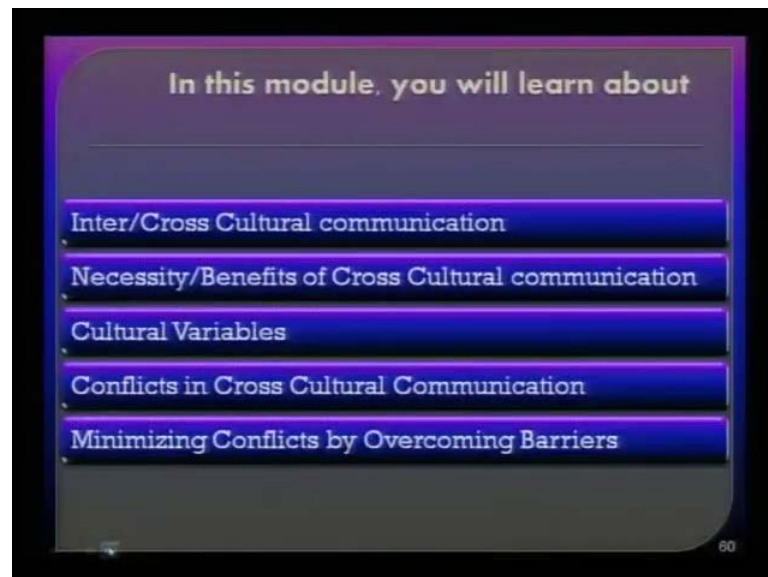**Communication Skills**
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Lecture - 37

Hello and welcome to NPTEL course on communication skills. We are now on a very interesting part of this module, module number 11 and this is the concluding part. Lecture number 4 on cross cultural communication, which is otherwise called as intercultural communication also.

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Now, so far in the past three lectures I have been trying to tell you or trying to define and describe what is inter or cross cultural communication. Then I talked about the necessity, the benefits which go with this cross cultural communication, and the cultural variables the various dimensions is which we look at the variables. Followed by some of the conflicts that we may be facing, in case we are not aware of the cultural variables and in this one I will be just continuing from the previous lecture.

I will be focussing more on the environmental variables, the perceptional variables and then I will also talk about roles, which play a very key role in cross cultural communication. Then I will conclude by giving some tips on overcoming some of the conflicts that will come due to lack of this knowledge, in relation to cross cultural communication.

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Now, in the previous lecture I just concluded with just making a passing reference to certain aspects of environment.

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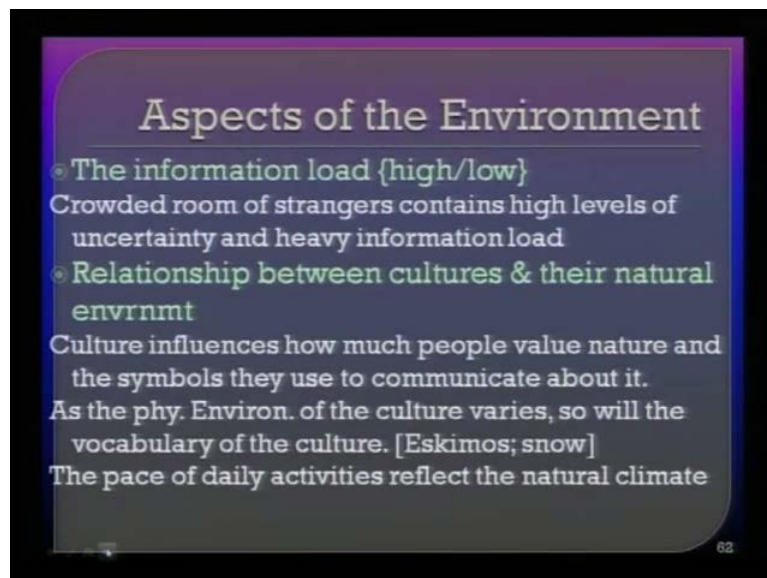
Now, let us look at those aspects of environment in detail, aspects of environment now the environment itself is loaded always with information. Now, information in a communication sense where we are able to take cues from that and we are able to gather the message that is available from the cues. Now, depending on the environment the information load can be high or it can be low, so we call environment itself as highly

loaded environment, heavily loaded environment or low load environment. Now, for instance the crowded room, a room that is crowded or a space like mall where there is so much crowd, a crowded room of strangers will definitely contain high levels of uncertainty and heavy information load.

The opposite is also true a very calm room, such as the interior room of a person, the study room where he is discussing with somebody else on a topic. Now, the load is reduced it is low. Now, what is interesting here is there are communication theorist, there are people who are working on cultural studies, who try to identify how environment is playing a very key role they are actually like Albert Mehrabian. People like him study the environment and see how it is influencing the communication part of cross cultural communication. Now, they say the relationship between cultures and their natural environment go again hand in hand.

Now, culture influences how much people value nature and the symbols they use to communicate about it. So, as a physical environment of the culture varies, so will the vocabulary of the culture, this means the environment itself is giving us the vocabulary the way we speak and the way we think. Take for example, eskimos snow for non-eskimos refers only to snow, but for eskimos it can refer to various types of snow and they use different words. May be there are about 11 variations or so to indicate what other people will generally call a snow, but for the Eskimos, they are variations. So, depending on the culture so there are variations and the vocabulary itself is formed according to those variations.

So, it is very necessary to understand there is variation that is happening because of environment. Even the pace of daily activities reflect the natural climate, this means in some cold environment the working hours are different. People go home yearly they may even come late depending upon the snowfall, rain etcetera. In some cases the tropical environment again the work hour hours are different, people may take a nap go for a siesta in the afternoon because it is so hot. Then they work till late hours sometimes the shops are open till 10 o clock, 11 o clock, 12 o clock and in places where it is cold, the shops are getting closed by 7, 7:30 PM in the evening. So, even the work hours are changed, accordingly people modify their food habits, eating habits, even socializing changes according to the environment.
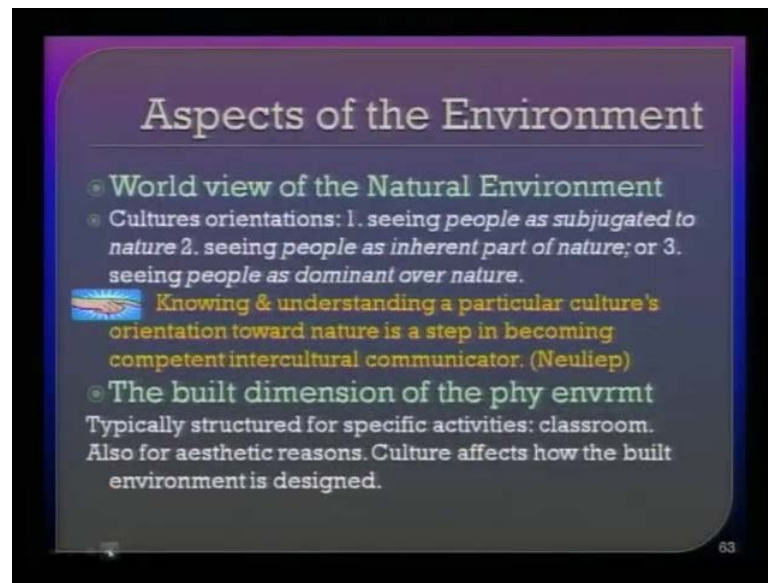
Again to continue with the aspects of environment, the world view of the natural environment again changes. Now, people have pointed out that we have cultural orientations according to the world view. Now, one in certain culture people are oriented towards seeing people as subjugated to nature, this means nature is supreme, nature is divine, nature is god like all powerful and people are subjugated to nature. Now, in certain other culture people are oriented towards nature culturally, seeing people as inherent part of nature. So, people are not different, human beings are not different from nature they are part of nature itself, including them its nature.

