

Employment Communication – A Lab Based Course
Prof. Seema Singh
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur

Lecture – 04
Verbal Communication – Introduction

Hello, friends. So, here we are once again with Employment Communication – A Lab Based Course and now, maybe we can move slightly slowly and take our time to establish this course and find ourselves in this course. I hope that all of you are with me and we are on the same page and I also hope that you are enjoying this course as of now.

So, we are moving to an important section of this course and that is called Verbal Communication. So, till now we have introduced you to the course. We have introduced you to communication. We have emphasized on the importance of communication skills at the workplace and now. This is lecture number – 4, which is verbal communication.

Lecture number – 4 and 5 together they are one unit which is on verbal communication. As I have already mentioned in my introductory lecture, verbal the English word verbal – v e r b a l springs or originates from the Latin verbum – v e r b u m that is in other words verbs. So, Latin verbum means words and verbal communication is therefore, communication through words.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:07)

The slide features a dark blue background on the left and a yellow background on the right. The title 'Language and Meaning: Helping minds meet' is written in blue and black text. Below the title, a list of concepts covered is provided. In the bottom right corner, there is a small video inset showing Prof. Seema Singh. At the bottom center, there is a logo for 'swayam' (Free Online Education) and the Indian Institute of Technology logo.

**Language and Meaning:
Helping minds meet**

CONCEPTS COVERED

- What Language is
- How Language works: Words, things and thoughts
- The Communication of meaning
- Culture and Language
- Gender and Language

FREE ONLINE EDUCATION
swayam
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

So, let us move further. The concept I proposed to you at the beginning of this lecture number – 4, verbal communication and introduction is that there are two ideas of communication. One aspect is verbal communication or language and the second, is the meaning of that language and as I mentioned in the concluding part of the previous lecture that is communication skills at the workplace, one basic truth about communication was that meanings exist in the mind.

So, when meanings exist in the mind, in this mental space, the space between your temples therefore, what one communicator maybe trying to transmit or communicate to the communicatee or to the other, may not be reaching toto or exactly the same per se because of what we have in our minds- mental filters. We all agree that English is not our native tongue, it is a second language for us and when we think or in our mind the meanings are always in the vernacular or in our native tongue. So, I may be teaching English or talking in English or speaking in English or conversing in English the point is my mind is making meaning in my native tongue which may be Hindi, Telugu, Tamil whatever.

So, the concept I propose in this course is how language and meaning can help minds to meet. So, there is required a, consonants, there is required strategy, there is required effort, there is required deliberation, slow deliberation in using language to mean, what you want to mean, so that the other can understand, what you intend to mean and gets the same message, what you intend to transfer or transmit to the other - the communicatee.

So, let us move further. Now, the objectives of this lecture are quite a few, this is divided into two lectures of half an hour session each. The first is I will define language and the second how language works, the third how the communication of meaning happens, then we will come to certain important aspects of verbal communication. The first aspect we covered is culture and how culture influences language, impacts language and makes language operate in a different way or together at times as well.

The second aspect we cover is gender that is male and female. Across both these genders language is used differently, even if it is the same language, an English man will be using English differently, very differently from an English woman using differently. So, the language might be one again I say, but the way in which a male and a female use language varies and therefore, that impacts verbal communication.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:41)

**Language and Meaning:
Helping minds meet**

CONCEPTS COVERED

- Language and Power
- Problems with meaning: Patterns of miscommunication
- Thinking critically about Language: How to make Language work for you

FREE ONLINE EDUCATION
swamyam
BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS

We will move further to how language is associated with power. In this lecture series of 4 and 5 we will be covering how language can be used to communicate power, how power can be exhibited through language. Then we come to problems with meaning. As I said the main concept I would like to communicate or make you understand in this lecture number – 4, Verbal Communication an Introduction and the next lecture - Verbal Communication (Continued) is how to make the minds meet language and meaning two things, but two aspects can make the mind meet.

