-verbal communication. It may seem to be strange but according to a survey, about 70% of human communication takes place through non-verbal methods. Sometimes different colours are used to send across a message. For example, in traffic signals red light indicates 'to stop immediately', yellow light indicates 'to get set', and green light indicates that one should 'move'. Similarly, different symbols are used in traffic control and for warning people in certain conditions such as blind turn, school ahead, etc. In the same way arrows in different directions such as →, ↑, ↓, ← indicate movement in respective directions.



The factors that stimulate the non-verbal communication are of significance for the sender as well as for the receiver. These factors can arise from within the sender and/or from the environment where the communication is taking place. In other words, non-verbal communication takes place when a sender and a receiver communicate with each other without using the words and sentences.

Sometimes non-verbal communication is done intentionally whereas sometimes it is so unintentional that even the speakers and listeners are not aware of it. There are various elements that facilitate the verbal communication such as gaze, eye contact, volume of voice, vocal nuance, proximity, touch, gestures, face expressions, dress, intonation, smell or fragrance in the air, etc. Non-verbal communication is basically divided into two categories:

- 1) Non-verbal messages produced by the body.
- 2) Non-verbal messages produced by the broad setting (time, space, and silence).

According to Vaughan and Hogg, "Non-verbal communication is the transfer of meaningful information from one person to another by means other than written or spoken".

According to Cabbab and Cabbab, "Non-verbal communication is our primary mode to communicate feelings and emotions which we usually do not express verbally".

## 2.4.2. Characteristics of Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication possesses the following characteristics:

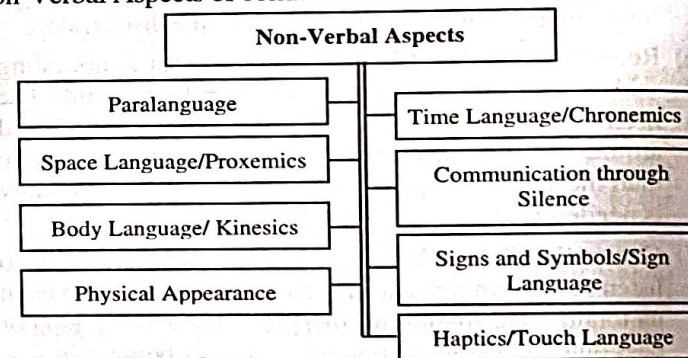
- 1) **It Primarily Communicates Emotions and Attitudes:** Messages that are communicated non-verbally can convey one's emotions such as unhappiness, praise, hatred, disappointment, etc., toward certain conditions or circumstances. One's ideas or opinion about a topic cannot be conveyed non-verbally.
- 2) **It Substitutes, Contradicts, Emphasises, or Regulates Verbal Messages:** Non-verbal cues act as a substitute to the verbal message. Mostly non-verbal gestures such as raising an index finger, nodding, moving ahead, bending forward, raising eyebrows, maintaining or changing eye contact, etc., regulate the flow of the communication. **For example**, a person may praise the cook after tasting a dish but his/her facial expression shows that the food was not as per the expectation.
- 3) **Non-Verbal Cues are often Ambiguous:** Certain cues or gestures are very difficult to interpret. Sometimes a 'wave of the hand' or a 'wink of an eye' may be understood in a completely different manner. Often it is observed that a person's verbal and non-verbal gestures do not complement each other and act as a barrier to effective communication.
- 4) **Non-Verbal Cues are Continuous:** It is a matter of general observation that even if the speaker stops conversing, his/her non-verbal gestures continue to convey a certain message. When a person tries to

mask a verbal message, even then it sends out a message. If there is a long silence at the dining table then it clearly tells, without using any words, that there is some issue between the family members.

- 5) **Non-Verbal Communication is viewed as more Reliable:** Non-verbal cues are considered more reliable in cases where any mismatch between verbal and non-verbal message of a speaker occurs. People tend to believe only non-verbal communication as they cannot be imitated and are real.
- 6) **Non-Verbal Cues are Culture Bound:** Non-verbal gestures generally cut across the various cultures of the world and correctly convey positive and negative message in a uniform way.  
**For example**, smile of a person always indicates his/her happiness while frowning on the other hand is an indicator of unhappiness. However, there are certain gestures that have different meanings in different cultures. Some gestures which are quite positive in one culture may be termed obscene in another.
- 7) **Non-Verbal Communication is Strongly Related to Verbal Communication:** Non-verbal gestures play the role of substitute in order to contradict, stress, or complement verbal message.

