Lecture - 13
Barriers to Communication

Good morning, welcome back to the lectures on International Business Communication, we dealt with several issues here, we have talked about, what international business communication is, we have talked about a little bit about competence in international business communication. And the last few lectures, we discussed the specific problems that can arise in intercultural communication specifically. Today we will talk about the barriers to communication, we will talk about the categories of barriers that we come across in communicating with people from different cultures, from different settings; people who are not from the same mind set to put it very, very simply as ours and so we will discuss the barriers.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:15)

Revision

- Translation and the problems it creates in the business environment
- Is degradation of coincident meaning specific to inter-lingual translation?

Let us revise a little bit, I had asked you to think about the problems you face, when you try and explain things, from your mother tongue to people who are not familiar with the same language or dialogues that you use. And so in class I would like you to discuss the problems of translation, that are created in the business environment or the problems that are created due to problems with translation in the business environment.

The second thing I would like you to talk about, in class or discuss in class is degradation of coincident meaning, we talked about coincident meaning last time, I would like you to talk about whether degradation of coincident meaning is specific to inter-lingual translation, inter-lingual translation means, translation across languages. So, when we talk about translation, I have been specifically referring to translation across languages or are we talking about something much more over actually than that.

And that is what I would like you to discuss in class, as to whether the we talk about degradation of coincident meaning. So, please discuss what coincident meaning is what degradation, of coincidence meaning is and whether this degradation of coincident meaning, only applies to translations that happen between from one language to another or does it happen in other situations also and I am sure the teachers can help you with lot more of that.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:59)
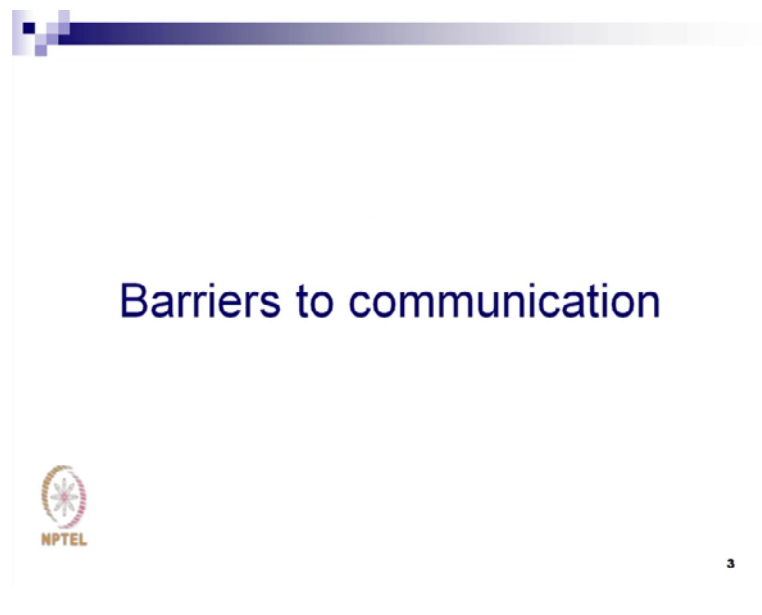
Now, once you have done that then we can start talking about barriers to communication.

Common misinterpretations in intercultural communication (Barna, 1994)

- Assumption of similarities
- Language differences
- Nonverbal misrepresentations
- Preconceptions and stereotypes
- Tendency to evaluate
- High anxiety

When we talk about barriers, the first thing we need to talk about is the common misinterpretations in intercultural communication and when we talk about cultures by now, I am sure you agree with me. We were not talking about only about ethnicity, we are not talking only about language, we are not talking only about community, we are in general talking about people, who are different from us in any way.

And so we are going to discuss the common misinterpretations that we come across in intercultural communication, which means the common things, that we tend to misinterpret about people, who are different from us in any way possible. And Barna wrote a paper on this with specific focus on intercultural communication, but I think it applies to all situations across the board, the first thing here is assumption of similarities.

The first when we come across any person, the first thing we tend to do is, we tend to think, that the person is similar to us, we tend to view a person, we are communicating with in the same light as ourselves. And we assume that the person knows, which context we are talking from and how we have designed our message with what intension have we designed our message, we talked about the emotional volitional aspect of messages in the initial parts of this series and we also discussed how context plays a role in interpretations.

So, when we talk to anybody knew, we assume that the person is on the same wavelength, to put it very simply and to put it in common parallels as ours. And so they

know what we mean and that becomes a problem, because that may not always be true. The second thing, we tend to do is focus on the language differences and we not focus on, but if the difference in their language, becomes a problem as we discussed in the last lecture.

The problem of translation creates degradation or results in, a degradation of coincident meaning, which is how we draw the same meaning, from the same description, if we are familiar with a language, we understand what things can note or what things can in different situations, but if, we do not speak the same language and this changes. The other big misinterpretation that happens is non-verbal misinterpretations and I am not sure, if I shared this example with you at some point.

But, I will give you personal example, of something that happened to me when I was doing my P H D, I was studying abroad. And in India what happens is that when we speak to our teachers or somebody, who is senior to us either in age or authority, we do not generally look the at them straight in the eye, you know you will not look at your father, when he is scolding you or you will not look at your teacher, when you getting the scolding, you hang your head in shame and you look down.

And so something similar happened to me and I am taking the liberty of sharing this experience with you, here on this platform as any graduate student, I also slacked as any regular student. At some point, I slacked in my work and I did not do, what I was supposed to finish by a certain date and I went to my P H D advisors room and he called me and he said you know, we need to talk and you know, I need to know, why you are a good student, but I do not know, why you have not been able to finish, what you are assigned to finish.

And I am sure, if doctor Dans is viewing this lecture, he would remember that incident, so I held my head in shame and doctor Dans was standing there and he was scolding me and he kept getting more and more irritated. Because, I was not looking straight at him and then suddenly, he said you know he got really upset and he said Aradhna are you listening to me, you know why are not you listening to me, what is happening with you.

And I looked at him and I had tears in my eyes and he said, what did I just say and I repeated what he had said exactly as he had said it and I told him that, I was really sorry and that I would not slack again. And he said, but I thought you are not listening, why

would not you looking at me and that is been he realized and that is been realized what the problem was, he thought that by not looking at him directly, when he was speaking to me, I was trying to evade whatever was being said to me, I was not paying attention.