So, there are problems with meaning and there are therefore, patterns of miscommunication. Why somebody is saying or writing something and the other is not understanding in exactly the same way as the source, as the communicator intended his words to imply or mean, this will be covered under this heading- Problems with Meaning Patterns of Miscommunication. Then there is a need to cover also the area of how we can make language work for ourselves thinking critically about language how to make language work for you.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:31)



**Language and Meaning:
Helping minds meet**

CONCEPTS COVERED

- Technology and Language use
- Guidelines for developing Language Skills
- Summary

swayam

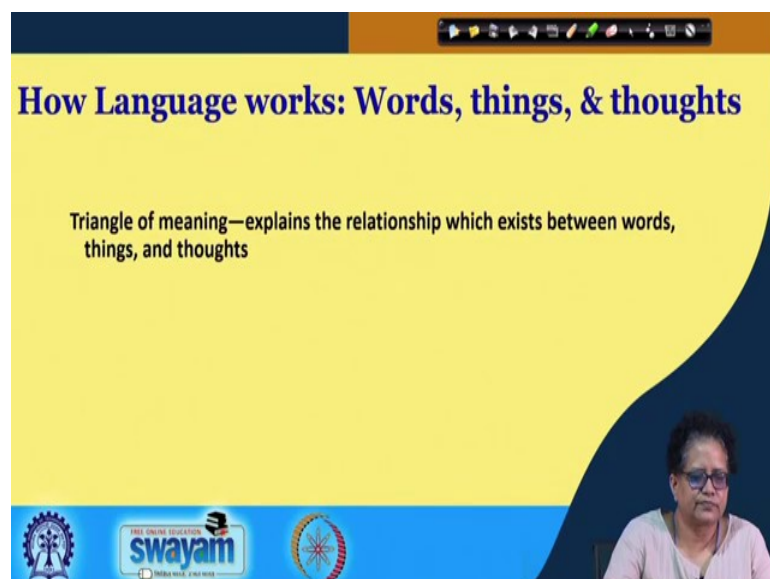
THE ONLINE EDUCATION

INDIA WISE, LEARN WISE

A woman is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide, gesturing while speaking.

We have mentioned about culture, about gender and then let us come to technology an important area nowadays. So, how has technology helped us use language, how technology has enabled us, how technology can be used further, will be covered under this subheading. Then in conclusion, penultimate, I have some guidelines for developing language skills for us, and we summarize in conclusion for this series of two lectures 4 and 5 - Verbal Communication an Introduction and Verbal Communication (Continued).

(Refer Slide Time: 09:29)



How Language works: Words, things, & thoughts

Triangle of meaning—explains the relationship which exists between words, things, and thoughts

swayam

THE ONLINE EDUCATION

INDIA WISE, LEARN WISE

A woman is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide, looking at the camera.

So, let us come to the topic of what language is, and language can be defined as unified system of symbols that permits the sharing of meaning. We have already emphasized at the outset of this lecture, that language and meaning, can help minds meet. Now, language if and is defined as a unified system of symbols that permit the sharing of this meaning. In other words, if all of us agree that this is V- then we all agree that this stands for V and V and V only and nothing more, no more, no less. So, unified system of symbols that permit the sharing of meaning.

To move further now, let us come to symbol. A symbol is simply defined as that which stands for something else. Now, let us say that we ask you a question. What is the rose stand for? Or the question in other words: what does the rose symbolize? And of course, you know biologically or botanically or scientifically speaking the rose, is the rose. The rose is the queen of flowers some say and you have rose festivals so on and so forth.

But, most of us will agree now that valentine's day is also coming nearby you know 14th February most of us will think or will have this opinion that the rose stands for love. Since time immemorial, the rose has symbolized the most powerful and the most intimate of human emotions that is love- the most powerful force on this planet. There would be perhaps no one here who disagree that the rose does not stand for love. So, again the symbol is defined as that which represents or stands for something else the rose represents or stands for love.