Now, there are certain other cultures where people are used to seeing people as dominant over nature. So, in this case what happens people see as supreme power, man is endowed with the power to control, govern, change, subjugate nature. So, most of the highly developed countries, western countries, the United States in particular, many parts of it the notion is that human being can control nature. So, you have huge dams, big roads, so lot of constructions, indoor courts, they are all at the cost of destroying nature and telling nature. That look we can control we can govern you, we can have our own things and you can be subjugated to our own desire and wishes.

So, you can look at the world view itself changing and the role of human being in a subjugated position, in an equal position and in a dominant position are given as per the world view that is shown towards nature and the surrounding. Now, what Neuliep says

knowing and understanding a particular cultures orientation toward nature is a step in becoming competent intercultural communicator. Before reaching the land if you have an idea as how the people are oriented towards nature it helps you to synchronize yourself with their natural clock, natural way of responding to the environment and you will be in a better frame of mind, you will be more receptive to receive. Some of the differences which are culture based, but nevertheless for you it appears to be quite different.

Then the built dimension of the physical environment, that also plays a very characteristic role. The built dimension how much space is given to some buildings, in some place you have skyscrapers, in some place you have a single storeyed building, you do not find anything more than that. And the space itself some of the malls occupy so much space in some place there are no malls at all. So, they are typically structured for specific activities, in terms of physical environment we have buildings such as which are meant for classroom, some buildings are meant for auditorium, some for indoor activities some for games, etcetera.

Now, they are also structured for aesthetic reasons, this means culture affects how the built environment is designed. So, in certain culture they plan certain buildings in such a manner for instance, even the classrooms of one culture need not be the same way in some other culture. The construction of the classrooms itself differs, even the infrastructure the model itself differs, in some culture students sit on a semicircle form on surrounding a round table. In most of the other cultures the teacher is on the one side on the black board side and rest of the students are on the desks and so on. So, the environment itself changes according to the culture.
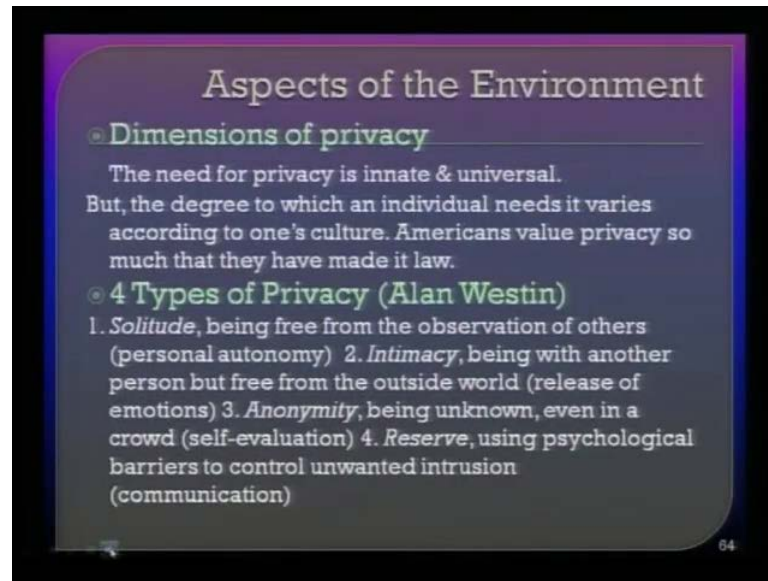
Then, another interesting aspect of environment is the dimensions of privacy, how is privacy seen in relation to the environment and what kind of attitudes are prevailing in terms of giving respecting privacy? Now, on the one hand you will understand and accept that the need for privacy itself is innate and universal. Innate its comes from within, so there are times when we all would like to be in a socializing mood, we want to be in the crowd and then there are times we want to be left alone.

So, that desire is coming from within and it is universal, everybody has this wish to be private maintains ones privacy sometime or other. But cultural variations are possible, there are some people coming from a culture we want, they want highly private moments, more of privacy and then there are other cultures which are so crowded and there is less time and space given to privacy. Now, the degree to which an individual needs it, varies according to ones culture Americans value privacy, so much that they have made it law, its legal one can demand us a right in America with regard to privacy.

That is not the case in most of the other countries, in most of the other countries when somebody's privacy is violated the other person cannot take that as a legal offence, whereas in U S it is possible. Then there are people who point out types of privacy, there are some who point out six and then Alan Westin points out four, this four types itself is quite interesting and then if you are aware of this, this is fine the other variations talking about six and all that are slightly detailing the four variations.

Now, let us look at the four types of privacy, the first one he categorises is solitude and which is considered as being free from the observation of others. Solitude is considered being free from the observation of others and so much personal autonomy is given here. The second type is intimacy, now this is being with another person, but free from the outside world. So, only restricting the outside world, but giving some space and time to the person that one likes to be with, so it can be friends or family, but generally in intimacy what happens is the release of emotions, it is at a emotional level people are close.

The third one is anonymity, the unknown stature, now this is just trying to be unknown and even in a crowd this can happen, in fact people who would like to, celebrities who would like to go and disappear in a crowd that does not know that the person is a celebrity. So, they would like to merge, mingle, this is just for self evaluation. And the fourth one is just maintaining reserve, here using psychological barriers to control unwanted intrusion. Now, this time when the person is maintaining reserve, the person can be in crowd, the person can be alone, the person can be in a small group, but the person has already constructed. Erected a kind of psychological barrier and decided not to let unwanted intrusion especially in terms of communication.

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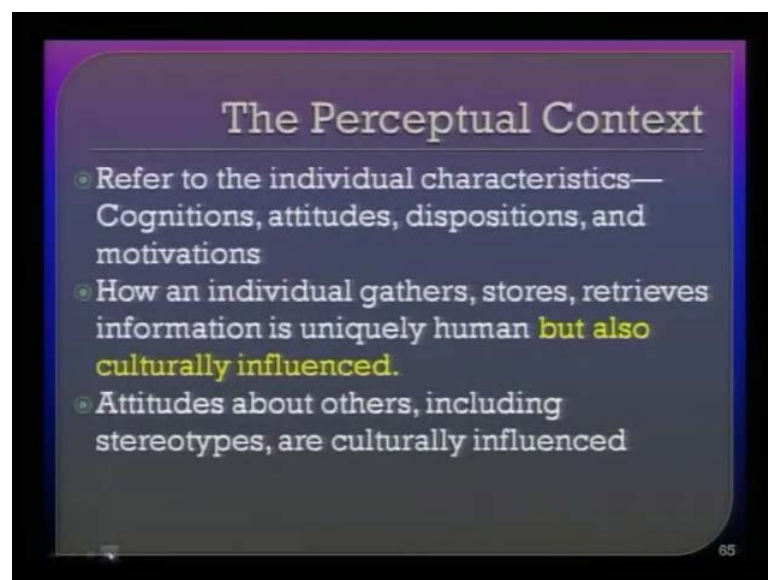
Now, the next interesting context one should carefully notice the perceptual context. How we perceive things, although we think are normal to us, varies, changes, depending

on culture, depending on background, depending on environment, depending on the values, depending on the attitudes, that we have developed depending on one's own assumptions. So, this is very important and it is a very key factor in cross cultural communication, the perceptual context simply refers to the individual characteristics, such as cognitions, attitudes, dispositions and motivations. How an individual gathers, stores, retrieves information is uniquely human, which means if two people are there looking at the same picture and trying to get the same message.