Now, I came from a different culture, he was in the west, I was coming from a very conservative or moderately conservative mindset in the east. And I looked at him and then I told him, I said sir I was listening to everything and he said why would not you looking at me and I said, if my father was scolding me, I would not look at him in the eye, because he would get very upset, he would think, that I was being impertinent.

Now, these are the kinds of non-verbal misinterpretations that happen across cultures across, situations where people do not think along the same lines as us. And so when he got the sorted out, we realized and he said no I need you to look at me, whether you feel you know, you need to start feeling more comfortable, about looking at people especially in the west, because you could be misinterpreted, which is what had happened.

So, and I am sure you faced, similar situations in your own personal lives and professional lives also, where you did not intend to come across as rude or insensitive or impertinent or aggressive, but something that you did non-verbally was misinterpreted in that manner. So, these are the non-verbal misinterpretations that we are talking about here, the other big problem that happens is preconceptions and stereotypes.

Now, again there is nothing wrong with stereotyping people, I am sure people might disagree, but I feel that, we have a tendency to stereotype people, we have a tendency to judge and evaluate people, because the world around us is so complex. To understand the world around us, we need to categorize things, we need to put them into different slots, unless we do that, we are we have trouble in understanding what is going on around us. And so we say anyways, I want to remember this situation or if I want to understand, what is happening, may be whatever I am seeing is can be slotted in category a or can be slotted in category b, this is what happens, when we have a large volume of files on our computer excuse me.

So, this is what happens is we tend to take these large volumes of files and then when we start going through the files on our computers and we start looking at the files. Even if they do not fit into particular category, which we put in into different folders, we create

different folders on our hard drive and we start putting these files into folders, even if they fit in somehow.

So, that we can organize and we can sort of make sense of the mess around us, we attach tags to them or the computer picks up on some tags that are in those files and when we want to search them, that is how the computer goes, it goes from one tag to another and pulls out everything that has that word or whatever description we provide on it. The same thing happens when we try and understand the world around us, how do we retrieve things from our memory, we attach some tags subconsciously.

We attach these tags to everything, that is happening around us and we say this is similar to something, I saw or heard in the past. This is similar to, so this can be clubbed as x and this can be clubbed as y and you know, we go over bored, sometimes with that and we say, you know if we go through enough number of incidents with a certain community of people, we feel that everybody in that community will be the same.
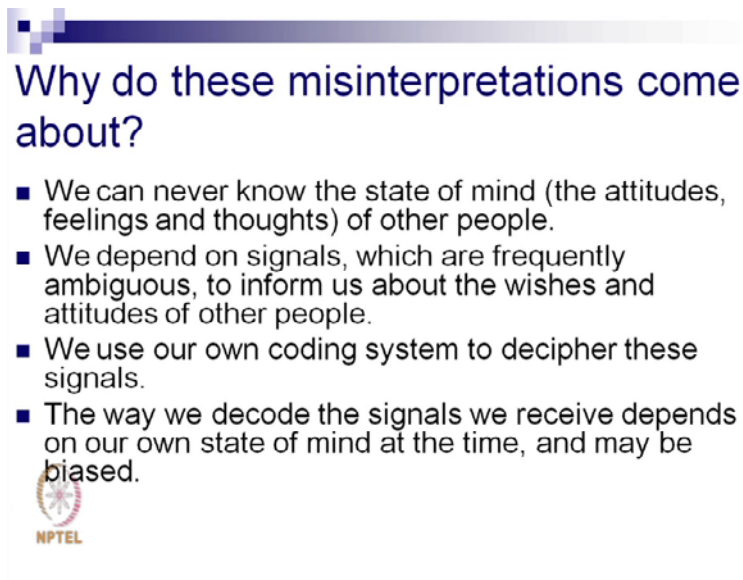
Just to understand, what is going on, now of course, I am sure there are people who would disagree and say no you have to see things in perspective, I am a big fan of context and I would say yes, you have to put things in context. But, this is how on a very basic level we organize things and that becomes a problem, when we are trying to understand people, who are not similar to us.

So, even though, we may need to categorize some situations, we also need to realize that situations are contextual and every person every event is unique, in its own place. And this is one big thing that happens, the next point is also related, we have a tendency to evaluate people situations. We results of situations, we have a tendency to infer some situations based on our previous experiences with similar situations, we have a tendency to infer things about peoples behaviors based on what we have learnt from similar experiences with the same kind of people or similar people in the past.

And we have a tendency to evaluate things and we say this is comfortable, this is not comfortable, last time something like this happened it was not right. So, this time also it will not be right and then when we in our hurry, to get through a situation in our haste to understand the situation fully, we categorize things. We evaluate things and we look at whatever we had the inference, we had drawn from the same situation or the behavior of similar people in the past and we tend to evaluate these behaviors along the same lines.

The next point here is high anxiety, if we are worried about, how a situation will pan out, if you are worried about, how people will respond to us, we have a tendency to misinterpret situations, because that anxiety prevents us from seeing things in context.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:27)

Why do these misinterpretations come about, how do we, how do we reach these misinterpretations, the first thing is or how are these interpretations classified as misinterpretations. The reason, we add the word mis to the interpretations is one we can never know the state of mind of other people, we cannot gauge, the exact context of the sender of any message, that is coming to us.

The second thing that happens to be is that, we depend on signals, signals that are frequently ambiguous, signals that often need various things that often have more than one meaning, to inform us about the wishes and attitudes of other people. How do we come to know whether people are thinking along the same lines as us or not how do we come to know, whether people are understanding or people are on the same wavelength as us.

We come to know this, through the signals they send us, through some non-verbal behavior through, some verbal some words that they use, for example, the examples that I just gave you about doctor Dans misinterpreting, my behavior as impertinent. When I was really trying to be respectful to a person, who was you know almost 50 years my

senior and who was almost probably more than the age of my father and was my P H D advisor.

So, really high up in the level of hierarchy, so it was a signal, my not looking at him or my eyes, on the floor were a signal to him and based on the past experiences, he had with other students may not be with Indian students, but with other western students across his teaching career. He assumed that, I was being impertinent, he tagged the signal, he got from that situation and he made a to his past experiences.

So, the signal of a student, who had not finished her work on time, is not looking at him in the eye, because she was wrong came across to him, as was tagged with something, that he had seen in the past and that signal informed him, based on his past experiences, I am repeating this, because this is really important. This is an ambiguous signal, he thought it was an exact signal, but in reality, it was an ambiguous signal.