## 2.4.3. Classification/ Non-Verbal Aspects

Non-Verbal Aspects of communication are as follows:



### 2.4.3.1. Paralanguage

Paralanguage can be defined as the meaning that is derived from how a message is said whereas oral communication deals with the content of the message. This feature explains the difference as well as the association between paralanguage and oral communication. One cannot use paralanguage without using oral language. This relation between the two is similar to the one which exists between computer software and hardware. They do not have any value when separated from each other. This method helps in finding out the purpose for which a statement is made. This is a method which tells us how something is said rather than what is the literal meaning, i.e., it stresses the manner of saying something. It involves the study of pitch, amplitude, rate, and voice quality of speech. In other words, it simply means that more attention is paid to the manner of speaking rather than the words used in the statements.



### Importance of Paralanguage

The various benefits of paralanguage are as follows:

- 1) There is a great deal of proximity between paralanguage and language. It is an integral part of the message.
- 2) It gives an idea about one's national or regional background. It plays a significant role in understanding an individual and gives a hint how to deal with him/her.
- 3) Paralanguage also reveals the educational credentials of the person.
- 4) Paralanguage is also a gauge of the nationality or the region to which a person belongs.
- 5) The paralanguage also reveals a lot of the mentality of the person. The kind of voice quality and modulation of the speaker has a big impact on the message that is received.
- 6) One can get various academic indicators also from one's speech. A careful listener may learn a lot from a good speaker.

### 2.4.3.2. Time Language/Chronemics

Another type of non-verbal communication is time language. In time language, people convey messages to others in a way that emphasises the importance of time. Thus, time is symbolised in this way. Most often, we listen to the maxim, 'Time is money'. Here, people convey signals related to that importance of time, a specific point of time, and so on. Today, time management is the most significant aspect of effective business management.

The importance of time cannot be undermined in the business world. Keeping this in mind, various devices have been invented that helps in saving time. Generally, all forms of formal communication are time bound. Time plays a major role in increasing or decreasing the productivity. It makes all the difference whether an individual reaches on time or late. Time consciousness varies from culture to culture, e.g., people belonging to the eastern culture have a relaxed attitude towards time, while people of North America are very time conscious.

### Importance of Time Language/Chronemics

- 1) **Regulating Interaction:** This is done to elicit a change in the flow of conversation. For instance, the speaker may pause while speaking so that the audience may ask him a question. On the other hand, when he does not want people to ask any questions, his pace will be faster.
- 2) **Expressing Intimacy:** Changes are also made when relationships mature or become more intimate. The time that is spent on mutual gazes, time spent in joint activity or for the other person and time that is spent in planning for the future are examples of changes that are made.
- 3) **Affect Management:** The advent of strong feelings and emotions also has an impact. This can manifest in extreme emotions like boundless joy or heart wrenching grief. They can also lead to negative behaviour like reduced time of gaze and inordinate delays while having a conversation. In these situations

individuals should try to reduce the negative factors and try to increase positivity in relationships.

- 4) **Evoking Emotion:** Time can also be employed to communicate the emotions in a relationship. For example, a person may not get peeved when his/her spouse is late. However in a more professional setting, such behaviour can cause a very emotional outburst from the same individual.

### 2.4.3.3. Space Language/Proxemics

Proxemics refers to the study of understanding the way people utilise the physical space around them and what this utilisation reflects about them. Personal space feature can be defined as an invisible boundary that people create between them and other people. Four feature space categories or zones are shown in figure 2.3.

