Lecture No - 11
Intercultural Communication: Translation as Problematic Discourse

Welcome back to the class on International Business Communication. Today we will talk about Translation as Problematic Discourse and we have discussed a lot of different things in this class. But today I will take you through another very interesting aspect of intercultural communication, which deals with primarily translation of concepts from one channel of thought to another from one language to another and so on and so forth. And today's lecture is based on a paper by Banks and Banks, which was published in 1991, I will show you the paper, I will give you the reference to the paper.

But, today's lecture is primarily based on that one research paper, which I thought is very, very useful for a class on international business communication, specifically in today's changing world, where people from different backgrounds come together and work together in one, in the same environment. People from different ideologies, people speaking different languages, thinking in different languages, come together and agree on common things and work on common goals.
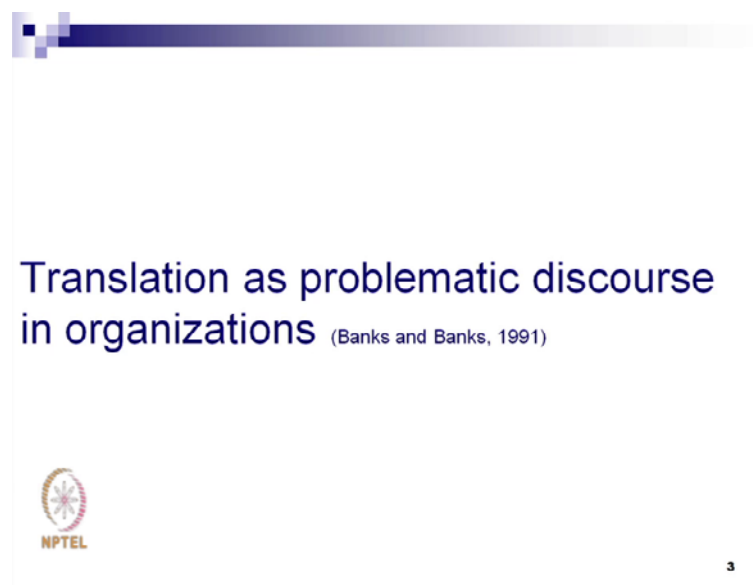
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Revision

- Styles of learning and problem solving and their implications in the business environment
- Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis and its implications in the business environment

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So, let us get started, as always the first thing we will do is little bit of revision, which is we have talked about these styles of learning and problem solving. And I would like you to remember and to discuss, what you learnt in the previous class regarding, how styles of learning and problem solving change or across different cultures or how people in different environments think differently about learning and problem solving. And how does this play out in your work in a multicultural environment, and how does this influence the way you work in a multicultural environment.
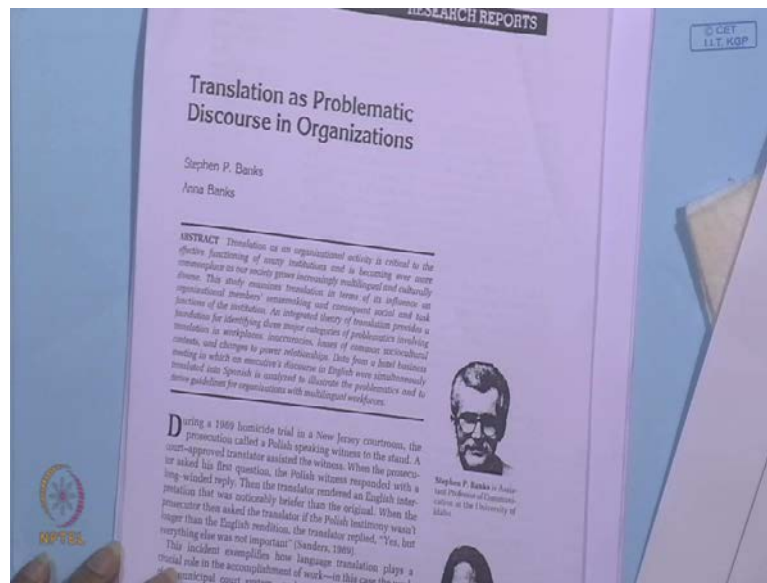
The other thing that we would revise today or I would like to revise in your class is the Sapir Whorf hypothesis. We had talked about the Sapir Whorf hypothesis in the last class and I would like you to think about and revise and discuss the implications of the Sapir Whorf hypothesis in the business environment. I really want you to think about these things and discuss their implications in multicultural environment, where people are coming from different backgrounds, different places, different channels of thought, different ideologies, different value systems and working together on common goals.

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Translation as problematic discourse
in organizations (Banks and Banks, 1991)

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So, after you have done that, we will move on to translation as problematic discourse in organizations.

And the paper I would refer to is a paper by the same name, it is called translation as problematic discourse in organizations and it was published in the journal of applied communication research in November 1991. And the authors are professors Stephan P. Banks and professor Anna Banks, both of whom are work professors at the university of Idaho. So, and of course, you have some data base that gives you access to these journal papers, it could be helpful. I retrieved it from Hebsgo, which is a very, very comprehensive data base comprising of many, many journals, many, many pure review journals in various areas. So, if your library subscribes to it, you should be able pull out this paper, but today's lecture is primarily on this paper and wherever references are not given, it should be assumed that, the material on the slides is or has been drawn from the specific paper.

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The issue

- Multicultural organizations
- Multilingual employees
- Multiple ideologies, beliefs, interests at stake

The issue regarding translation, we have multicultural organizations, I am sure you will believe this, you will agree with me on this that, these states more and more people are moving out of their houses and going to work in organizations with people from different backgrounds. So, the main issue is that, most of the organizations these days are multicultural, whether they are teaching, work, research, any kind of organization. Initially, in the olden days what use to happen was, places like the army or the civil services or the defense forces or some organizations like that, were multicultural.