And it informed him about the about, what I was possibly imagining, what I possibly wanted and what kind of attitude I had and so he assumed, that since in the past many students, who had done. Engaged in similar behavior had been impertinent or had not paid attention to the work even after they had been scolded he assumed that I will do the same thing.

So, it was it informed him about my wish, about my attitude, I did not wish to be serious in my work, my attitude was that of impertinence and this is how we come to know about the signals coming to us from the environment. And we depend on these signals, the second, the next point here is we use our own coding system to decide for these signals, we have our own connections in our minds, we make our own connections with different things in our minds.
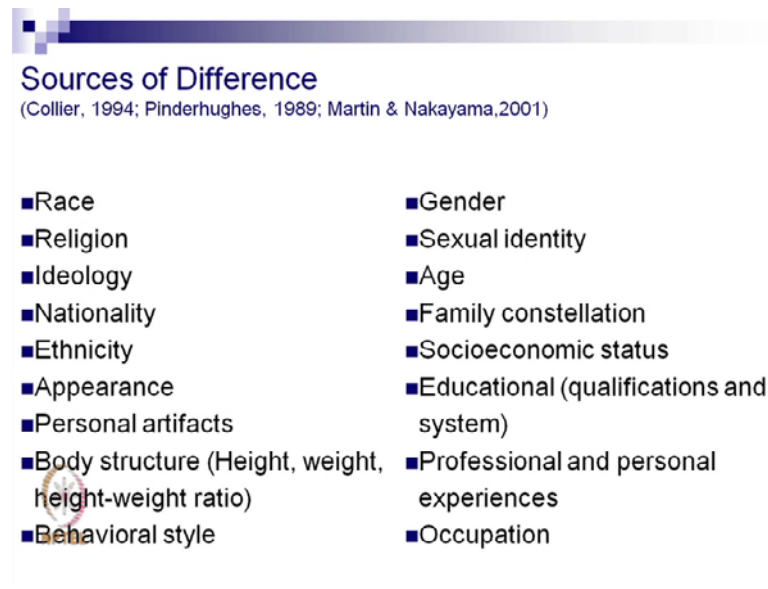
And we use this coding system, we have our own tags, when we erase the files in our computer, we erase them based on our own understanding or what should go into the files, nobody comes and tells us that, this should be filed here and that should be filed there. So, we have our own coding system every single human being on this earth, has his or her own coding system, to tag these signals and to understand them and to understand their dimensions.

The way we decode the signals, we receive depends on our state of mind at the time and may be by us. Let us go back to this personal example that I have shared with you, doctor Dans was upset, that a student who he thought had been serious, had slacked in her work. So, it was his own state of mind, he was irritated, he was angry, he was very upset, that his effort in advising me had possibly gone waste. He was already angry and then I come in and exhibit a behavior that he has always associated with impertinence and rudeness and lack of sincerity.

So, it is like adding fuel to the fire, so his own state of mind was negative, at that point of time, he is upset, when I say negative, he was upset genuinely upset any teacher would be. And to have to that upset state of mind, he sees something else that upsets him even further. And that is. So, his reaction which in other cases may not have been the same was in a way, a little more intense than it would have been, because of his upset state of mind, because this upsetting, you know too many upsetting signals were, coming to him and so it was biased.

So, this is this happens with us, you know the way we decode our signals, depends on our state of mind, if we are really happy something nasty happens, we let it slight by why, because we do not want to spoil our mood, as we say in regular terminology. And but if we are upset and something up settings happen and you know you say this is the last raw on the camel's back which means, I this is as much stresses, I can handle and give me any more stress and I will really lose my temper. So, this is what this is about and this is how these misinterpretations come about ok.
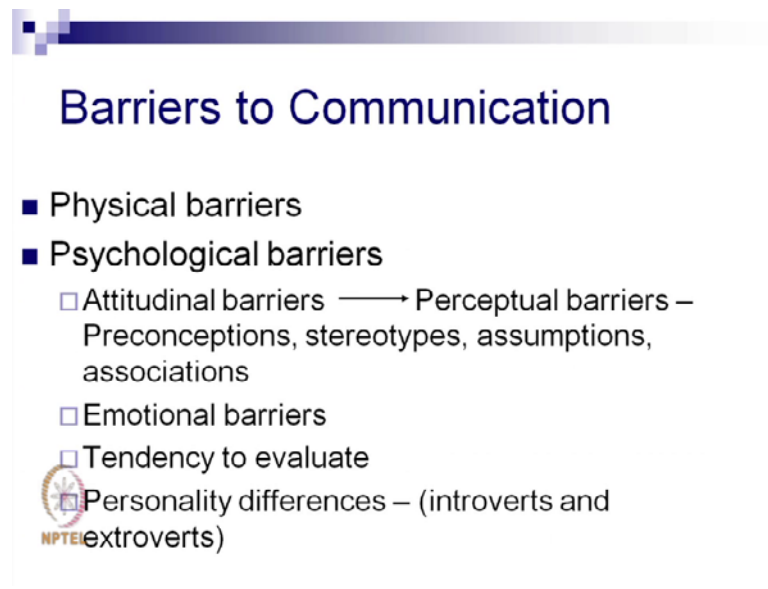
(Refer Slide Time: 20:58)

Sources of Difference
(Collier, 1994; Pinderhughes, 1989; Martin & Nakayama, 2001)

- Race
- Religion
- Ideology
- Nationality
- Ethnicity
- Appearance
- Personal artifacts
- Body structure (Height, weight, height-weight ratio)
- Behavioral style

- Gender
- Sexual identity
- Age
- Family constellation
- Socioeconomic status
- Educational (qualifications and system)
- Professional and personal experiences
- Occupation

We quickly we will go with the sources of difference, that we had talked about at some point, various points on which we can differ from other people.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:10)

Barriers to Communication

- Physical barriers
- Psychological barriers
  - Attitudinal barriers ⟶ Perceptual barriers – Preconceptions, stereotypes, assumptions, associations
  - Emotional barriers
  - Tendency to evaluate
  - Personality differences – (introverts and extroverts)

And now, we come to the actual thing, that we are going to talk about, which is barriers to communication. So, all these things the differences, we have from people the physical situation, the context the mind sets of people everything, can become a stumbling block or a barrier in the accurate interpretation of our messages by the receiver of our messages.