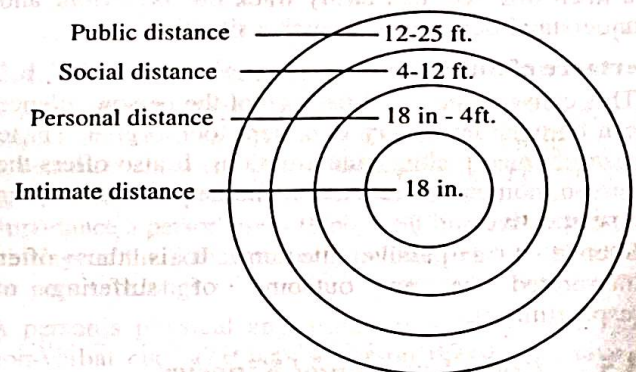


Figure 2.3: Personal Feature Space Categories

Usually, the people reserve their intimate zone for close relations and friends, which include a radius of up to 18 inches around them. The personal space, which may exceed from 1½ to 4 feet, also involves family members and friends. Cultural variations also influence the personal space of people. Some cultures are more open for intrusions into an individual's personal distance zone than the other cultures. Social distance zone of people generally extends from 4 to 12 feet. Most of business transactions are held into this zone. Public distance zone extends from 12 to 25 feet, which is the farthest zone at which one can communicate face-to-face effectively. Hence, after observing the physical space between two individuals, the relationship between them can be evaluated.

### Importance of Proxemics

- 1) The knowledge of proxemics can be useful in designing of an office or the way a commercial outlet is planned
- 2) Proxemics also helps in selecting the colour combination that should be used in workplaces. The study of this science helps to develop an understanding of the impact of various colours on the behaviour of people when keeping factors like culture, behaviour, perception, etc., in mind.
- 3) It is also helpful to an individual to create a good account of himself in a professional and personal life.



#### 2.4.3.4. Communication through Silence

Silence is a state where no verbal communication takes place and no words are being spoken. Communication can take place in a state of silence. Silence can be perceived as positive or negative as per the situation. Sometimes silence maybe interpreted as a consent to a request, whereas, sometimes it may read as a negative response. **For example**, if anyone asks for a loan and we remain silent then it will be taken as non-acceptance of request. In certain situations silence may also be interpreted as disinterest. Our interest in something or somebody freely flows through our communication and comes to our mouth and is visible through our eyes. Interest has an intrinsic factor of excitement; on the other hand, lack of interest is best spoken through silence. Sometimes, we also remain quiet to hold back our anger. But a keen observer can easily track our behaviour and can understand our silence in such a situation.

##### Importance of Silence

- 1) This conveys the mental makeup of the person. Silence can be regarded a very important tool to give vent to many human feelings and emotions. It also offers the person moments of relaxation and helps in developing a perspective.
- 2) Silence is a passive medium. It is thus often interpreted as an outcome of suffering or respectfulness.

#### 2.4.3.5. Body Language/ Kinesics

Kinesics or body language can be defined as an analysis of the body movement. It is a method of conveying the message without using verbal communication. This is done by using movements of different parts of the body. Almost all types of human emotions such as happiness, shock, surprise, regret, fear, sadness, etc., can be conveyed through body language. These are expressed through special movements of body and its limbs as well as through facial expressions. It refers to non-verbal signs that we use in conveying a message. It presents the mental and physical capability of an individual during a non-verbal communication. Different types of gestures, eye movements, body postures, etc., are an integral part of kinesics. Such types of signals are widely used unintentionally while communicating with people and they are interpreted in a certain way during their transmission. **For example**, if a good boss is reprimanding his employees without showing a sign of anger on his face, it shows he is worried about the improvement of performance of his employees and it is taken positively by the concerned employees and leads to positive results.

##### Elements of Body Language

Body language can be of the following types:

- 1) **Gestures:** Gestures need not only emanate from the face or the eyes, other parts of the human body also represent gestures. This can be in the way the individual moves his arms, his feet, his torso, etc. Gestures play a big role in communicating a message without use of words. **For example**, if one shows a thumb and a forefinger touching to make a circle it means OK.

In the same way, if one founds a fist on the table, it signifies anger while a forefinger held high above the head shows 'Number-1'. Similarly, if one's arms are spread apart these convey the meaning of 'wide' and if one shuffles from one leg to another it shows one's nervousness. Similarly one is understood to be in 'tension' or 'intense' if one's torso is erect and bent slightly ahead.