But these days, the mobility has increased and people are moving out of their houses, going to different cities, people do not think twice about leaving their home town or leaving their comforts zone very much these days, because people still can stay connected with their families, so multicultural organizations is one. The second thing that very influence, what we are going to talk about today is, the multilingual nature of employees. More and more people are speaking more and more languages these days, Indians by default are multicultural.

I am sure you will agree with that, most of us, I am not saying all of us, but most of us speak and are able to think in more than two or three languages. English and Hindi being the languages that we speak throughout India, for the most part and or in most parts of the country, we speak English, because it is the language of formal communication all over India and it also helps us stay connected with the rest of the world.

Hindi is another language that is spoken in most parts of the country and most of us speak and are able to think in one other or at least one other regional language, the language that we speak in our homes, in our home states. So, most of us are multilingual, we switch from one language to another, we speak in a mixture of languages. I know this may sound very strange to people from monolingual countries or countries where you learn the second language has more of a necessity than anything else.

For example, Spanish is learnt by people in the united states, most people in the united states speak in English and then they learn Spanish of range or another foreign language, they term it as a foreign language. For us, it is not foreign, we just sort of mingle with each other and just because our country is so diverse, we speak and are able to think in English, Hindi and then Urdu, Krepson, as we go north and to the west of the country. And you would have your own regional language, could be Kashmire, could be Pahari, could be Punjabi, could be Haryanvi and you will sort of move down.

So, most was a multilingual and most organizations have multilingual employees and you do not know what language the person sitting next to you would be thinking in. And we think about different concepts in different languages, this is part of our intrapersonal communication and I want you to be more sensitive to these things in your environment. In India, we do not think twice, we are switching from one language to another, so if I am thinking about my family, I could be using Hindi and Punjabi in my head.

And when I am thinking about work or specifically the theories of communication, it is all English and when I am thinking about some hobby that I may be interested in, it is mostly Urdu. Or so all, where I am thinking about living in Bengal, I may even become familiar within start thinking in some words that can only be expressed well in Bengali or Gujarathi or whatever. So, we all think like that, the other issue here is multiple ideologies, beliefs and interests or at stake.

Now, when we come from such different backgrounds or ideologies are at stake when we are doing something or belief systems or at stake when we are trying to learn something new, do something different or interests are at stake, we have different kinds of interests in the organization, we have different personal goals, we have different professional goals. And we have this plethora of diversity that is constantly colloiding with each other, most of us come from these different backgrounds and are diverse thoughts, and
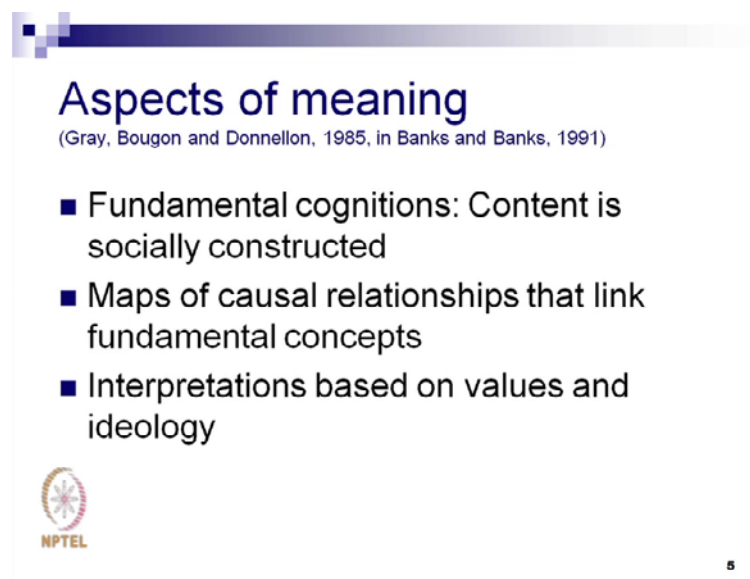
beliefs and ideals are could be colloiding with each other and interfering with the alignment of our comforts zones.

Communication as we have in discussing since the very beginning, is more often alignment of comforts zones. It is more about drawing coming to the same platform, coming to the same level or talking on the same wavelength, as we say normal balance. So, that is pretty much the issue here that we comes, we brings so much of diversity to our work place, that it becomes difficult that times to think along the same lines. And today we are going to talk about translation, translation is what you may ask, what are we translating, we are translating things constantly.

Untranslation does not only need to be the translation across languages, it can also be translation across different technical disciplines, different areas of expertise. I give you an example last time of ERP, Enterprise Resource Planning is a very, very technical concept and if you never been exposed to it, it sounds like a foreign language, the phrase sounds as if it is been taken from a foreign language, it is a technical term.

So, professional Jargan is another type of language, SMS language is another type of language, face book the language you use on face book is the special dilate of English, you could say. So, we have all these different areas that we use different dilates, different words in and that is what we are going to discuss today in the context of intercultural international business communication.

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Aspects of meaning
(Gray, Bougon and Donnellon, 1985, in Banks and Banks, 1991)

- Fundamental cognitions: Content is socially constructed
- Maps of causal relationships that link fundamental concepts
- Interpretations based on values and ideology

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Before we move on, we need to first discuss the aspects of meaning, how is meaning constructed or what does the meaning of a word constitute of. Now, according to Gray, Bougon and Donnellon, in this paper in Banks and Banks 1991, there are three primary aspects of meaning, the first one is fundamental cognitions. Fundamental cognitions is the recognition or acknowledgement of the different possibilities that a meaning can have.