Now, these stumbling blocks or barriers or speed bumps can be classified as follows, the first one we will talk about here is physical barriers. And when we talk about physical barriers, we are essentially talking about, the physical things that prevent us from listening to or from hearing or from receiving the message. So, when its paper message it could be the bad quality of printing, when it is an audio message may be the sound is too low or the words are garbled or the signal is not clear.

So, those are the physical barriers or the person is differently in a way and cannot see or hear things properly, so that can be a physical barrier, the other barrier here is the psychological barriers. And these could be attitudinal barriers, the first one here is attitudinal barriers, which leads to it a problem with perception, perceptual barriers, which include preconceptions as we talked about earlier. Stereotyped preconceptions are things that we assume ahead of time or we sort of, we preconceive, which means we decide about another person, before we actually have had a chance to know them as well as we should.

Stereotypes are we put them into different categories, different assumptions about, what people may mean, after they start talking and our assumptions about where, they are coming from, what their intensions are and associations. Regarding these people, that we are talking to you know what we associate them with good, bad, sincere insincere honest, untruthful stuff like that. The other psychological barrier here is the emotional barriers that we have our own emotions prevents us from same things in the right context from, understanding them in the right context.

Another one here is tendency to evaluate, we just discuss that and we have personality differences introverts and extroverts, one example of different personalities, we have aggressive and we have calm people. So, personality differences can also become a major barrier in and prevent us from interpreting any message, in its true context for example, when we talk about introverts the introverts here are when we talk about introverts, we are essentially talking about people, who are not very comfortable sharing their feelings.

Extraverts are people who are very, very comfortable or appeared to be very, very comfortable sharing their feelings with people outside their own comfort zone. And if you are an extrovert, you are dealing with an introvert, it becomes really difficult,

because we feel to we fail to understand the reason, why somebody is not comfortable sharing their opinions and that in turn connects with our attitudinal barriers.

So, all of these are inter related, you know it is not either this or that our own personality, may lead us to have different attitudes or may result in us having different attitudes and different perceptions, than people with a different personality than ours.

And so this is how it becomes the big barrier in understanding where, the other person is coming from, if I am an aggressive person and I really do whatever it takes to get whatever, I want done. And I come across a person, whose is more calm and more passive, then I will not be able to understand, why this person is not willing to put in all here she has, may be peace of mind is more important to a passive person or a calm person, than getting the work done and for me, getting the work done is more important.

And so even if the passive or calm person says that, I would like to reach the top, I would like to do x and y and z I say, but how will you do it, you are not willing to put in the effort it requires and the person says no, I will give it time and it will all work out. So, I assume that this person is only pretending to be concerned about the work on hand and person is not really concerned about the work on hand. And the person does not seem to be or does not appear to be putting in the amount of effort that is required, to go into this. So, that is what we mean by personality differences being a big barrier in communication.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:49)

Barriers to communication (Contd.)
Semantic barriers (Lewis, 1980):

Semantics (Gr. *semantikos* meaning "significant") refers to word meanings

- Allness: An attitude that people have who believe what they say about a particular subject is all there is to say or know about that subject.

NPTEL

Now, the other thing that, we will discuss in lot of detail today is semantic barriers, semantics means, refers to word meanings and word meanings depend largely on context. And communication is all about communication, it is all about sending and receiving meanings, but we know that meanings cannot be transmitted, only messages can be transmitted.

So, when we talk about word meanings or semantics, we are essentially talking about sending words or messages, that are composed a words and hoping, that people who receives these collections of words interpret them in the same context, as we want them interpreted. The first semantic barrier, that we will talk about is allness and this was a term coined sometime ago and the first semantic barrier, that we will talk about is allness.

And this was a term that was coined sometime ago and it refers to an attitude that people have, who believe what I say about, a particular subject is all there is to say or know about that subject. This means, that people who have this barrier feel that they know everything about a subject and anything else that is said about the subject does not really count and or nobody else can have as much information as they have about the subject.

And they are the authorities on the subject and so you know as we say, it is my way or the highway. So, you either listen to what I am saying and believe what I am saying or go and believe somebody else and that becomes a big problem in sending our message, in communicating our thoughts and receiving messages, as well. This usually translates into superior subordinate problems, in superior subordinate communication problems in communication among people who belong to different expert themes.
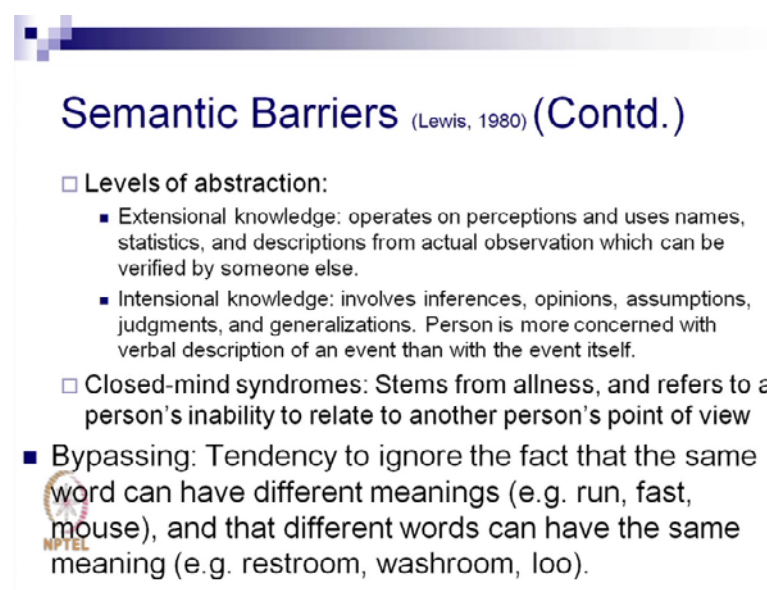
So, we get, so involved in our work we get, so engrossed in whatever, we are doing, that we are not able to see, whatever we are doing from another perspective, we have been trained, we have put in. So, much work we feel we have a right to collapse those experts and then somebody comes along, who has seen things from a different perspective and we are just not able to see it.

One very good example of this is the communication regarding technical issues between people, who are actually technical experts and the users of whatever these technical experts design. The users see things in a very different light and then there are researchers that evaluate or analyze or study the social impact of these new technological

developments. And so when you listen to an interaction between the users the social scientists, who studied social change, as a result of technology and the designers of new technologies, we realize that everybody is coming from a different perspective.