So, how does language work, point number 2. Now, that we have defined language and we have defined symbols which are the building blocks of language. Let us come to point number – 2. How does language work? And we have two researchers Ogden and Richards, C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards and Ogden and Richards have this proposition of the triangle of meaning. So, the triangle of meaning has three components- the first is the word itself, the second the thing and the third we thought or what is in the mind.

So, the first is the word consisting of symbols, then the second is the object and lastly is the thought- what you think when you use the word for a thing. So, the thing the word and they thought about it this is the triangle of meaning proposed by the researchers Ogden and Richards. So, the triangle of meaning explains the relationship which exists between words, things and thoughts

(Refer Slide Time: 13:55)



This is a pictorial representation of the triangle of meaning proposed by Ogden and Richards. So, as I said on the top you have the thought. So, let us say you see a dog or a cat and that is the thing. So, it is a four-legged, furry, soft creature, small creature or big creature and it is domesticated and then and there is a word for that, that is d o g or let us say c a t and then there is the thought- as I was describing a four-legged creature which is a domesticated animal or a pet.

So, we move further and I would like you to see a small video here.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:05)



(Refer Slide Time: 15:19)



(Refer Slide Time: 15:33)



Easily erasable Camlin whiteboard markers.

ACTUALLY what this organization really really needs is repositioning.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:41)



That means.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:51)



Easily erasable Camlin whiteboard markers.

What this organization desperately needs is change.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:15)



(Refer Slide Time: 16:19)



(Refer Slide Time: 16:35)



The Communication of meaning

- Meanings are Denotative and Connotative
 - Denotative meaning—dictionary meaning; the objective or descriptive meaning of a word
 - Connotative meaning—subjective meaning; one's personal meaning for a word

swayam

So, I feel that you must be quite amused on seeing how the people in the organization are in that small office and perhaps a presentation is going on by the big boss or the boss and the miscommunication which is happening as shown in the video was about, taking the words literally not understanding the meaning of the words as intended by the speaker.

So, in the video you saw that the boss perhaps or the manager was speaking about one on one approach and this is a phrase in the workplace which implies something different from taking it literally as the employees did that they all stood behind one or the other so, as if they were in a way communicating that this is what they understood by one on one approach. But, more funny is what happens secondly, when the manager says that what the organisation needs is repositioning.

So, of course, it is a term of the business industry of the workplace and it means that you have to change the way in which you are now going to position yourself in the industry. But, again the audience or let us say the employees or let us say the ones who are working take it literally and they change their seating positions or standing positions in that small meeting place or room. But, I think the funniest point is when he speaks about change. Now, we all know you know, we say also that change is the only constant factor in the universe any organization any workplace must change. You know even the fingers on our hands, they change, say minimum six months to one year the lines the lines on the

fingers and the palm of our hands change. This is what Cheiro say is the master of palmistry.

So, change is a way of life, change is progress, change is growth and the workplace demands change. If things are not changing, if people are not changing, if the company is not changing then there has been no growth. There has only been a static position for the company or the workplace. So, the last howler in that short video presentation was the fact that the boss says what we need now is change and all the employees perhaps or some of them are Indians as well they start collecting the currency change, the coins they have and they deposit, they place it on the centre table.

So, of course, we saw a very funny ad of Camlin whiteboard markers, but what I wanted you to understand from that short video was that, if we think about communication of meaning there must be total balance between language and meaning. The word you use and what you imply and whether that implication is same to same understood by the other- the communicatee.

So, now we come to the communication of meaning and actually any word will have two meanings or let us say, let us put it this way that meanings are of two types first denotative second connotative. So, there are two types of meanings- denotative and connotative. Now, what does the word denotative meaning imply? Denotes that you know we use the phrase denotes, that x denotes 23 let us say for example. So, x stands for 23. As we said in the triangle of meaning the word stands for the thing the word 3 lettered or three lettered d o g, c a t stands for the thing the living animal four-legged furry domesticated pet.