So, the content is socially constructed, this is a table, it is a table, it is a table, we all agree that what I am, you know this thing that the computer is kept on is a table, this is a monitor, a computer monitor, so this is a meaning that we have decided on, collectively. So, the content is socially constructed, we call it a computer monitor, this is a socially constructed meaning of the word. Now, monitor could be what I am probably looking at, I am looking at the camera, I am also looking at the screen, on which I can see what has going on here, so that is a monitor.
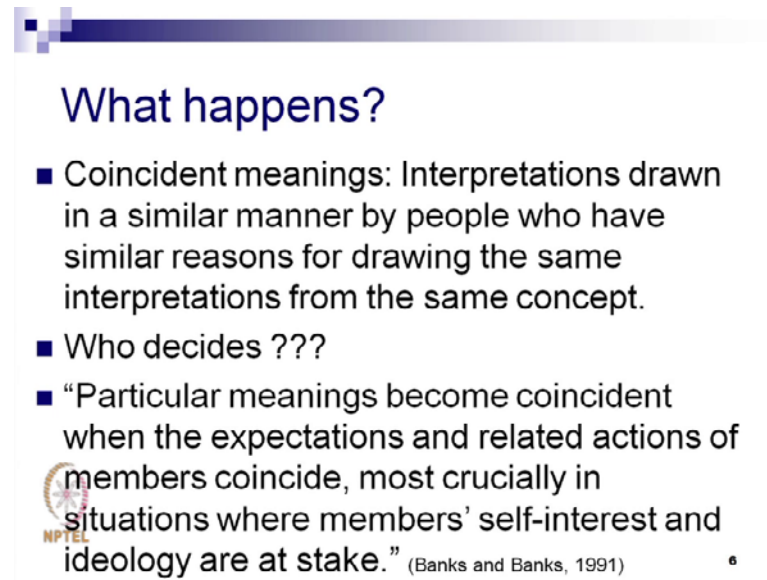
So, we agree that we call the screen a monitor, that is a fundamental cognition which means, the basic recognition of a concept. The second thing here is the maps of causal relationships that link fundamental concepts that means, that these are the connections we draw between different fundamental concepts. So, what I am doing now is, looking at the computer or I am looking at the screen, so one fundamental concept is seen with my eyes, the other fundamental concept is a monitor, what is happening between.

I use this site to view what is on the computer monitor, so I am linking these two concepts. I am using my site to figure out what is on the, to read what is on the monitor, that is a one small very basic form of a map of a causal relationship, that links fundamental concepts, the connections we draw between fundamental concepts, that is the second aspect of meaning. The third aspect of meaning is the interpretations we draw based on values and ideology, how do I interpret, what I am doing here, am I looking or am I reading, am I just seeing the monitor or am I reading.

So, I assume that, if there is something sensible written on the monitor, I will rewrite or if there is something that and sitting at work, so I am not just looking at the monitor and reading what is on the monitor. Now, that is at a very basic level but then when we talk about interpretations, this is what is influenced. The interpretations are what is

influenced by the different ideologies and value systems, that we bring to our work place and these are culturally and contextually determined.

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Now, what happens? when we have these different aspects of meaning, we try in an organization in a place, where we are trying to work together, we try to come upon coincident meanings, we try and draw coincident similar meanings. And what are coincident meanings, coincident meanings are interpretations that are drawn in a similar manner by people who have similar reasons for drawing the same interpretations from the same concept.

It sounds very complicated but it is not, if you look at it very closely, what the sentence means is that coincident meanings is being on the same wavelength. You are interpreting whatever you see in a manner similar to another person, who is in the same context as you, so this is essentially and who decides, how we draw these meanings. Now, according to Banks and Banks, particular meanings become coincident when the expectations and related actions of members coincide, most crucially in situations where members self interest and ideology are at stake.

So, what we are essentially are saying here is that, if we have the same goal from a situation, the possibility of us drawing the same meaning from that situation would be very, very high, that is what is a coincident meaning. Let us read the definition again, coincident meanings are interpretations that are drawn in a similar manner. So, the same

kind of interpretation drawn by people, who have almost the same similar, that is why we say similar and not same, by people who have similar reasons, almost same reasons for drawing the same interpretation from the same concept. Our reasons for interaction are the same, our reasons for viewing something are the same, so we are in a position or context is the same and that influences, how we draw the same meaning from the same concept and this is what is meant by coincident meaning.

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The organization as a symbolic activity

People with
- Different socio-cultural backgrounds
- Different goals
- Different reasons for pursuing those goals

come together and
- Try to create a sense of a common goal
- Try to work together to achieve this mutually decided upon common goal
- Usually without compromising on any of the differences listed above

The other issue that I would like to bring to the table today is the organization as a symbolic activity. When we talk about organization what do we think of, we think of lots of people doing lots of things and then when we define an organization, we say an organization is a connection of small units engaged in specific tasks that are ultimately geared towards the same common goals. So, they are connected through this tasks that ultimately connect and form a network and help this collection of people and activities to one common goal.

But, we are looking at organization as slightly differently here, we say that an organization is people, it is only people. It is people with different socio cultural backgrounds, it is people with different goals, you may have a different reason for joining an organization than the person sitting next to you. You want to make money, the other person wants to learn something new, the third person just wants to support his

family. So, you know or you trying to move into a different direction that what you are doing, so it is people with different socio cultural backgrounds.