But the way they will gather it, they will store it, they will retrieve it, its uniquely human, but also culturally influenced. The way they receive is uniquely human, but the way they are going to store it, retrieve it, is also culturally programmed or influenced. Attitudes about others including stereotypes are culturally influenced and then there are theorist who argue that we cannot have any kind of opinion, any kind of assumptions, any kind of information stored in our memory without having these cultural traces. And traces of stereotypes traces of negative evaluation or positive evaluation injected through our prejudices and biases, which are again controlled by our attitudes and values which are given to us by the sociocultural setup.

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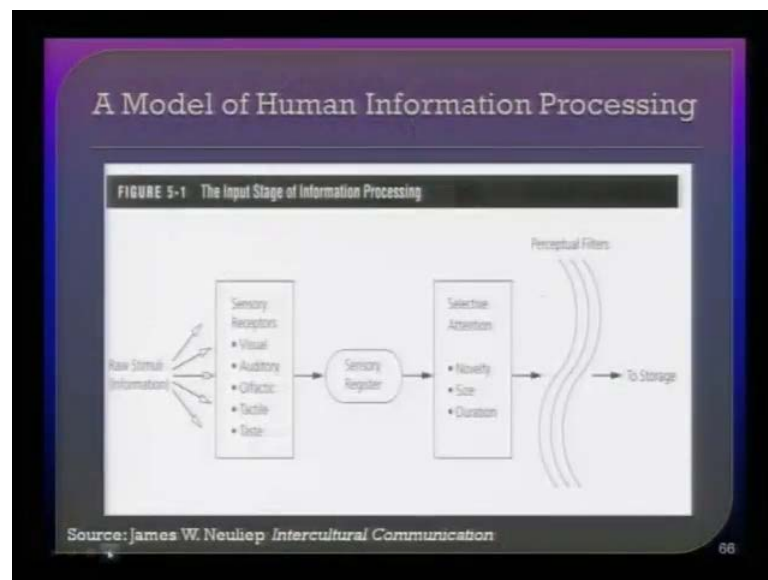
This is another model suggested by Neuliep and this module is just telling us how information is being processed and where we are interested in. As far as the perceptual context is concerned is this part where perceptual filters come. Now, before that let us

look at what is happening the raw stimuli is coming in the form of information and then this stimuli is actually received through sensory receptors, you know that only through these senses we make all the learning and interpretation possible. So, visual, auditory, visual is we receive through eyes, auditory we receive through ears, olfactic is using the sense of smell and then tactile using the sense of touch and then taste itself using our tongue and tasting it.

Now, once you do that either you see it, feel it, sense it, smell it, taste it, you make a sensory register in the mind, that is fine up to this it looks like very physiological and objective and scientific, but the next part is more culturally bound and then which is very important for cross cultural communication. The next part is the selective attention, now what makes the attention selective is something that is culturally bound, why is it some people are interested in some aspects of communication and some others are not interested in that and why they pay attention to that particular aspect. Now, it may be because of the novelty its attracting somebody, the size, the duration in which the stimuli is transmitted in the form of message.

Although, it is given selective attention to these aspects, the next thing that happens is storage and before storage there are perceptual filters. Now, the filters decide and determine what to be stored, how long to be stored and whether it should be stored in a positive sense or in a negative sense. All the things are decided by the perceptual filters and how do we perceive them, we do that based on the cultural colouring which are given to our own vision. Now, in the next few slides I am going to show you very successive pictures, which will tell us our perceptional error very quickly and you will be able to understand what I mean by perceptional errors and what kind of problems come along with this.
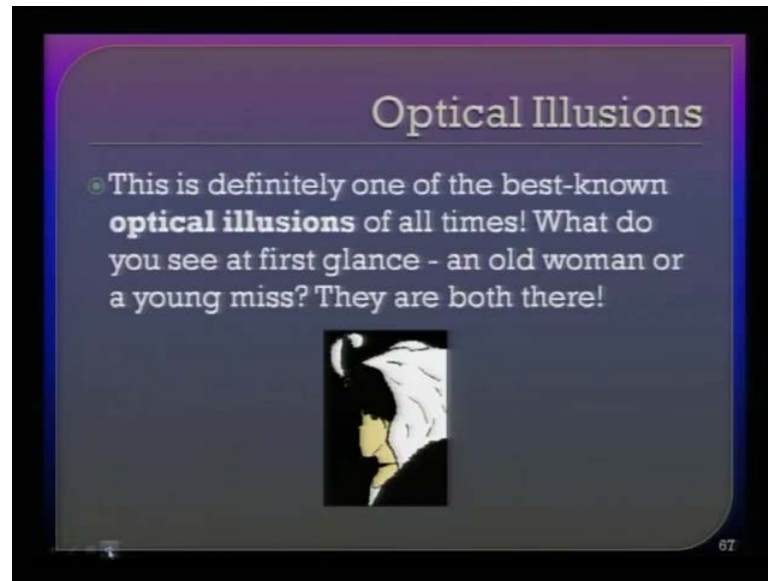
Look at optical illusions which is one important and significant and key factor associated with perceptual errors. Now, if you look at this picture and there are couple of others which I am going to show and there are so many hundreds of others which are available on the net and on so many books on perceptual errors particularly with regard to optical illusions. Now, what do you see at the first sight and its one of the best optical illusions picture that shown all times. Now, what do you see as at the first glance, is it a old woman who is very raggered and may be shivering in cold and she has put a scarf or do you see a young women, so she also has something on the head and if you look at the young woman this is her face.

Now, if you look at the old woman this is her nose actually and mouth and chin are just below. Which one do you look at it is the old woman or the young woman or are you able to look at both? You know most of the cases first instance you look at either one of them and after long time you realise that there is something else, rare chance is there that you look at both of them together.