- 2) **Facial Expressions:** There is a saying that "the face is the index of the heart". In other words the face reflects what our innermost feelings are. These expressions of face play a vital role in face-to-face interaction. A lot of information can be passed on through expressions without saying a word. **For example**, facial expressions can convey a variety of emotions like delight, surprise, grief, satisfaction, etc.
- 3) **Eye Contact:** Eye contact has a great deal of importance in the art of communication. In fact when we communicate with someone we rely a lot on eye contact to gauge the meaning of the message that is being transmitted. The movement of eyes, eye balls, dilation or contraction of eye pupils, movement of eyebrows and eyelids convey the deepest feelings of one's mind.
- 4) **Posture:** Posture refers to the way a person stands, walks and sits down. The posture reveals a lot about an individual. It is not just a reflection of the person's attitude and mental state but also the kind of control that he has on the topic that he is speaking.
- 5) **Dress Code:** The dress that the person wears also has a role to play in communication. The dress includes the clothes that a person is wearing, the hair style, any accessories that one uses like watches, jewellery, perfumes etc. Though they may seem to not have a direct bearing on body language but they have a deep impact on the way the body language is perceived by the audience.

##### Importance of Body-Language/Kinesics

- 1) **Regulates the Flow of Communication:** Body language has a very important role of regulating and timing the flow of communication. **For example**, when two or more people interact, the body language cues indicate when the communicator has started and finished speaking.
- 2) **Substitutes Verbal Communication:** Body language can also be used as a substitute of verbal communication. **For example**, while talking with a person who is not interesting or tends to be boring, one can utilise body language to convey one's lack of interest by glancing at the watch or looking in some other direction.
- 3) **Conflicting:** Sometimes the body language is not synchronised with our verbal communication. At moments like this there can be a conflict. **For example**, you may tell someone that they made a great presentation but our body language may convey a totally different meaning. At moments like this people give greater importance to the body language than the words that are spoken.



- 4) **Accenting/Moderating:** Body language also plays a role of magnifying or moderating verbal communication. For example, a person may use a finger or a pointer to point something that is important in a presentation. Similarly a person may touch the arm of a child to point out a mistake.

#### 2.4.3.6. Signs and Symbols/Sign Language

In some situations, signs and symbols create a lasting impact. Now-a-days only use of verbal communication is not considered enough for a long lasting impression. So, all forms of codes that include visual signs, signals, etc., which are used in place of words, numbers and signs of punctuations, come under the 'sign language'. Communication is a process where messages and meanings are exchanged through sign/symbols that are mutually understood by the sender and the receiver. Most of the time, the signals or symbols used do not belong to a particular language like French, Hindi or English. These signs are not restricted by words and encompass different visual and audio signs. Man has been using drawings, sounds, pictures, etc., to communicate since the most ancient times.

Some common signs used by individuals are as follows:

- 1) **Eat, Hungry, Food, and Restaurant:** Patting the stomach, showing motion to open mouth.
- 2) **Do not Know:** Shrugging shoulders, raising hands and eyebrows.
- 3) **Money, Expensive, How Much:** Rubbing thumb and fingers together.
- 4) **Little:** Holding thumb and forefinger close together.
- 5) **Time:** Tapping of wrist.

#### Importance of Proxemics

- 1) The knowledge of proxemics can be useful in designing of an office or the way a commercial outlet is planned
- 2) Proxemics also helps in selecting the colour combination that should be used in workplaces. The study of this science helps to develop an understanding of the impact of various colours on the behaviour of people when keeping factors like culture, behaviour, perception, etc., in mind.
- 3) It is also helpful to an individual to create a good account of himself in a professional and personal life.

#### 2.4.3.7. Haptics/Touch Language

It refers to the study of 'art of touch' and it plays a great role in non-verbal communication. It includes handshakes, brushing an arm, patting on a shoulder, back slapping, holding hands, etc. There can be self-touching also like picking, picking, holding and scratching, etc. Sometimes a message is sent unwillingly through one's non-verbal activities like running fingers in hair, chewing nails, widdling with hands, etc.