People with different goals with different reasons for pursuing this goal, we all want to make money, why, one person wants to build a house, the other person wants to travel the world, the third person wants to support his parents, the fourth wants to get married and have a family of his own. So, we have different reasons for earning money, fifth person says I will earn tones of money now and retire at 40 or 45. So, we have different reasons for pursuing these goals and all of us come together in an organization and then we try and create a sense of a common goal.

We may not have the same goal, but we try and agree upon one common goal, yes I have my personal goals, but I also have a goal that matches what you are earning for. We try and create a sense of a common goal and we try to work together to achieve this mutually decided upon common goal. We agree upon this mutually decided, we agree together on this common goal and we get together and try to work towards achieving it.

And that is why people say, well work is work and personal life is personal life, you should not mix the two, many times people say that, but it is not easy to keep the two separate. So, what do we do, we come to work and we try and switch off our personal goals and say, this is what I am suppose to do as member of this team. And what do I mean by a team, it is a group of people who have decided that, they will work towards a common goal.

Everybody is going to be a little uncomfortable about that common goal, but we all align our comfort zones. We expand our comfort zones to accept a complete common definition of a goal and we try and work towards it. And usually without compromising on any of the differences listed above, that is another complication in an organization, we try and create a sense of this common goal without compromising on the differences in our socio cultural backgrounds.
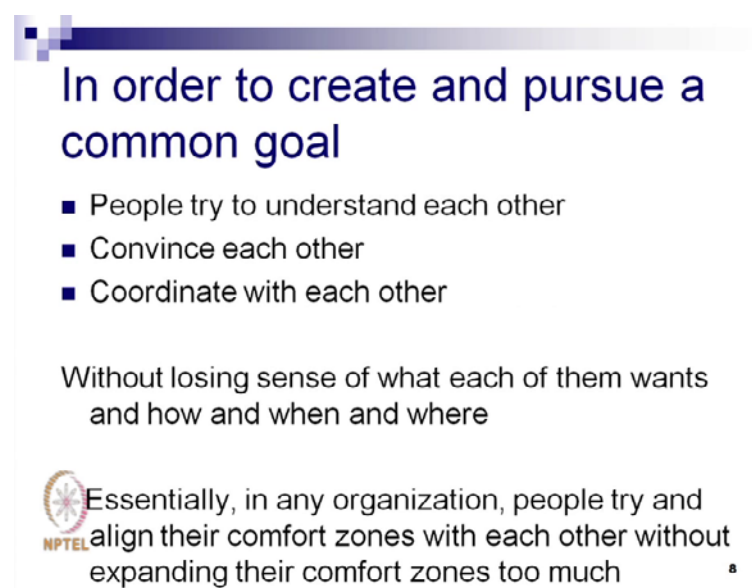
So, I am Punjabi, I am going to work with the Kashmire and I am going to work with the Gujarathi and I am going to work with a Tamilian and I am going to work with an Andhrait and I am going to work with a Bengali in the same office. But, I will still continue to hold on to my Punjabiath or Punjabiness and somebody as far hold on to whatever their different socio cultural background. I will still continue to hold on to my

goals, yes my goal is grow in this organization, do something worthwhile with my life and somebody else says, I am going to make tones of money.

They still have those goals, they do not let go of their goals, we do not compromise, that is what is meant by not compromising on any of the differences listed above. And I will continue to have these different reasons for pursuing my goal, I want to learn more, why, because I just have this urge to learn. Somebody else may say, I want to learn more so that, my skills set expands and I am able to move to a different organization, where I can ultimately do what I like.

So, we do not compromise on these things and as soon as we get a chance, we do what are heart desires, but we come together and create a sense of a common goal and we try in work together towards this common goal, that is what meant by an organization. When we say that an organization is a symbolic activity, it is a symbol of our getting together. We may not necessarily get together, but we try to modify our comfort zones in such a manner, that it appears that we are getting together and pursuing a common goal. And at the same time, on the surface of it, it looks like we are pursuing a common goal, but the sub surface layer, we are also trying to pursue our own goals and hold on to our different identities at the same time.

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In order to create and pursue a common goal

- People try to understand each other
- Convince each other
- Coordinate with each other

Without losing sense of what each of them wants and how and when and where

Essentially, in any organization, people try and align their comfort zones with each other without expanding their comfort zones too much

Now, in order to create and pursue a common goal, what do we do, we start by trying to understand each other and we try to convince each other and we trying to coordinate with

the each other without losing sense of, what each of them wants and how and, when and where, more complications. So, we try and convince each other that, we should align, yes we need to align. So, what do I do, I have a louder voice, so I will say, you have to agree to what I am saying.
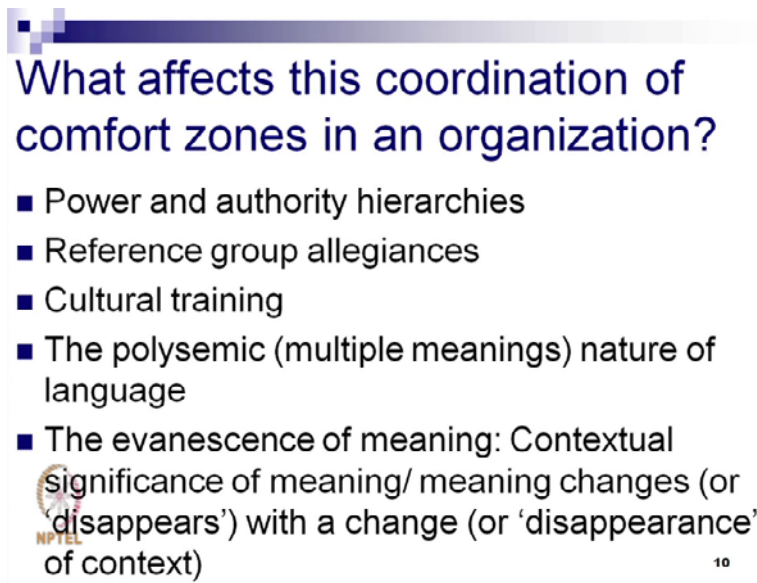
In somebody else is not so aggressive, so they will turn around and they will say, I will agree with what you doing, but I will continue to hold on to my differences also. Essentially in an organization what happens is that, people try and align their comfort zones with each other without expanding their own comfort zones too much, however hard we may try, we are however open minded we say we are. But, ultimately it is about survive, it is about maintaining my identity regarding my own comfort zone and expanding it just a little bit so that, I stay connected with in the organization, that is what happens in the organization.