And usually the designers or the people, who have spent excuse me 10 12 15 20 years developing a product are just not able to grasp the social impact. And they are at times not able to grasp, what a user must be feeling about the technology, they developed and what, how it must be impacting them.

(Refer Slide Time: 30:58)

Semantic Barriers (Lewis, 1980) (Contd.)

□ Levels of abstraction:
  ▪ Extensional knowledge: operates on perceptions and uses names, statistics, and descriptions from actual observation which can be verified by someone else.
  ▪ Intensional knowledge: involves inferences, opinions, assumptions, judgments, and generalizations. Person is more concerned with verbal description of an event than with the event itself.

□ Closed-mind syndromes: Stems from allness, and refers to a person's inability to relate to another person's point of view

▪ Bypassing: Tendency to ignore the fact that the same word can have different meanings (e.g. run, fast, mouse), and that different words can have the same meaning (e.g. restroom, washroom, loo).

The next and within allness, we have 2 different kinds of barriers, we have levels of abstraction, the first one here is extensional knowledge, which operates on perceptions and uses names statistics and descriptions from actual observation which can be verified by someone else. So, this is inductive, similar to inductive reasoning, where you go from this specific to the general, this is what I know anyone can verify it, anyone will be able to come up with the same categories that I have been able to come up with.

Hence there is nothing else beyond whatever I am saying that is extensional knowledge the other one is intentional knowledge and this is more about the deductive logic or deductive knowledge.

It involves inferences opinions assumptions judgments and generalizations and the person here is more concerned with the verbal description of an event than with the event

itself, this is what I saw this is what I heard. Hence, I am inferring this and based on the words that I heard, this is what these words mean based on the words that were presented to me, this is what the event means and that becomes a big barrier. You know, we say I have seen every aspect of whatever was presented to me, I have gone through everything that is presented to me.

And if I am able to interpret things in a certain way anyone else should we all know, that when we have large volumes of data one small minor difference in selecting the data points can result in completely different interpretations, completely different inferences by different people. So, levels of abstraction is one kind of allness barrier, the other all ness barrier is the closed mind syndromes and based on from allness and referred to a person's inability to relate to another person's point of view, which means that you know again my way or the highway.

What I am saying is true, why because I have done enough research, because I have I see things in a certain way and that is all there is. So, this is really a blinded vision, as we say you know or since where there blinders to make sure that they stay on track, so they are like this. And so this is my close minded or tunnel vision, you know this is all I am seeing and there is nothing beyond whatever I see, no nothing exists beyond whatever I am seeing.

Another type of semantic barrier that we will discuss today is by passing is the tendency to ignore the fact, that the same word can have different meanings, for example, the word run can mean a person running, now run on a sock can mean, that the sock is the socks, that we wear on our feet.
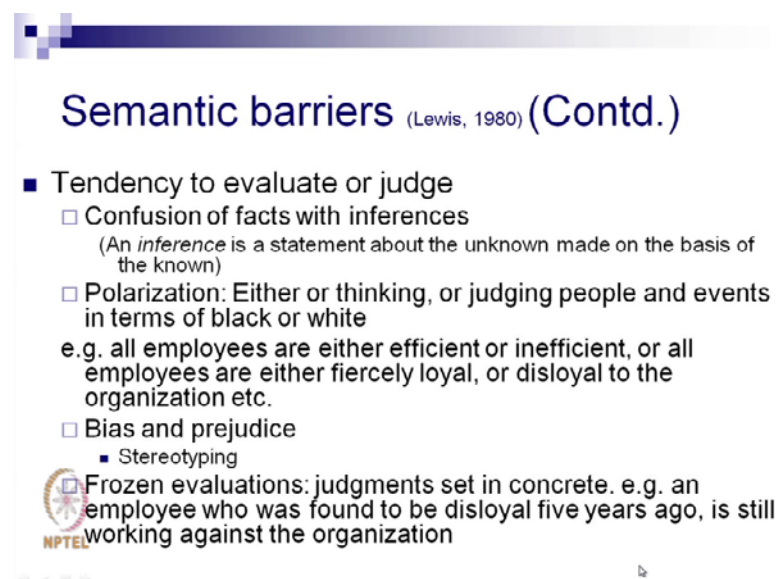
So, run on a sock can mean that the sock is torn in some place, when we talk about run, we also you know, it can actually refer to a physical act of running or somebody is had a good run with their work or a good run of experiences or whatever. So, it is can refer to a series of events and or fast diametrically opposite meanings fast means, high speed fast also means, when you do not eat for a day or a while.

So, you know 2 meanings of the same word or a mouse, you know a regular mouse and this plastic device, that we use with the computer and when we bypass, we also have a tendency to ignore the fact that different words can have the same meaning too, which

means, restroom and washroom and loo can mean the same thing, so we have you know different meanings, different words that contribute to the same meaning.

Now, of course, I can understand that a restroom in reality would be a more of an lounge attached to a bathroom where you go and use certain you freshen up and a washroom would probably only be used for washing yourself. But then we use these terms interchangeably and people who bypass do not want to even acknowledge, that it is to use these terms interchangeably.

(Refer Slide Time: 36:02)

Another type of semantic barrier is the tendency to evaluate or judge and we are again, we are focusing only on meanings of words here. One is confusion of facts with inferences, what is the fact and what is an inference please discuss in your class and I will tell you. A fact is something that is viewed by everybody in the same light and inference on the other hand is a statement about the unknown, made on the basis of the known, I know these 3 facts based on these 3 facts, I infer something else.

So, over the years IIT is have been taking in exceptional students from the country, over the years a lamina of IIT have been performing really well, in India and abroad. So, I assume, now I infer from this data that all IIT students are exceptional students all IIT students have an above average I q. This may or may not be true, because there are some students here, who work really, really hard and they succeed on the basis of their intelligence on their hard work everybody works really hard.