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The same thing about this one, the whole family mind teaser, father with mother and daughter. So, you will find that, so this side you have a face, so you find the father with moustache and all that and then you also have mother merged inside and then the daughter is also here on this side. You know at one go at one glance how many images your mind will gather and when you see a picture like this, do you consider only the male who is there or the woman or the young girl. Know this is actually determined by the cultural inputs that you have got and this is also determined by the kind of vision that we have. As far as looking at pictures are concerned that is why it is called as optical illusion.
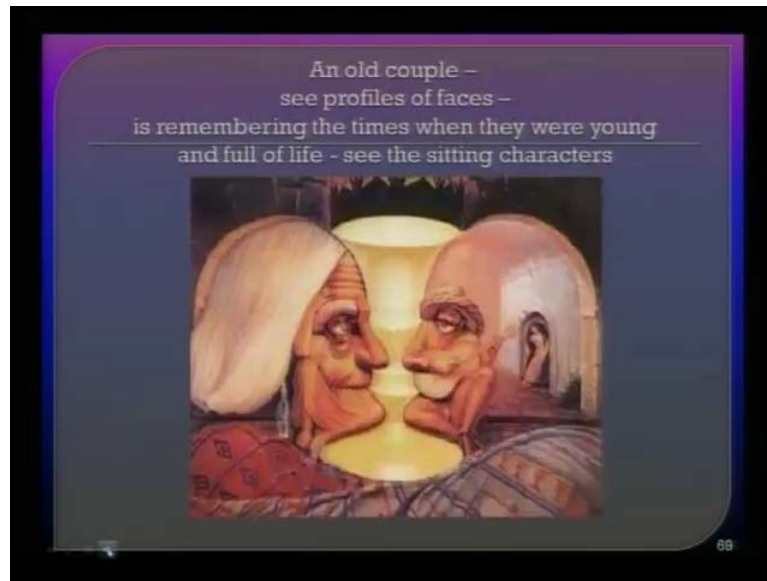
Look at this one it is an old couple, but if you see the profiles of faces. So, they are also remembering the times when they were young and full of life. Now, what is interesting is on the one hand it is just the old women and the old man, but inside you will also find a vase, may be a wine cup or a vase it is also there inside. But you should also note the people who are young and full of life and living a gay free and happy life. So, three pictures, three scenarios, three objects are embedded into one, know which one you see first and which one you do not see at all even after I explained this.
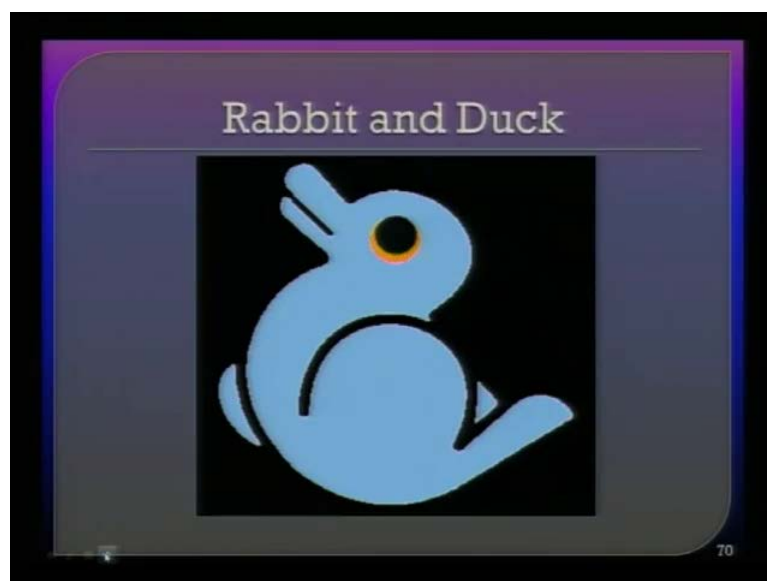
So, these things matter, which one do you see immediately it is a rabbit or a duck, so if you look at from this side you will find a rabbit, but if you look at this beak and then if you take this as eyes and this is probably legs you will find the duck also. Depending on whether it is duck or rabbit this can be tail or leg or the feather. So, which one do you look at the beginning rabbit or duck.

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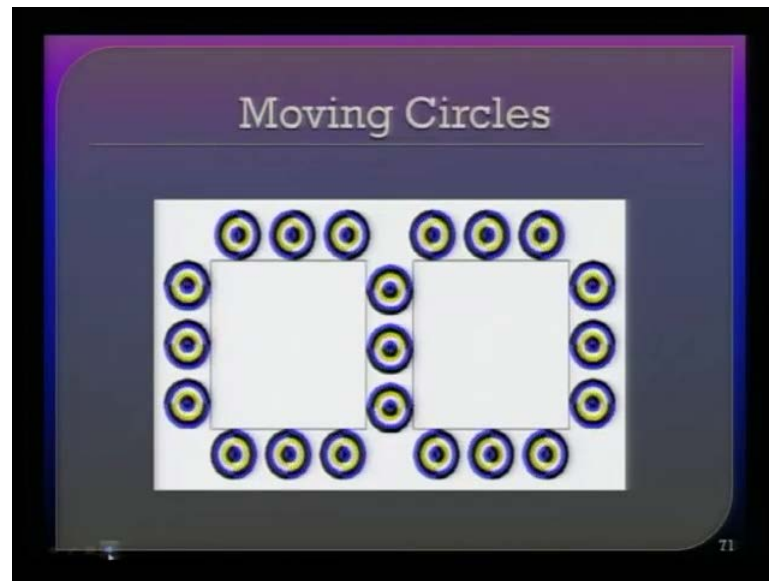
Then if you look at it for a long time, you will get the illusion that these circles are actually moving, but as you know since I am showing it in a frozen form, you will not be able to see. But just I wanted you to tell you that even when you think that they are moving, actually they are not moving they are fixed.
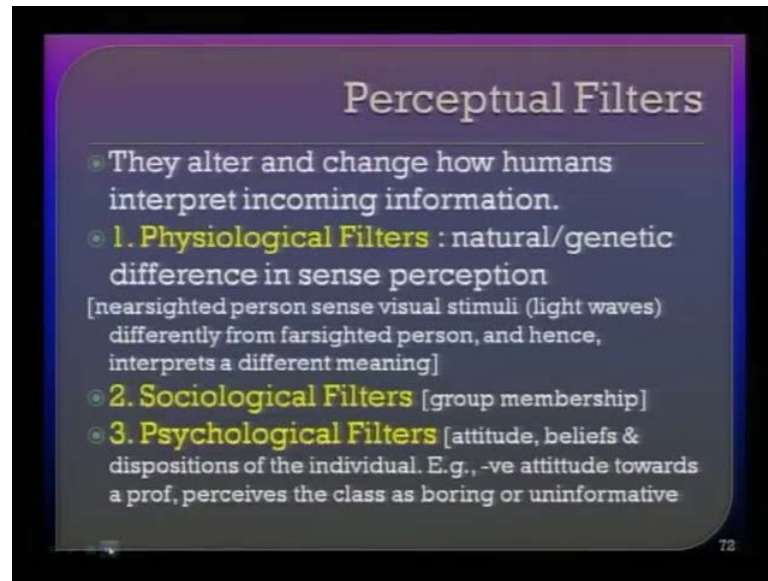
So, these are some perceptional errors which we may commit due to optical illusions, so perceptual filters again are very crucial what do they do, they alter and change how humans interpret incoming information. So, we have physiological filters, which are natural and genetic and so they saw difference in sense perception. Which means near sighted person senses visual stimuli differently form a far sighted person, so that means the light waves which are received by the near sighted person and the far sighted person are different and hence they interpret different meanings.

Same thing goes with people with good vision, who do not wear spectacles and those who wear spectacles and then the type of the power that they have in the spectacles, they also determine and decide the kind of interpretation they take from the environment, as far as visual perceptions are concerned. This is physiological, this is determining what one does physically and the second is sociological filters, this refers to group membership. So, you belong to your group you belong to a community, you belong to a particular social setup, so you like the members of that setup.