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But, who decides? ultimately who decides, what needs to be done here and who decides, whose voice is going to be louder and who decides, who is going to be heard more than somebody else.

What affects this coordination of comfort zones in an organization?

- Power and authority hierarchies
- Reference group allegiances
- Cultural training
- The polysemic (multiple meanings) nature of language
- The evanescence of meaning: Contextual significance of meaning/ meaning changes (or 'disappears') with a change (or 'disappearance' of context)

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Now, what affects this coordination of comfort zones in the organization? what affects, how people are going to get together and how people are going to be to align their comforts zones with each other. So, that is something that we need to figure out and that is what will talk about, a few points are listed here. The power and authority hierarchies are the first to decide of course, that is one of things or one of the areas that decides, how the comfort zones are aligned.

So, person in a position of power or higher authority is usually the one to have his or her same. Reference group allegiances, now what does this means, this means that our connection with the group that we identify more with. So, if I identify with a group, it will be easier for me to fall in line with, what that group is doing and it will be easier for me to align my comfort zone to a group that I identify with. It will be easier for me to expand my comfort zone, so as to accommodate my reference group more than the other groups, that I do not necessarily identify with.

For example, in the IT system and faculty, and I would agree more with, what the faculty group is same, rather than with what is students are saying. It will be easier for me to align my comfort zone to the comforts zones of other faculty than with the comforts zone of say, other non teaching staff or research staff or with the students, that is what we mean here.
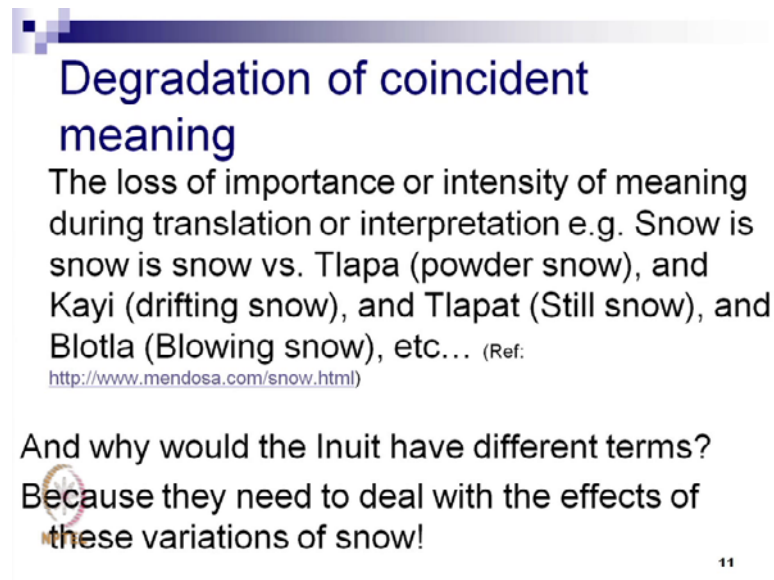
Then, another thing that affects the coordination of comfort zone is cultural training, how much is exposure have you had to different cultures. How much of training have you had in trying to understand other cultures, in trying to align yourself with other cultures and that really affects, how well we are able to coordinate our comfort zones. The other thing that affects the alignment or coordination comforts zone is the polysemic nature of language which means, that in any language, any word has multiple meanings.

And these different interpretations that we draw from the same words, help us to align our comforts zones. So, we make sense of these different situations that we find ourselves in, through the different interpretations we draw from the same word or from the same concepts. Language, by definition is polysemic in nature which means, that words may have multiple meanings and covotations as we say normal balance and that helps us a just better to different situations.

But, you will say then the effectiveness of communication is lost, if we are trying to draw different meanings from the same word then the effectiveness of communication will be lost, no, that is where the context comes in. We define the context and we say, within this context we are drawing meaning A, within another context we are drawing meaning B and that is how, the effectiveness is brought out. The other thing that can affect this coordination of comfort zones is the evanescence of meaning which means, the contextual significance of meaning and meaning changes.

So, meaning changes or disappears with a change or disappearance of context, this is what is meant by evanescence of meaning, evanescence means constantly disappearing. So, the meaning is relevant only in a particular context, that is what this means and once that context changes, the meaning also changes. And all of these things influence, how well we coordinate or comforts zone in any organization, that is specifically multicultural and multilingual in nature.