But, there are some who are not that intelligent, but they work, they are not that insightful, but they work so hard, that they are able to surpass the students, who are not working hard. But, are extremely insightful and add extremely or are very, very capable of picking upon smaller things.
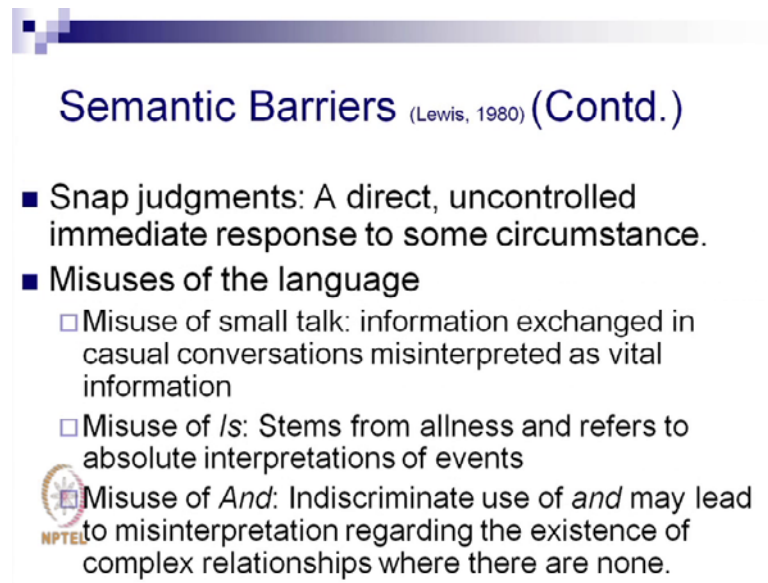
So, all our students have yes all our students are exceptional, but they are exceptional in different fields, but what do we club all of them in one slot and that is what people say, so this is one example. So, are everybody, who joins an organization like Google is extremely creative, now we do not know that for a fact, yes Google encourages creativity amongst its employees, yes Google has had a reputation for providing a very comfortable working environment for its employees.

But, it is possible that, there are some employees in Google, who may not be that creative or who may not feel that comfortable with the environment that has been provided to them. The other semantic barrier that, we will talk about today is polarization, which is either odd thinking or judging people and events in terms of black and white, for example all employees are either efficient or inefficient or all employees are either seriously loyal or disloyal to the organization etcetera.

So, if an employee is not loyal and is not constantly championing the cause of the organization that means, that the employee has tie ups with competitor organizations. So, we just slot people into, either 1 or 2 extremes of a continuum, so either a person is good or bad, there is no middle ground. And this is called polarization and we tend to evaluate people and we tend to use absolute words for these things, bias and prejudice again we talked about this the stereotype people based on the descriptions that we receive about people, we are biased against certain types of people, so that is stereotyping.

Frozen evaluations or judgments set in concrete for example, an employee who was found to be disloyal 5 years ago is still working against the organization or an employee, who was not able to meet the targets last month will never be able to meet the targets, ever in his or her life. And so this is called a frozen evaluation, which means that the evaluation that we have about a person is frozen in time.

Snap judgments are another type of semantic barriers and snap judgments are direct uncontrolled immediate responses to some circumstance, which means jumping to conclusions without thinking about them. Another semantic barrier that we will talk about is misuses of language, in this we have various things, the first one is misuse of small talk, which means the information, that we may exchange over a cup of tea or in a public place or casual information, that we exchange with appears is misinterpreted as a vital piece of information.
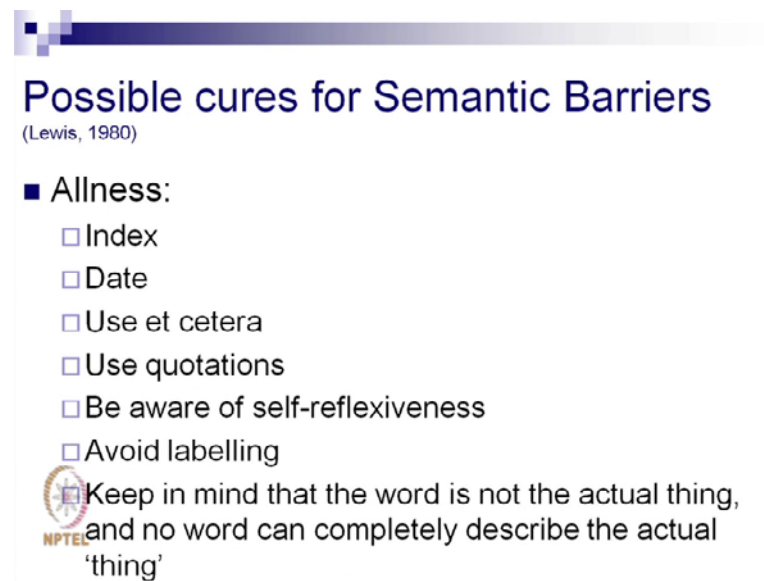
So, this kind of exchange is used by gossip mongers in the organization, you over here somebody is saying something, you will over here a piece of the conversation and we will start interpreting things from it. And that can lead to a big barrier or a big problem with the way we interpret, the rest of the events in the organization.

The other thing here is misuse of is not a word is a big pain actually, when we say is we are talking in terms of in absolute terms, we are talking in terms of things being a certain way. And so A is an inefficient employee, A is very dedicated to her work, B is not a nice person, B is a very good supervisor. So, you know we create these valued judgments we use these words inappropriately and we create these value judgments and we tend to slot people in categories and then you know all these things are interrelated.

The other semantic barrier here is misuse of the word and what do we do we club the illogically juxtapose or we inappropriately juxtapose suppose or place together or attach

2 different concepts together that really do not make any sense and we reach different kinds of conclusions. So, in thus it results to the indiscriminate use of the word and it may lead to misinterpretation regarding the existence of complex relationships where they are none. So, we take 2 different concepts and we use the word and just, because we want to cover enough ground and we end up misinterpreting the whole event or we end up sending a wrong signal to the receiver of our message, who ends up misinterpreting the event ok.

(Refer Slide Time: 43:56)

Possible cures for Semantic Barriers
(Lewis, 1980)

- **Allness:**
  - Index
  - Date
  - Use et cetera
  - Use quotations
  - Be aware of self-reflexiveness
  - Avoid labelling
  - Keep in mind that the word is not the actual thing, and no word can completely describe the actual 'thing'

Some possible cures for these semantic barriers, the first one is allness, so when we first barrier, that we just discussed is allness. And some ways, in which we can prevent this or we can get over this is by indexing whatever, we come across appropriately, the other cure here is that, we ask when did the event take place. So, you know or what is our frame of reference, we index we define the boundaries, I am talking about I am not talking about all students, I am talking about student a b c and d and I am talking about students a b c and d from, the 1972 batch for example, ok.