So, the denotative meaning are the dictionary meanings of words, your vocabulary, your diction the amount of control you have over the words of a language which you are using as a second language user. So, all these words are found in the dictionary which is repository of your vocabulary, your diction, your word power, your vocabulary usage. So, the denotative meaning is the dictionary meaning of words and it is further defined as the objective or descriptive meaning of a word. So, a dog or a cat is perhaps defined I have not seen it as such in a dictionary as a small or large furry four-legged domesticated animal. So, this describes the dog or the cat.

Now, we think about the objective meaning, objective because it is not subjective, it is not personal, it is not having any emotional attachment that meaning, is not it? But, then we come to the second type of meaning which is called connotative meaning. Connotative meaning implies subjective meaning. Subject implies each one of us. So, in short in other words connotative meaning implies one's personal meaning for a word. To carry forward the example which I was giving you of the denotative meaning of the word d o g or c a t in the dictionary.

Now, we come to the connotative meaning. One person might use the word as, for another one whom he or she does not like. Say somebody might say come here my dog or somebody may say you are my cat. So, this is one's personal meaning being applied to the word.

It does not make the other who is being addressed as dog or cat I will get dog or cat just as the meaning of the word dog or cat does not change in the dictionary as such, but the only thing is that when we connote we apply our personal individual meanings to the word. They are not that which exist in the dictionary. So, denotative meaning is in black and white, the denotative meaning is exact precise and denotative meaning is as the language would want it to be formally speaking informal terms, languages are formal means of communication.

If we have to define language we have the simplest possible definition of language. Language is a means of communication. Here also when I say that language is a means of communication I am myself implying that there are other means of communication as well and here in this slide we see that connotative meaning is the connotations or the several hues, colours and other meanings, level by level meanings which individuals might imply or apply to a word.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:19)



The Communication of meaning (contd.)

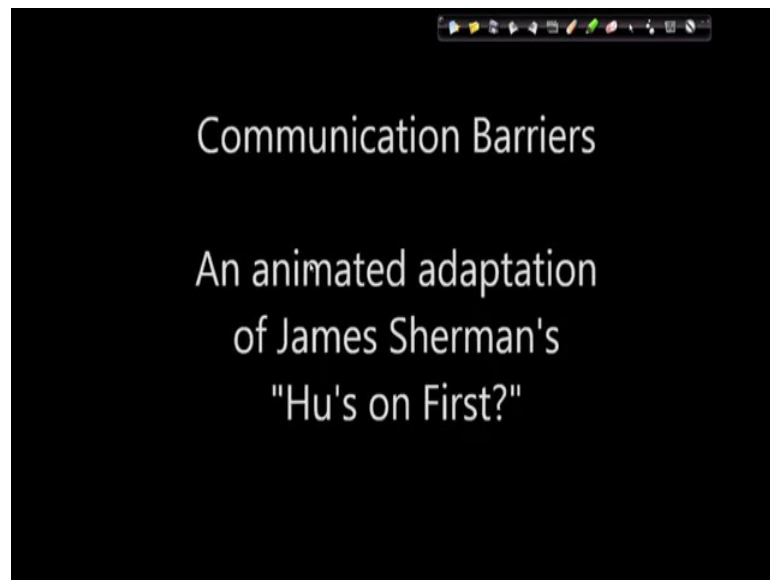
- Meanings are Denotative and Connotative (continued)
 - Meaning and Time
 - Meaning and Place
 - Meaning and Experience
- Whether language is concrete or abstract influences meaning

swayam
THE ONLINE EDUCATION
MEDIA WISE. LEARN WISE.

So, words are denotative and connotative because words and their meaning change with time place as well as experience. If somebody has a good experience with dogs then somebody may say that, somebody might use the word dog connotatively with a positive meaning. We will come to more of this later.

The point here is that language is concrete or abstract. This also matters on what influence or what meaning the word communicates. So, whether language is used concretely or on an abstract level which is non-concrete level, influences the meaning of language or words that constitute or comprise that language. I would like you to go through this video.