Degradation of coincident meaning
The loss of importance or intensity of meaning during translation or interpretation e.g. Snow is snow is snow vs. Tlapa (powder snow), and Kayi (drifting snow), and Tlapat (Still snow), and Blotla (Blowing snow), etc... (Ref: http://www.mendosa.com/snow.html)

And why would the Inuit have different terms? Because they need to deal with the effects of these variations of snow!
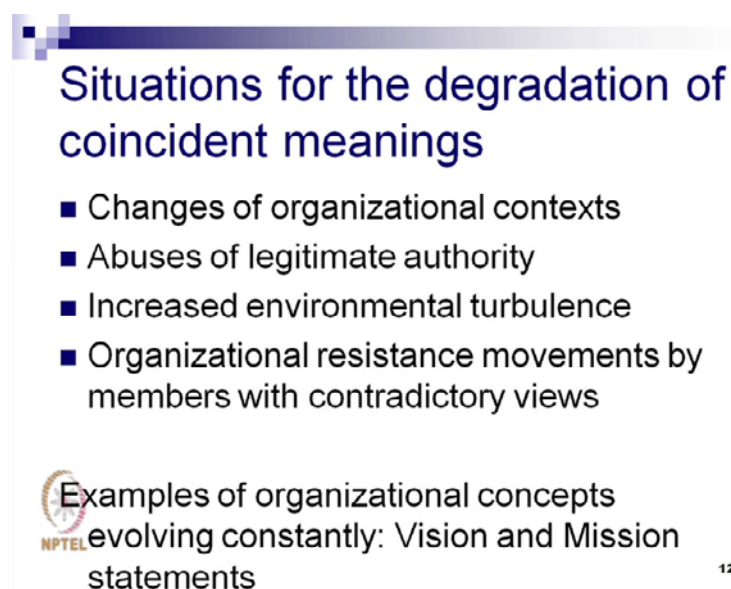
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And another concept that I would like to talk you about is the degradation of coincident meaning which means, that the loss of importance or intensity of meaning during translation or interpretation. When we try and translate a word from one language to another, the meaning degrades, the coincident meaning degrades. Because, the context changes and the actual meaning is lost and we have to recreate the meaning out of context, just by defining the context we have to recreate the meaning.

So, for example and this is a very interesting example, in the Inuit language, which is the language that Eskimos in Alaska or the Tundra region speak. Snow has various names, now even for those of us who have lived in colder climates, snow is snow is snow. It is these flakes that fall very slowly from the sky and sometimes flakes falls fasters, sometimes they falls slower, but we have snowflakes and we have sleet and we have rain on hill stones.

But, the Eskimos have different words for snow, powder snow is called as Tlapa, Kayi is drifting snow Tlapat is still snow and Blotla is blowing snow, etcetera. And I have given you the website, from where I have got these meanings and you can look the map, they have more than 15 names for snow that is falling from the sky. And why do they have these names, why would the inuit have different terms for snow, because they have so much of snow in that region.

They have to deal with these different effects with the effects of these variations of snow, so if snow is falling really fast, the effect it would have on their lives, on their daily livelihood also at times, would be different than the effect say, powdery snow would have or then the effect smaller flakes would have, whatever they do is dependent on nature to a great deal. So, they have all these different meanings, because they are the once who have to deal with the effects of these different meanings of snow. So, they coin this different terms and that is our language evolves, we come up with different language, different terms in any language, because we use these terms in different context, we need to use these terms in different contexts.

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The situations for the degradation of coincident meanings, in what situations do meanings degrade or degenerate, one is the change of organizational context. When organizational context changes, the meaning changes and our explanation of the meaning, in our attempt to explain the meaning in a different context, the meaning degrades or degenerates. The other one is abuses of legitimate authority, I am in a position to tell you what communication is.

So, you are forced to believe, whatever I say about communication, so I could say anything and you will have to believe it, that is abuse of legitimate authority. I am providing reference is here for everything I say in this course, but if I was not doing that, in that situation, you would have no way of knowing what I was saying, whether what I

was saying was right or not. And so I will force whatever I believe in down your throat and that is abuse of legitimate authority.

And you must have seen this happening, people will say, because I am the boss, you have to believe whatever I am saying, because I am from such and such area, I associate more with such and such thing, whatever I say is right and whatever everybody also saying is incorrect. The other situation for the degradation of coincident meaning is increased environmental turbulence. When you have changes, constant changes going on in the environment, the meaning may degenerate in our attempt to deal with other effects of this environmental turbulence, we may lose sense of the context and the meaning changes.

Organizational resistance movements by members with contradictory views, when members of any organization have different views, they may resists the changes in any organization. They may resist whatever the organization is doing and in doing, so the meaning of the concepts would probably change or degenerate. Now, some examples of organizational concepts that are evolving constantly or vision and mission statements, they are constantly evolving with the change in environment, with the change in the goals of the organization, with a change in the socio economic cultural political environment.

The vision and mission statements are changing and they are also changing with the turnover of employees, especially at the higher level. And you will say, well if they are changing then how can they be vision and mission statements, they do undergo evolution. Like every other concept in any organization, the vision and mission statements also undergo evolution and these things change with the context and so does the meaning attached to these vision and mission statements.

How does translation factor enter into all this? [FL], no all this is connected, whatever I am saying is connected. How does translation factor into all this, we think in a language different from the one we speak in or conduct our business in most of the time. Like I said in the beginning of this class, what happens is that, we bring our cultural backgrounds to the table, we bring our cultural backgrounds to any organization and we may end up thinking about these concepts in a language different from the one we end up explaining these concepts in.

The second place, where translation factors into all this is our language and the response to the language we use in our work environments, determines how we frame our future inputs to the organization. So, the language that we think in and the response to the language we use in our work, the Medon and which we respond to the language that we use at our work place, determines how we frame our future inputs to the organization and this is our translation comes in.