So, we create boundaries, we define the context, instead of saying all students were able to make a name for themselves. We say students a b c and d from 1972 batch, became good entrepreneurs or student a from 1961, student b from 1963, student c from 1965, student d from 1973 ended up setting up their own entrepreneurial ventures, which laid
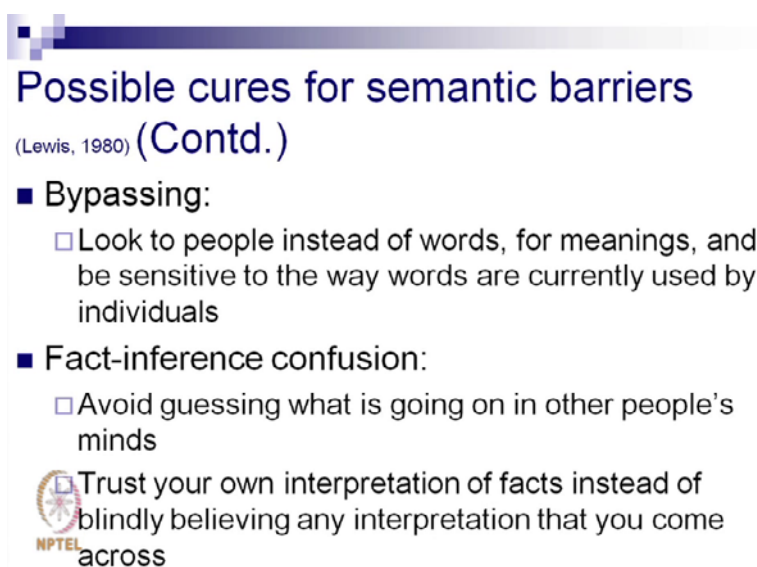
to student e from 1965 and student f from 1985, have joining them and diversifying these ventures.

So, we have indexed instead of saying all students are entrepreneurs, we say that these specific students became good entrepreneurs in these years, then we use the word etcetera. Now, when we are trying to be absolute or exact, we avoid the use of the word etcetera, which is commonly written as e t c dot, it is not etcetera its etcetera and so that is one, we use quotations, we classify things we refer to things within their context.

We also need to be aware of self-reflexiveness, which means we need to think about and we need to evaluate our own assumptions and then classify whatever we are trying to say accordingly. We try and avoid labeling, we try and avoid slotting people and situations into categories, we also want to keep in mind, that the word is not the actual thing and no word can completely describe the actual thing and why is this. There is something, what we have talked about in the very beginning of this series, we talked about messages being in words, the meanings cannot be transmitted, only messages can be transmitted.

The meanings are in people, the messages are in words used by the same people, but the meanings come from, the people who are using those words. So, I may be using a word, that is inappropriate, if I use an absolute word, I may not be doing justice to the actual description of the event ok.

(Refer Slide Time: 47:43)

Possible cures for semantic barriers
(Lewis, 1980) (Contd.)

- Bypassing:
  - Look to people instead of words, for meanings, and be sensitive to the way words are currently used by individuals
- Fact-inference confusion:
  - Avoid guessing what is going on in other people's minds
  - Trust your own interpretation of facts instead of blindly believing any interpretation that you come across
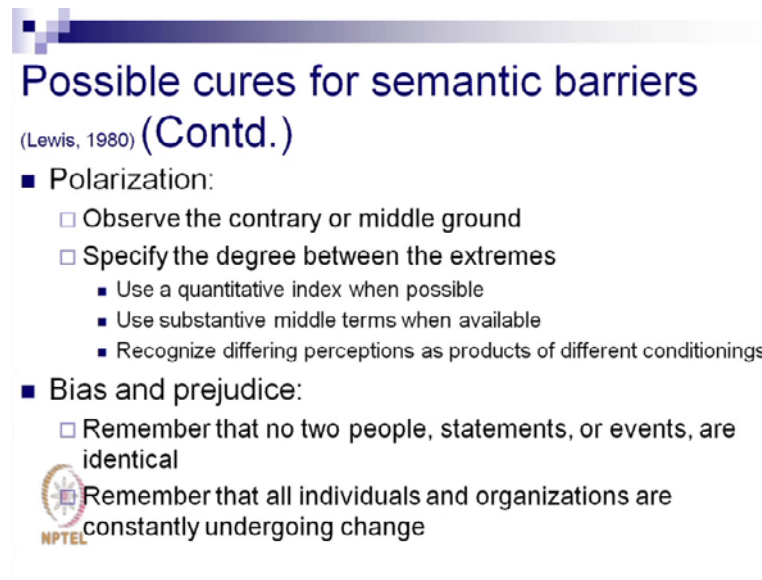
The other cure for another semantic barrier is you know the cure for bypassing, we talked about bypassing, which means, we fail to understand, what different words can mean and what meanings, we can draw from or what similar meanings, we can draw from different words. So, how do we deal with this, we look to people instead of words for meanings and be sensitive to the way the words are currently used by individuals.

We listen, we pay attention to our environment, we pay attention to our surroundings, we pay attention to the usage of different words in our environments and we try and figure out what is being said and how it is being said. And then we realize that may be different words can mean different things or differently sounding words can mean the same thing one word can have more than one meaning, more than one connotation and we keep our eyes and ears open and we see how different words are used different meanings are interpreted.

The other semantic barrier that we discussed was fact-inference confusion and to overcome this barrier, we need to avoid guessing, what is going on in other people's minds. We said, we assume similarities, we talked about the reasons for misinterpretations, we need to understand, that we can never really figure out what other people are thinking, we can never really know what is going on in other people's minds. And we need to consciously avoid, a figure out or trying to figure out, what is going on people's mind, we also need to trust our own interpretation of facts and instead of blindly believing, any interpretation that we come across.

(Refer Slide Time: 50:04)

So, the other barrier that we discussed was polarization and in order to avoid polarization, we need to recognize and that there is a middle ground. Everything may not be on either sides of a continuum, everything may not be either 1 or 2, you could have 1.1, you could have 1.5. So, we need to recognize, that most people most situations in life, lie on the middle ground and not on either sides of a continuum, the sides of a continuum only help us recognize, that there are different categories.

But, most people are mixtures of the 2 sides or the 2 extremes of a continuum, the other way by which we can avoid polarizing people and events and situations are using absolute words, for people and events and situations is, we specify the degree between the extremes. We gives a quantitative index wherever possible, we recognize and acknowledge, the quantitative difference, there is between these 2 extremes, we use substantive middle terms whenever available.