You develop a kind of antipathy towards the non members and you develop hatred against those people who are in the other group, which do not share similar ideas as your group. So, this is kind of sociological filters and then psychological filters, this is much more dangerous and crucial than the other two ones, because this is to do with attitude, beliefs. And if you remember the iceberg analogy that I showed you, these attitudes

beliefs are shown in a different form, that they are at the root, they are at the rock bottom, but outside you see only some behaviour. But you do not know why the person is behaving like that because the person has particular belief, particular attitude and dispositions of the individual.

For example, negative attitude towards a professor, negative attitude towards a class teacher, will very much make the person perceive the student perceive the class as a boring or very uninformative one, because the person has a negative perception. Somehow or other about this teacher, about this professor, the person will always think that the class is boring or he will try to find some negative quality about the teacher or other, so this is a kind of perceptual filter

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Now, the other thing that goes with perceptual filter is categorization and mental economy. What do we mean by this categorization and mental economy? In categorization, it is a kind of strategy that is used to economize the information overload which we are getting. What does it mean? So, we may do some kind of categorizations, maybe we can do it sometimes zodiacally, we may think that the person who is belonging to a particular zodiac sign such as aries, will have these qualities. Then immediately you ask a person what is you sign the person says I am aries, immediately you just categorize the positive and the negative. Then you impose certain things which

the person may or may not have and then you look at the person from that kind of categorization.

So, categorization can happen at various level, because the information load is so high, we go for a kind of economy. So, it is a common form of information processing and it is a strategy used by humans to economize memory storage by classifying, sorting or arranging information into identifiable compartments that share certain common characteristics. You identify categorize and put them according to the common characteristics so that you are easily able to retrieve them as and when it is required.

But what is the problem with this, on the one hand it is easy for memory, easy to retrieve store and collect information, but on the other hand what are we doing. We are compressing, suppressing information and especially with regard to a person we are just compressing some characteristics. And we are putting into a category and attributing something which the person may not have. So, this is doing injustice to the persons own inherent nature and harming cultural cross cultural communication.

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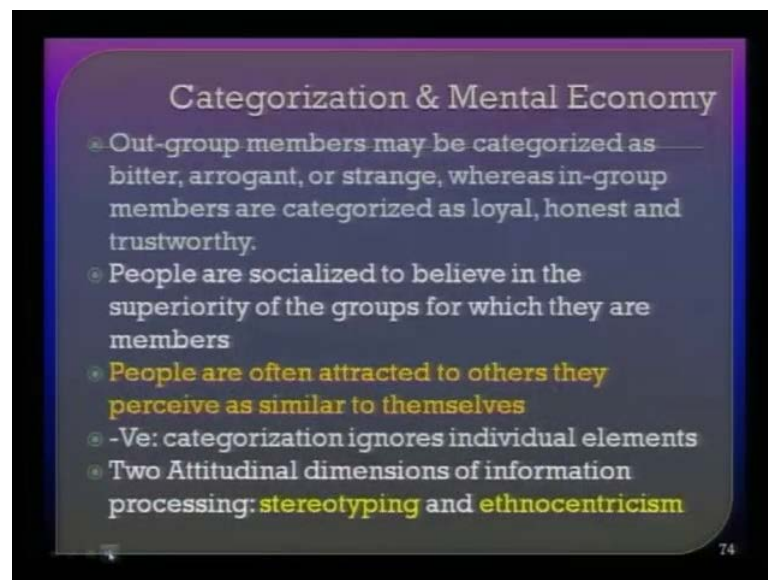
Now, what happens in this kind of categorization, out-group members as against in-group members, so if I am in the group I am part of that in-group. So, out-group members may be categorized as bitter, arrogant or strange, so however good they are some kind of negativity will be attributed to those out group members. Whereas in-group members are categorized as loyal, honest and trust worthy, out group members are

always looked with suspicion, so in group members are always appreciated for their honesty or loyalty. So, people are socialized to believe in the superiority of the groups for which they are members, this means whichever group they belong to they believe that that group is superior that is the best one.

So, much so they start thinking that the rest of the groups are bad. So, this is what is happening in house making tea making, so once somebody follows joins one house, one group, one team. The person automatically starts believing that the team that, he has joined is good superior and the rest of the teams, rest of the groups, rest of the houses are inferior not that superior and so on. People are often attracted to others, even in terms of relationship; people are often attracted to others whom they perceive a similar to themselves. I like you because you are like me, which actually amounts to saying that I like myself and most of the times people say that yes we always like ourselves. And only when we think that somebody is behaving like us, performing like us we like the other person.

So, even there our prejudice is very much there, our perceptual filters are just coming and interfering. Certain things are considered negative, with regard to categorization what are they? Categorization ignores individual elements, this means when you start stereotyping somebody, when you start putting somebody into a mould and then looking at the person you ignore the individual traits. If you say that people from this part of India they are all political. Now, there may be a person who has no idea of politics and he is so naive and he could be exploited by so many people and so many people have already exploited him he has no sense of manipulation and he lets people do that and then he does not feel bad about it.

Now, this person is an exception and he has a different characteristic trait, but when you stereotype you will also say, no he is also from that place, so he will also be like that only. So, the second one, we should know that apart from this negative thing that is happening in categorization. There are two attitudinal dimensions of information processing one is stereotyping and another one is ethnocentrism, both are again dangerous. Stereotyping I kept referring to, even when I was talking about categorization.

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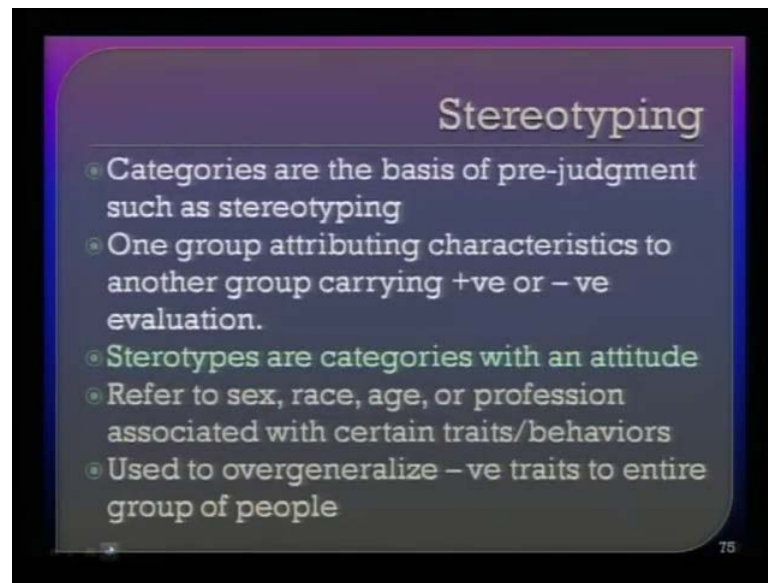
Now, in stereotyping what happens, categories or the basis of pre-judgment such as stereotyping? So, we think generally that we are making categories and we are making a very objective kind of categorization, but actually we should realize that categories are the basis of pre-judgment such as stereotyping. We tend to stereotype that is why we also categorize. One group attributing characteristics to another group carrying positive or negative evaluation is typical of stereotyping. This group is always positive, but the other group is always negative, so that is stereotyping. You can also say that stereotypes are categories with an attitude, they are categorized, but an attitude is there. They refer to sex, race, age or profession associated with certain traits and behaviours.