I am thinking in one language, the language that is coming to me from the environment is something different and I draw parallels between these two and then I frame a response, either in the language of my organization or in my own native language. I explain things to myself in a language that I understand, it could be a mixture of languages or dialogues, in which I explain these concepts to myself and then I phrase them in the language that people I work will understand.

So, I look for Jargan once again and all this is happening subconsciously, I am thinking in one language, I may be thinking in images, I may be thinking in words, I may be thinking in terms of formulae, but when I express it, I cannot just write down a formula on a piece of paper. I have to use words and the language that I draw those words from, is where the meaning sort of degenerates I mean, for the mean the meaning is very clear. If this is a class, I am imagining people sitting there and there, even though there is nobody right now.

So, I have for me, a class is a room full of people who are nodding their heads, some of whom have questions in their minds and I can see those things and so that is my image of a class. But, when I go to explain what a class is, I cannot described everything that I see in a split second in my head. When I close my eyes, I can visualize a class, I can visualize men and women, most of them are wearing jeans, young faces, some of them are earning, some of them are sleeping, some of them are paying attention, some of them are busy writing everything that is being said.

But, when I am trying to explain it, I am sure I will miss out certain things and that is what we mean, when we say that the meaning gets, meaning degenerates when we translate the meaning from one language to another, which in the case that, I just described is a visual imaginary versus the language that I am using to teach this class. I cannot capture the whole scene and give you an idea, but I can see it in my head, I close my eyes and I can see it in my head. The same thing happens with languages, if you were to explain the different variations of snow that we just discussed.

For example, the powder snow and drifting snow and still snow and blowing snow, now if you seen snow falls, may be you will be able to see all these variations in your minds, but you cannot really explain them. So, when I say blowing snow, what else do I experience with the blowing snow, do I experience sounds, do I experience a chill, can I feel something on my cheeks when the snow is blowing, as posed to still snow, is still snow colder or a blowing snow colder.

What do I feel more comfortable in, what happens to the way I walk in such snow, what happens will I fall in this snow, what will happen to my dogs, so all of those things are going on in my head. So, when I inuit says, Kayi I mean, the person has so many different things associated with Kayi. Similarly, when a technical experts says, ERP

Enterprise Resource Planning, there is a whole bunch of things that come to the persons mind, what happens.

But then what challenges, what problems, what are the benefits, what are the disadvantages, all of these things come. May be the person also thinks about the ERP has a very expensive course, that the person may have gone through an added skill, all of those things. But, when the person goes to explain these things then all these meanings are lost, so that is what we mean by degradation of meaning. And when the person tries to translate these things, the person will take things, that mean more to the situation and describe only those.

For example, if we are talking about ERP, the person is talking about ERP, but when the person is describing ERP to his colleagues, he probably talk about advantages and disadvantages, as related to the organization. The person may not mention, because he or she had to incur while going through this program and the problems that he or she faced, while learning the program, so that is what we mean.

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Translation and degradation of meaning

- In an attempt to explain our thoughts and ideas to our peers, we tend to over-simplify what we are saying
- Meaning is essentially embedded in context: Lack of familiarity with the context results in inhibition of the accurate interpretation of meaning

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Now, what happens is that, when we attempt to explain our thoughts and ideas to appears, we tend to either, we tend to over simplify what we are saying or we tend to down place things. We just keep them what they may want to here or what will make sense to them. So, we essentially expand things, when we are trying to explain things or

we will selectively take portions or whatever we are saying and describe only those portions to appears.

Meaning is, essentially embedded in context and the lack of familiarity with the context results in inhibition of the accurate interpretation of meaning. Let us take the examples of snow once again, the meaning is embedded in that context, the meaning of blowing snow versus drifting snow versus still snow versus powder snow is in the context. When you take it out of context, when you take it to person who is studying physical geography for example, but has had no experience with real snow, the person will need to see some video of the differences in these things to understand, what the concept is about. And even then it will just be a visual, you cannot physically be present there and imagine this. I mean, till you physically presents in that situation and experiencing all these things, the meaning evades us and that is how, the meaning degrades or degenerates in any form of translation.

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Some major problems posed by translation in organizations, the first one here is the issues involving inaccuracies in carrying over referential meanings from one language to another. How do we describe things, how do we discuss meanings, we provide a reference to something that the person listening to us already knows, that is how we describe meanings, that is how we explain things to people.

You know x, so I am going to explain it to you in terms of y, when I am telling, a person living in the planes about snow, I say have you seen ice, you know what ice looks like and the ice that you have in the fridge. And the person says, yes I have seen this ice, on the inside of a refrigerator, in the inside of freezer compartment, that is what snow on the ground looks like. So, it is white in color, it is powdery, it is cold, person has never seen snow, so I describe it in terms of, whatever the person already knows and that is what we mean by referential meaning.

Now, it is inaccurate to some extent, if you lived in a cold place, you will know that, this snow that falls is not similar to the ice inside a refrigerator. In the olden times, I mean, these days of course, refrigerators do not have that kind of ice, only if something falls and you have enough moisture and the refrigerators not doing it is job, do you see that on the inside. But, in the olden refrigerators, may be 10, 12 years ago, 15 years ago, we used to have this old style refrigerators with freezer compartments and you would see this powdery snow.

And still, if you have been, if you live in a cold place and you seen the snow fallen on the ground, there is very little similarity between the two, except that is cold and it is white and it is powdery. But, the texture is very different and it does not resembles the snow falling from the sky. So, there is some type or some amount of inaccuracy in carrying over these referential meanings. But, we have no other choice, we have no other way of explaining things to somebody, who has not been exposed to these concepts.