Such non-verbal methods of communication actually give the idea of a person's involvement in the conversation process. These non-verbal gestures are widely known as adapters and can convey the real motive and purpose of communication as well as about the mind-set of the

speaker. Intimacy between people may be indicated by a number of non-verbal actions like smiling, touching, hugging, kissing, open body position and eye contact, etc. These are called immediacy behaviours. High contact cultures generally allow such public display of affection.

#### Importance of Haptics

- 1) It is an important social tool for the development of human beings. It can be motivating, persuasive or threatening.
- 2) It can be used to impart comfort and solace.
- 3) The touch plays the role of magnifying the content of the message. The importance of the message increases immensely if it is accompanied with a touch.
- 4) It is the most effective way of creating bonds with other human beings. The physical element of the touch reinforces the emotional connect between individuals.

#### 2.4.3.8. Physical Appearance

It gives an idea about a person's attitude towards life. First impression about a person is created by his/her physical appearance and personality. Generally, people develop an opinion about a person on the first meeting. The degree of importance a person gives to physical impression has a huge bearing on the social ranking, culture, or country to which the person belongs.

A person's physical appearance is a significant form of non-verbal cue. The way a person dresses-up says a lot about his background. For example, if an individual is well dressed for a formal dinner function, then he may be viewed as wealthy and successful by other guests. If a sales person of designer store is not well-dressed, people may not choose to purchase from that store.

#### Importance of Physical Appearance

- 1) **To Attract People:** There are advertisements which show the benefits of a clear skin or a particular type of hair style. These have a huge impact on moulding the attitude and thought process of people. The media shows being overweight or dark in a very negative way. This develops negative attitudes in the people for the above said persons. Therefore, in order to attract people, one should have a proper physical appearance. The dressing and body language should be simple and attractive. Physical appearance helps an individual to get the attention of the people.
- 2) **For Positive Approach:** People also feel impacted by how their peers and friends feel about them. Many a time they can develop a physical obsession about their physical appearance as a result. They often get the impression that a good physical appearance is important to be successful in society. Therefore, in order to have a positive approach towards the life a good physical appearance is essential.
- 3) **To Build Self-Confidence:** The self-confidence and assuredness of a person also improve if he/she has a good physical appearance. He/she has a better self-image and also a better opinion of his/her competencies. It creates a belief which is self-sustaining and this helps the



individuals to achieve success in life. It is, therefore, natural that everyone tries to have a good physical appearance and good looks.

- 4) **Face Value Matters:** It is very natural for human beings to be attractive to the opposite sex. There is a very strong psychological reason behind this. It is often seen that physical traits are given greater importance when a person is choosing his or her life partner.

#### 2.4.4. Advantages of Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal modes of communication can be passed-on quickly in almost all situations, if the receiver is alert enough to grab and understand them. Different benefits of non-verbal communication are listed below:

- 1) **Conveying Ideas:** Non-verbal communications are quite helpful in situations where one wants to convey ideas related to geography, maps, charts, graphs, data, etc. These communication methods can represent a large amount of information in a concise and compressed manner, and thus help a receiver to quickly understand the message. Using symbols, pictures, graphics, etc., persons can present a lot of information in a single page which would otherwise require a lot of pages, if written in verbal form.
- 2) **Effective in Traffic Control:** Non-verbal communication greatly helps in traffic control as drivers and pedestrians quickly notice non-verbal symbols and signals and become alert. As nobody has the patience and time to read written instructions, hence only traffic lights or pictorial forms of warning are used, which are quite effective. Similarly, warning sounds like a whistle or horn are quickly noticed and people immediately respond towards them.
- 3) **Conveying Information through Symbols:** Non-verbal communications are widely used for conveying information to illiterate people through symbols. **For example**, poisonous substances contained in bottles or packets always have a picture of a human skull with crossed bones. Similarly, power stations in certain areas where electric poles are pitched and which are considered danger zones have such a picture as warnings to common citizens. Such symbols are quite helpful for those persons who cannot understand written language or words.
- 4) **Communication with Physically Disabled Persons:** Non-verbal modes of communication significantly help people with physical disability to send or receive information with each other. By using facial gestures, touch, and signs, they easily communicate with other people as well as among themselves.
- 5) **Privacy:** Non-verbal communication is person-centric, i.e., it is directed either on an individual or on a selected group. It is helpful for exchanging information in situations where maintaining secrecy or privacy of the data is essential. People also use sign language to privately communicate to each other. Hence, this method can secretly communicate all the messages.