So, as you can understand sex is something biological, but then gender is something that is given. So, sometimes they will attribute roles, depending on sex, depending on race they will attribute characteristics, depending on age or depending on profession. For instance somebody from the profession of lawyer, people will generally say he may tell any kind of lies and he may escape. And there may be a person who must have never told any lie in his whole career, he may not be that successful as a lawyer, but he may be having the principle that he will never speak a lie.

Now, in that case again we are amounting to stereotyping, based on profession. Now, generally stereotyping is used to over generalize, so especially negative traits to entire

group of people. So, over generalization and negativity, association amounts to stereotyping.

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Now, look at this picture very quickly and most of the times when people are asked what did you see, they say Delhi in the spring. Now, they are again and again asked what do you see, they say Delhi in the spring, rarely people observe the duplication of the article then, it is actually Delhi in the spring. Now, what does it mean we do not read this as Delhi in the spring, if we read this as Dehli in the spring. Meaning we will read we will receive, only what we want to see and receive, we will ignore that we do not want to see, that we do not want to retrieve in our mind.
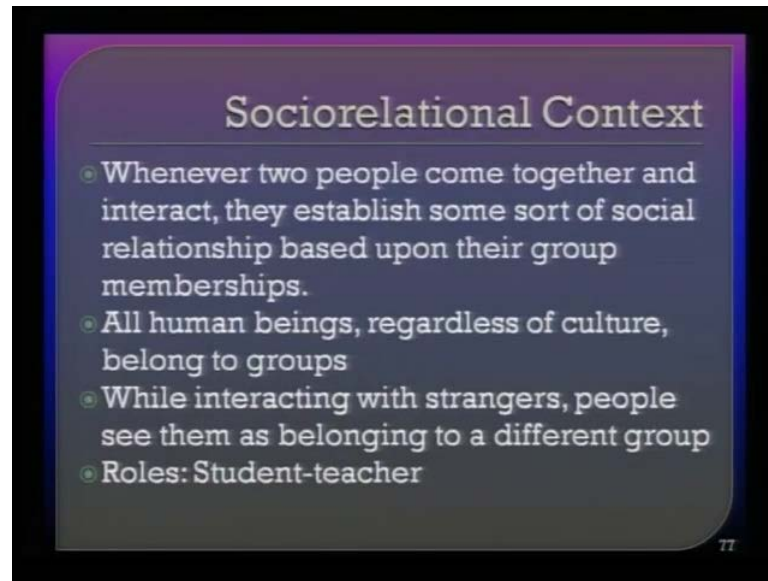
So, stereotypes in that sense distort social perception itself, now not only just distorting the social perception. People perceive what they wish to perceive, regardless of reality, as I show that in this example, they will just see what they wish to see and what they wish to perceive. Regardless of the objective, tangential reality that is just in front of them. Then all categorize, stereotype and to some extent are ethnocentric and racist, so we think again that whenever we form categories or whenever we tend to stereotype people. We think that they are just free from any cultural bias, but actually to some extent they are all ethnocentric and racist.

So ethnocentric you understand that ethno actually literally refers to nation, centric is referring to the centre. So, the belief that one's own nation and one's own cultural values is at the centre and in terms of racist, so thinking that one's own race is the superior one and rest of the races are not that superior. So, this takes us to the socio-relational context and in this context we just try to see how people enact the roles whenever they come across with each other. So, whenever two people come together and interact, they establish some sort of social relationship, based upon their group memberships. So, all human beings regardless of culture belong to groups, you cannot say that I belong to any group.

It may be a group based on your profession, it may be a group based on your religion, it can be a group based on your eating habits, it can be a group based on your birth place

and so on. So, while interacting with strangers people see them as belonging to a different group, so that is where roles picture in. So, the typical role that most of the times we play in academic institutions is that of student, teacher. Now even these roles of a student and teacher are culturally given, which means in some culture the student will go and touch the foot of the teacher; in some culture the teacher especially the highly developed ones would like to give a gentle pat on the head to encourage.

But certain cultures like the one that is coming from Thailand and all that a pat is considered as something that is not that appreciable, because head itself is considered a very holy part of the body, so patting there is not considered appreciable. So, you can see the cultural variations according to the role one plays which are culturally bound and one has to modify especially when he is going to a new environment and new culture. I will just talk about more on the roles and how it determines the socio-relational context. Then after that I will start giving you some tips as how you can actually avoid the conflicts, which will come because of ignorance towards the variables which are cultural and the perceptional errors which we are likely to commit, I will just discuss about them in the next few slides.

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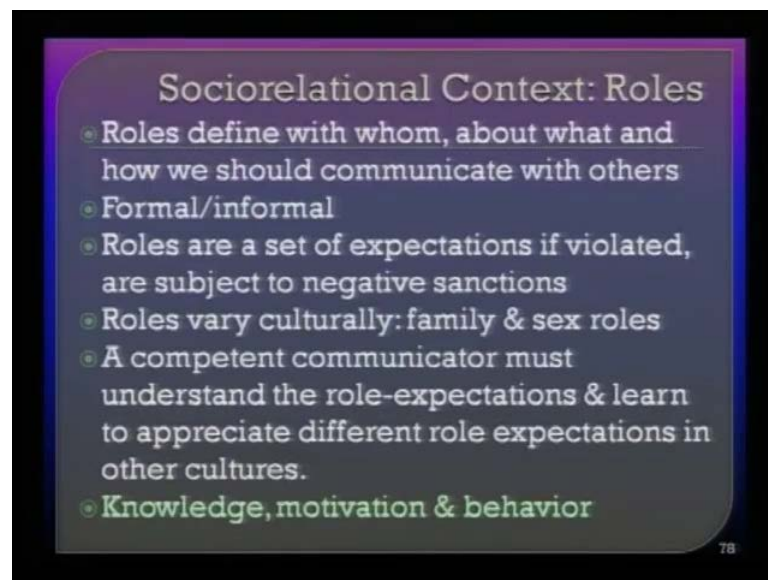
Now, let us look at roles in a socio-relational context. Roles define with whom, about what and how we should communicate with others. So, it defines with whom, this means if somebody is your superior, somebody is your friend, somebody is just your brother, so

with whom are you interacting and about what. Now, suppose you are talking about needing to buy a notebook to your brother and then suppose you are talking about the person whom you are interested in. Then you want to be married to that person. Now, the what changes and then especially if the person whom you are interested in is coming from a different family set up, different cultural background, speaking different language and then if your family happens to come from a conservative background how do you present this subject? What?

And depending on your role, you are already, if you are in a subjugated role it is very difficult to present this. So, roles actually determine this part of communication with whom, with what and how we should communicate with others. Now, the role itself will decide whether it is a formal one or informal one and all of us perform different roles, we do that informally we do that formally. So, take the life of an ordinary person, so let us say he is the father, now the father plays the formal role as a father, in occasions, functions, etcetera and informal role also when he plays with the kids, when he cracks jokes with them.