Similarly, taking things from one language to another language, we use terms that the other person may be familiar with, but that may not accurately describe, but we are trying to say. Issues involving the loss of common socio cultural contexts, unless people socio cultural context are the same, which is a big problem in today's organizations. We come from different languages and cultures, and so we do not have similar socio cultural context and that commonality is lost, when we try and explain things in a third language to somebody.

Now, somebody from Gujarat would know what charge is, somebody would from Punjab would talk about charge differently. Definition of professionalism, the definition of professionalism for a person living in Bombay is different from the definition of professionalism for a person living in Delhi, is different from the definition of a person

living in smaller place like Rayapur for example, or may be Calcutta or some or Bhuvaneswar.

So, the common socio cultural context is lost when we try and explain these things in a third language. Issues involving the change or sedimentation of power relationships, what this really means is that, the power relationships or the power, person in a position of authority is usually the one to decide, which meaning needs to be adopted. And once the meaning is adopted then this translation becomes a factor in the concretization of the power relationship.

Yes, we have listen to person x, so the person is more knowledgeable about this concept, the person may not know anything, but because the person explaining say, the concept of ERP to you, has been able to do it in a convincing manner, we decide that, so and so knows enough about the ERP. And so we put this person, the person sort of becomes starts being perceived as an expert on ERP, so this is what translation does in organizations.

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The implications now of translation in any organization, the major implication here is, that translation has the potential to degrade coincident meanings which means, there is a vulnerability to erosion of worker task accomplishment, productivity, commitment to programs and institution, and compliance. Now, when this coincident meanings are

degraded, we established that, the common meanings or the commonly understood meanings are degraded, because of translation, yes.

And then since translation has this potential to degrade coincident meanings, this results in the erosion of worker task accomplishment, I do not understand what somebody else is saying to me. So, my sense of accomplishment or my accomplishment of, what I am trying to achieve, is brought it down, because I am not fully understanding what is required or what I am doing. The productivity can comedown, if I am not able to understand things in the right context.

Commitment to programs and institutions may comedown and if a meaning is forced on my throat, is somebody in a position of authority forces me to agree to something or to agree to the interpretation of something, that I may not necessarily agree with. But, have to, because somebody in a position of authority is doing, is forcing me to agree to it. Then my compliance could go down, my ability to or my willingness to comply with whatever this person in the position of authority is saying, will come down.

Now, how do we correct this, we have some remedies that are listed here. One, we should avoid the ready to hand translator which means that, we should depend more upon our research, we should depend more upon our intelligence or maturity in finding somebody, who can translate things only after having done enough research or having had a thorough understanding of whatever is being talked about.
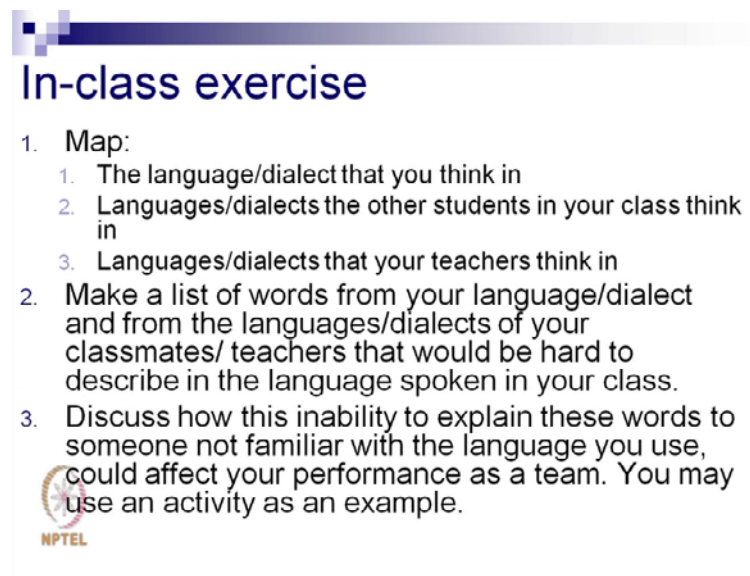
For example, the ERP, instead of depending on somebody who has a readymade answer for any problems with the ERP or foreign explanation of ERP, we may want to listen to somebody, who is actually gone through the system and developed the ERP or adopted the ERP to an organization. So, we need to avoid the ready to hand translator, we need to employ specialists who know what they are doing, we need to employ people who have specialized training.

We need to facilitate the familiarity of expert translators with the socio cultural context of the organization. So, we needs to help these expert translators, these experts, these specialists, become familiar with the culture of the organization. And we need to communicate policy interpretations procedure and product changes, key job information, etcetera in writing as well as through face to face discussions, if you put things in writing, the number of interpretations goes down dramatically when we have face to face

discussions with our employees, we are able to come to a common understanding, we are able to create a common culture, a common context for the co creation of meaning. So, we are able to create coincident meanings through face to face discussions with people and that is how, we remedy this situation.

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Now, I have an exercise for you all, for the first thing I want you to do is, map the language that you or the dialect that you thinking. I also want you to map the languages and the dialects, the other students in your class thinking and the languages and the dialects the teachers who teach you think in. And then I want you to make a list of words from your own language or dialect and from the languages and dialects of your classmates and teachers, that would be hard to describe in the language spoken in your class.

I can give you one example of an interesting word like that. there is a word in Punjabi called jella or jelly. So, I cannot explain it, I have no way of explaining it, so that is one and I also want you to discuss, how this inability to explain these words to someone not familiar with the language you use, could affect your performance as a team. If there was some specific word, that you were trying to explain to people who were not familiar with your language, what problems could it bring to your performance as a team.You may use some sort of an activity as an example for this, so you do this and we will talk more next time.

Thank you.