We recognize that, if something ranges from good to bad or loyal to disloyal, we can also have some people, who are neutral, how do we classify somebody as loyal, how do we classify somebody as disloyal. How do we, so you know we need to recognize, that there are some people, who can be neutral as well. And where do we draw the line between loyal and disloyal, how long that line is when we say disloyal are we talking about people who go out and speak to media negatively about the organization or who talk to
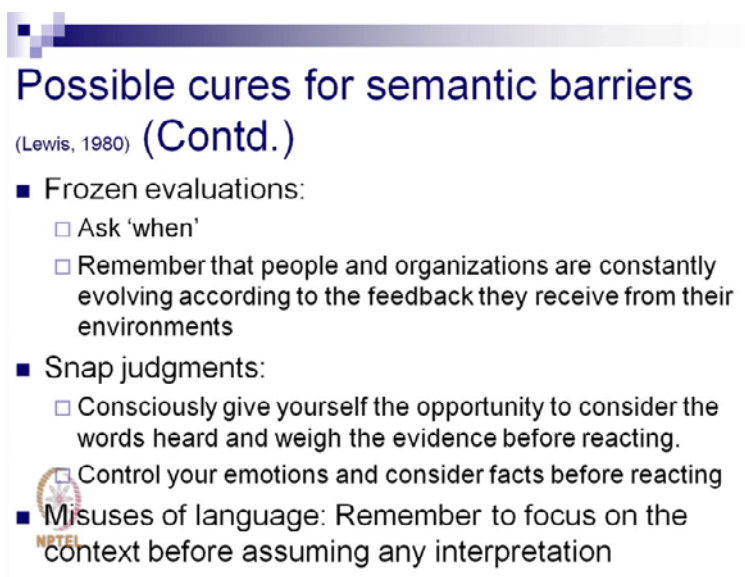
their colleagues negatively about the organization or who are actively doing something to sabotage the working of the organization are those people qualified as disloyal.

And who is qualified, who is classified as loyal, people who are constantly saying positive things about the organization, who are constantly, you know coming to their bosses and telling them how great they feel in the organization, so we have these list. And we compare these lists and we say there are some people, who may not be coming to the boss and saying how great the organization is, but may not also be sabotaging the organization.

They are just coming to the office doing their work and going away, so those people are neutral, so that is what we mean by substantively middle terms, wherever available you know people who are we do not really label these people. Recognize different perceptions as products of different conditionings, we also try and understand that people pursue different things because there have been conditions to believe different things.

Bias and prejudice, we need to remember that no 2 peoples statements or events are identical, everyone, every situation, every person as you meet in their own respects, we also need to remember that all individuals and organizations are constantly undergoing change. Nothing is frozen and time of place and the perception, you may have had about one person may be different from the perception about another person, sorry may be, may not hold true over time and space.

(Refer Slide Time: 53:50)

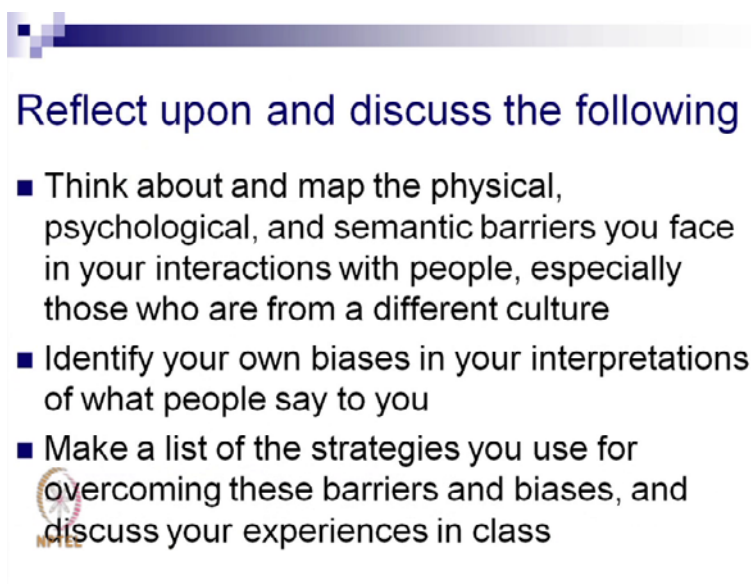## Possible cures for semantic barriers
(Lewis, 1980) (Contd.)

- Frozen evaluations:
  - □ Ask 'when'
  - □ Remember that people and organizations are constantly evolving according to the feedback they receive from their environments
- Snap judgments:
  - □ Consciously give yourself the opportunity to consider the words heard and weigh the evidence before reacting.
  - □ Control your emotions and consider facts before reacting
- Misuses of language: Remember to focus on the context before assuming any interpretation

Some more cures for frozen evaluations, we need to find out, when a particular event took place, when a person did something different. We also need to remember again, what we said last time that people and organizations are constantly evolving according to the feedback, they receive from their environments. When we talk about snap judgments, we need to consciously give ourselves the opportunity, to consider the words and vary evidence before reacting.

We need to see things in context and we need to weigh the evidence, we need to see whatever is going on in its right context before we react, we also need to control our emotions and consider facts before reacting, before jumping to conclusions and assuming that, certain things are certain way. And the last one here is misuses of language, we need to remember, to focus on the context before assuming any interpretation.

Now, lot of these things some similar, but if you see them separately and if you see them in context, they are really a little bit different from each other. But, we are essentially asking you to what I am, asking you to do is see things in the right context and view them, in the right context, before interpreting them in a certain way.

(Refer Slide Time: 55:11)

Reflect upon and discuss the following

- Think about and map the physical, psychological, and semantic barriers you face in your interactions with people, especially those who are from a different culture
- Identify your own biases in your interpretations of what people say to you
- Make a list of the strategies you use for overcoming these barriers and biases, and discuss your experiences in class

I will just take a minute more, what I would like you to do, before your next class is think about and map the physical, psychological and semantic barriers you, personally face in your interactions with people. Especially those who are from a different culture or mind set, I have also want you to identify your own biases, in your interpretations of

what people say to you, I had you do this earlier, I would like you to do this again. And I want you to make a list of the strategies you use for overcoming these barriers and biases and discuss these experiences in your class and then come prepared for the next lecture.