Then the father also plays a very highly formal and professional role when he goes to his office and interacts in a presentation, meeting with his other colleagues or let us say he is representing his institute, representing his firm and he is travelling somewhere and he has to give a presentation about the institution or share some vital information in a meeting again he is highly formal. Now, the formal informal is again determined by roles, the informal again as I said one can be informal in a relationship once it is developed giving some time and space. But it is very difficult to be informal generally with strangers, so we treat strangers at a very formal level.

However better we know the person, we need some time and space to interact with the same stranger at a very informal level or in a meeting which is quite formal we are very formal with stranger, but during the dinner time when the stranger himself is in a light hearted mood, we also start interacting with the person in an informal manner. So, the roles actually determine this formal informal aspects, the environment of course also plays a crucial role and again you should understand this is again cultural bound. How so again going back to teacher student relationship, the roles in which some teachers take their jobs. and the way some students play the roles are different or culturally given.

So, in some place teacher is superior even than one's own parents or brothers or friends or relatives, etcetera. In some culture a teacher is just like any other professional like a lawyer or a scientist, so you just take the teacher as a kind of information monger. So, the cultural variation, now if one is from one culture where teachers are respected as the noble soul and like almost like given the status of a demigod and then if the same person happens to be in another culture where teachers are just treated among the equals as students. So, teachers are as equal as treated as the students, the only difference is the teacher is treated as a kind of senior person.

Now, if the person goes to that culture, it is important that the person get some cultural inputs before going there. Otherwise the person is there in for a cultural shock and which can lead to some mistakes that the person may commit and amounts to maladjustment and leads to other psychological and emotional complications. Now, roles are a set of expectations if violated or subject to negative sanctions, which means if you violate the roles you may commit some errors, which are again negative. Roles vary culturally so there are family roles, there are sex roles, like the family itself, the role that is played by the mother and the role that is played by the father that is again varies according to the culture.
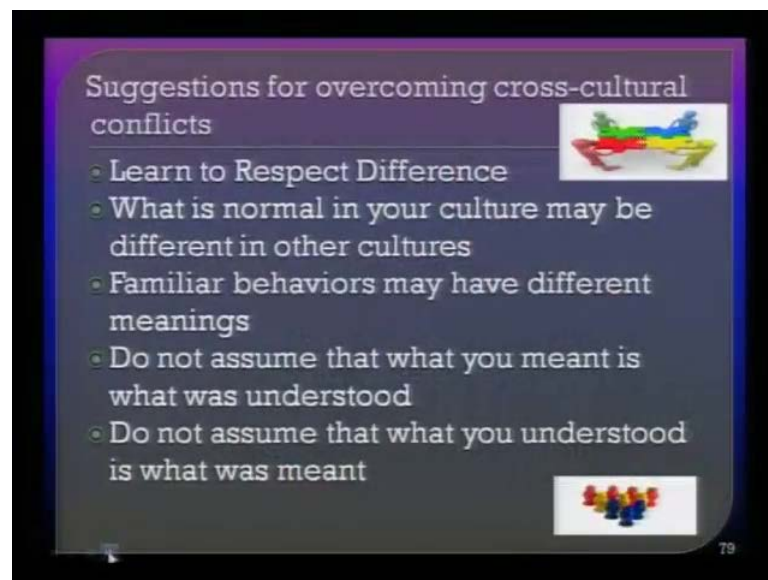
In some culture it is matrilineal and matriarchal also, which means the mother is dominating and the mother makes the decision of everything that is happening in the family. In some culture it is patrilineal and patriarchal where the father is dominating and the father decides everything. You cannot question the father or the mother where they are given the dominant role. In some culture all are treated equal in most of the western cultures. So, there everybody is given equal role in the family set up and before the father or mother makes a decision, every individual of the family including the child is taken into consideration the opinion is taken. If the father has to bring in his view, the father has to negotiate, he cannot just impose as in a patriarchal set up, he has to negotiate, he has to reason out, he has to logically convince the people.

Then sex roles, what do we mean by this, as I said before sex is something this is biological, but gender, that somebody is feminine, somebody is masculine, now that is given by culture. So, the person is a male or female is just by the biological indication, but how a female should behave in a culture socially, it is something that is given in the culture, so in some culture it is said that the female should be fully covered. So, they

should not wear two piece dresses and all that, in some culture its very open and normal to see women in two piece dresses or wearing modern dresses like jeans and t-shirt. Some culture says that it cannot be allowed, some culture says that you cannot use jeans or t-shirt inside the class rooms, some culture says dress code does not matter whatever you like you can wear and so on. So, even the sex and family roles are again determined by culture. What is the conclusion?

Why am I talking about all these things? This is just to make you competent cultural communicator and a competent communicator. If you want to become one must understand the role expectations and learn to appropriate different role expectations in other cultures. So, you should understand the expectations. Even when you go to a different culture, you are actually performing a role, your enacting a role, understand what are the expectations, which are associated with the role? Then perform accordingly knowledge of what is expected, motivation to do what is expected will actually control and govern your behaviour. So, if you have these two so you will be able to work out the third one, that is behaviour which is expressing what you have in your mind and then it can minimize the conflicts.

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Having said this let us overall look at some of the ways of overcoming this cultural conflicts and I would like to give them in the form of quick tips, as a kind of summary of whatever we have been doing so far. First learn to respect difference, what does it mean?

Do not expect sameness, do not think that if you are used to one particular way of eating, as I said if you are used to vegetarian habit of eating food, do not presume that the whole world has the same thing. Even if you have non-vegetarian habit, do not presume that whole world will be like that and vice versa.

So, learn to respect difference, understand that first of all there is difference according to culture, according to the cultural variations and then learn to respect it. The difference in your culture are what appears to be different to others in your culture is the same to you also. When you look at their culture you will feel that oh that is different from mine and you should also take the other persons point of view, who would also look at your culture from that angle. Now, once you understand that you learn to respect the difference, you understand they are different and my culture has this, I have a choice now I can choose to be what I think is different, I can try to emulate that, I can also retain this. But without ridiculing their culture, without making fun of their culture, giving due respect to their culture and giving contingency to those people and making them do whatever they want within their space and you respect that.

Then understand that what is normal in your culture may be different in other cultures, so you think that it is such a normal thing to do, but it is not the normal thing to do in other cultures. Such as I said before even in nonverbal communication, it is normal for an Indian to touch the feet of the elders to show respect, now do not presume that this is normal in all cultures. In some culture when you go and touch the feet they may even find it very repulsive, they may find it very embarrassing. So, you have to take note of what is normal in yours is not the same in other cultures. Then familiar behaviours may have different meanings, your culture has a particular behaviour and the same behaviour in another culture will not mean the same thing, especially in terms of nonverbal gesture and signals.

What you do in your culture will have a different meaning in another culture and if that difference is in terms of abusive language, abusive meaning then you are in trouble, so you have to be alert about this thing and then do not assume that what you meant is what was understood. So, you said something and even if the other people are nodding their heads, do not presume that they understood everything, use nonverbal component, use as much as possible use your hands, use your heads use you whole body to communicate and if you can use other images, maps, pictures, photographs to communicate the same

use it. Do not trust only the verbal component and think that whatever you said was understood exactly by the other people. And then do not also assume that what you understood is what was meant.