**For example**, if a person wants to convey something to his/her friends, he/she must use pre-decided gestures, codes, or signals for passing the information. Secret services or detective departments of defence and crime generally make use of such a means for their day-to-day work.

- 6) **Easy Expression of Feeling:** Verbal communication has certain limitations as in many cases, words cannot describe certain feelings. Whereas, non-verbal communication is limitless and almost every human emotion, direction, inner feeling, and personality can be effectively conveyed to the audience.

#### 2.4.5. Disadvantages of Non-Verbal Communication

Following are the disadvantages of non-verbal communication:

- 1) **Non-Verbal Signs are Unclear:** Unlike verbal communication, which conveys only one meaning, non-verbal communication is entirely different, as it uses various means such as gestures, facial expressions, body language, touch and appearance as well as dressing pattern. Each of these means convey a different meaning, which is not accurate or precise and hence creates doubts or misinterpretation. Therefore, a person sending non-verbal signals can never be sure about the way it would be taken by the audience.
- 2) **Non-Verbal Signs are Continuous:** A person can restrict himself from talking but nobody can stop non-verbal signals as they are continuous and form an inherent part of one's personality. In verbal communications, there is a definite structure and topic, which can be altered by listening to the words. However, this is not the case in non-verbal communication.
- 3) **Non-Verbal Signs are Multi-Channel:** Often, the different channel of non-verbal communication do not coincide with each other and create misunderstanding. **For example**, sometimes one's eye contact may not be accompanied by appropriate hand gestures, which may lead to confusion. Many persons do it unknowingly, as non-verbal gestures, signals, body movements, or language is generally interpreted by subconscious mind and in a stylish manner. It may happen in a quick, fair, and a correct way. It becomes very difficult to find out what impressed a person and what made him unhappy.
- 4) **Non-Verbal Signs are Culture-Bound:** It is a factual understanding that all human beings would feel pleasure and pain in the same manner and under same conditions. If a person belonging to one culture sends a happy text to another person of different culture, then under a happy situation he/she would also smile. Hence, it can be said that some gestures are universally known, interpreted, and accepted. However, in case of non-verbal communication, some symbols or gestures are interpreted differently in different cultures. Gestures which are considered quite positive in the U.S.A., such as thumbs up gesture, may be considered as a negative sign in other cross-cultural nations.



- 5) **First Impressions do Count:** People send strong non-verbal messages during the first meetings. The manner in which a person listens, stands, and reacts, tells others much more about him than what he is saying. This can work as someone's advantage, but the drawback is that people are uninformed about the non-verbal messages they are conveying, due to which sometimes they may give a wrong impression unknowingly.

## 2.4.6. Difference between Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

Table 2.1: Difference between Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

Verbal Communication	Non-Verbal Communication
Verbal communication depends on written and oral forms of language.	Non-verbal communication depends on non-verbal cues like facial expressions, eye contact, body language, and so on.
Formal training can impart competence in the use of verbal communication.	It is less structured. There is no formal training to gain excellence in the use of non-verbal means of communication.
Words are used with a definite connotation.	It is difficult to say what non-verbal symbols mean. <b>For example</b> , smile on your face may be interpreted differently by different people.
The words of a speaker may not openly convey his actual meaning and feelings.	True feelings and intentions of the speaker can be read and understood by one armed with a knowledge of what non-verbal signs really mean.
Sometimes words alone fail to convey message effectively.	Non-word cues support and supplement the message being conveyed in words. They can reinforce the meanings we intent in our verbal messages.
It is more structured; hence it is easier to study.	It less structured, hence it is more difficult to study.
Verbal communication is usually thought out, less spontaneous.	Non-verbal communication is more spontaneous. Often, when we communicate non-verbally, we do it unconsciously.
Verbal cues are less reliable. They may be deceiving.	Non-verbal cues are supposed to be more reliable than words.