(Refer Slide Time: 27:25)



(Refer Slide Time: 27:33)



(Refer Slide Time: 27:35)



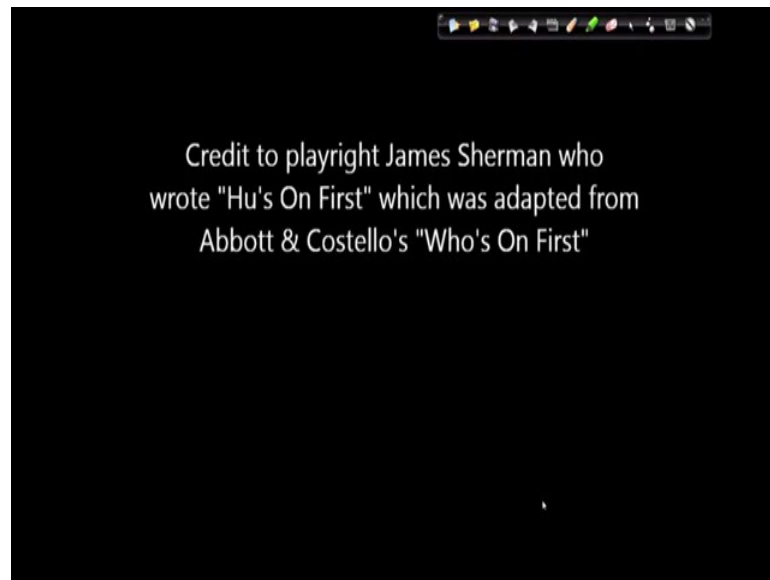
Mister President, Condoleezza Rice is here to see you. Good, send her in. Yes, sir. Good morning, mister president. Oh, Condoleezza, good to see you. What is happening? Well, mister president, I have the report here about the new leader in China. That is great, Condie. Let us hear it.

Mister president, Hu is the new leader of China. Well, that is what I want to know, but that is what I am telling you mister President. Well, that is what I am asking you Condie. Who is the new leader of China? Yes, I mean the fellow's name. Hu. The guy in China. Hu. The new leader of China. Hu. The China man. Hu is leading China, mister President. What are you asking me for? I am telling you Hu is leading China. Well, I am asking you Condie, who is leading China? That is the man's name. That is who's name? Yes. Will you or will you not tell me the name of the new leader of China. Yes, sir. Yassir? Yassir Arafat is in China? I thought he was in the Middle East. That is correct, sir. Then who is in China? Yes, sir. Yassir is in China? No, sir. Then who is? Yes, sir. Yassir? No, sir.

I need to know the name of the new leader of China. So, I want you to get me the secretary general of the United Nations on the phone. You want Kofi? No. You do not want Kofi? No, but now that you mention it, I could use a glass of milk and then get me the UN. Yes, sir. Not Yassir. The guy at the United Nations! Kofi? Milk. Will you please make the call? And, call who? Well, who is the guy at the UN? No, Hu is the guy in China. Will you stay out of china? Yes, sir. And stay out of the Middle East. Just get me

the guy at the UN. Kofi? Alright. With cream and two sugars. Now, get on the phone! Hello, Rice here. Rice? Good idea. And get a couple of egg rolls too, Condie. Maybe we should send some to the guy in China and the Middle East. Can you get Chinese food in the Middle East? I do not know.

(Refer Slide Time: 29:55)



(Refer Slide Time: 25:57)



So, that short funny video was reflective of the fact that there is more to language than what we have mentioned. It is not only a context of, let us say culture, gender, technology which we have already mentioned, but language is coming to you through

two ways: spoken and written and there are more, there are perhaps more hitches, more hiccups involved when you speak about spoken communication.

In the video as you saw, because there were subtitles we could understand in the video which was placed some time back when Bush was the American president and Condoleezza Rice, Kofi Annan, Yassir Arafat they were still around. The point is that it is reflective of the importance of pronunciation and pronunciation or the way in which language is properly uttered or spoken or pronounced, pronounced in fact, is important if we have to speak about verbal communication. I think we will end the first unit of verbal communication here. More when we meet for lecture number – 5, Verbal Communication part – 2(Continued).

Thank you and God bless you. May you stay blessed. Good bye, till we meet again.