So, they said something to you, but you should not presume that oh you understood, they the way they wanted you to understand it, so you must have totally misunderstood also. This means you should be a good listener and you should keep asking keep verifying, whether what you took as the message through your own perceptual filters and interpretation, verify, check it out whether you understood it correctly or not

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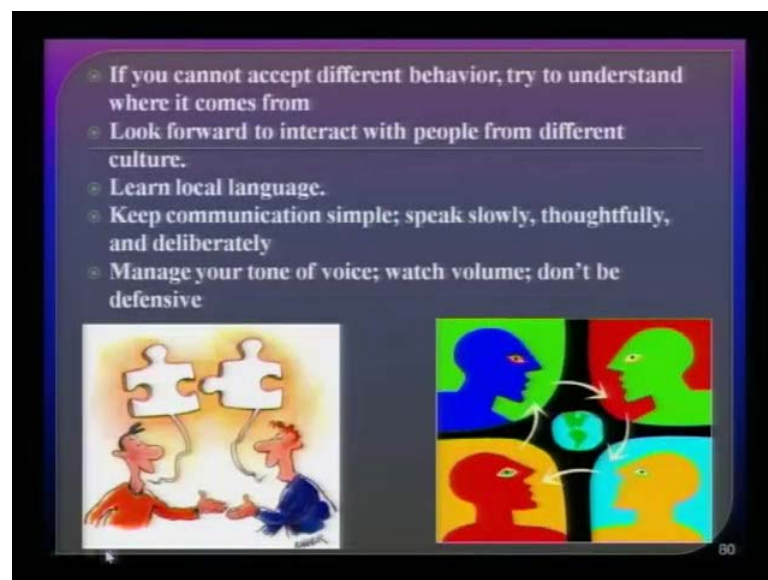
Then if you cannot accept different behaviour, try to understand where it comes from. Actually it comes from their cultural roots, so then again try to show respect to those roots, although you cannot accept some different behaviour try to tolerate, certain level of tolerance is required and be patient. So, the other person if is equally empathetic with you would understand that, may be that behaviour of that person is sort of annoying you and the person will be sensitive towards it and slightly try to restrain it.

But you do not impose your thoughts and ideas, before the other person gets sensitized towards it and on the other hand, if you understand that this is very much in the culture, so you can also ignore it. Look forward to interact with people from different culture, now once you have become a competent communicator and once you have understood

the cross cultural conflicts that may come. Once you have learnt that knowing this will be able to overcome some of the conflicts which might arise.

Now, you should look forward towards meeting people from other culture, its only interaction with those people, you will be able to develop yourself as a competent communicator. So, it is very important that instead of maintaining your reserve, instead of running away from strangers especially coming from other culture, instead of ridiculing foreigners, so try to be with them be friendly. Try to learn something from their culture and see the sameness and difference between two cultures. Take the good ones ignore the bad ones, become a competent communicator. Next try to learn the local language, especially if you are going to a foreign place foreign land, try to learn the local language.

Now, why practically it is going to be of very help, because if you go to a restaurant if you order for something, even you need to know some basic thing as, what is the word that is used for water, what is the word that is used for I am hungry, hunger, food, so the minimum things at least you should know. But more than that once people realize that you are interested in learning their language, you are interested in speaking to them in their language and when you speak in the their language, they become more open, more receptive and they move from the level of formal to the informal and intimate level, where relationship thrives and relationship develops. You know success is something that comes to you in terms of communication, only through cooperation from others, only through better and healthy relationship with others.

So, keeping that in mind try to learn the language and then keep communication simple, do not use complicated words, especially in intercultural situations, you are not there to impress them with very complicated words available in your culture, you are just there to communicate your ideas and achieve a communicative purpose. There is a buying, there is a selling, there is a negotiation and the communication is completed when the feedback is completely given and response is taken.

So, try to speak slowly, thoughtfully in fact think before you speak, think twice before you say something, that is likely to offend others and speak deliberately, so do not speak spontaneously. Then manage your tone of voice, so let the tone indicate confidence, but not over confidence. Let the tone indicate politeness, although your language may appear

sometimes to be very aggressive, but by your tone you can show them that you are not aggressive you are a polite person and watch the volume give emphasis as and when required and do not be on the defensive side. So, even when you are speaking make the communication open and only when you open up yourself, so people will also let you in, so it is a vice versa it is a two sided process.

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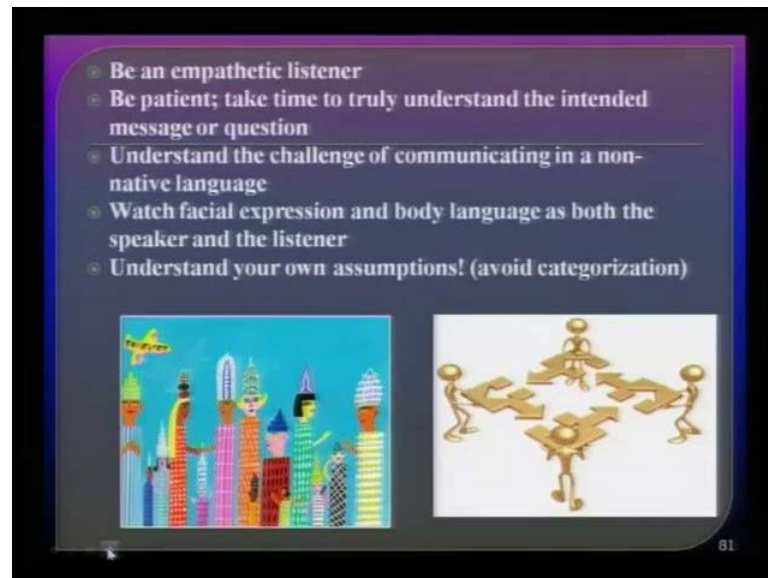
Overall try to be an empathetic listener, be a good listener, show empathy when you are listening to the other person, be patient. Take time to truly understand the intended message or question, do not jump in a hurry and give your response. Listen to it carefully and understand the challenge of communicating in a non native language it is not that easy, even for the most competent linguistic communicators, I mean those who are able to speak their own mother tongue excellently, when they are absolutely having no knowledge of the foreign language. If they are in a foreign place it is not that easy for them to communicate.

So, be patient and understand that it is a challenging situation, but only thing look forward towards it, so do not be defensive, do not be threatened by that kind of situation, try to exploit that situation, watch the nonverbal cues, look at the facial expression, look at the overall body language of both the speaker as well as the listener. Even when you play the role as speaker, listen, watch them as a listener and when you are listener again watch them as speaker and overall last but not the least, understand your own

assumptions, because most of our assumptions are culturally bound, most of our attitudes beliefs are given by culture, most of our categorizations stereotypes are again formed because of culture. If you want to become a competent communicator you have to rise above these barriers and which is very important and if you are able to avoid this you will definitely become a competent communicator.

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Now, there are some quick references, if you want to explore more on this, the famous book by Edward Hall beyond culture and the silent language. The book that I referred to her very frequently and some of the tables and other pictures that I had borrowed is from Neuliep James, intercultural communication, a contextual approach. This approach seems to be very practically possible and it is very easy to emulate also. Keep this in mind and with all these things, I say thank you, and thanks for patiently following all the four lectures on this cross cultural communication. Hopefully, with all the tips and the suggestions that I have given, you will be able to interact better and try to become a very competent communicator in the days to come.

Wish you all the best.

Thank you once again.