

NPTEL Questions and Answers

Lecture 1: Questions

1. What is communication?
2. What is the difference between a message and communication?
3. How many entities are required in the process of communication?
4. How does context affect communication?

Lecture 1: Answers

1. *Communication* is a *process* which involves the coming together of two or more *entities* in a particular *context* or *situation* where these entities exchange some *information* to which they ascribe some *meaning*, with or without the intention of *acting* upon it, or *intending* that the people this information is exchanged with act upon it.
2. The word message refers to the content of expressions that are exchanged between the interactants. Communication, on the other hand, is the process including messages and the reasons for the messages and the perceptions of the exchanged messages, and the feedback to the exchanged messages.
3. Two
4. Context determines the meanings carried by messages and interpreted from in a communication event.

Lecture 2: Questions

1. What are the implications of Aristotelian theory of communication on modern day corporate environment?
2. What is the primary difference between Shannon and Weaver's model and the SMCR model of communication?
3. What are the similarities and differences in Katz and Lazarsfeld's model of communication and the SMCR Model of communication?
4. Describe Dance's helical model of communication and explain its implications in corporate interactions.

Lecture 2: Answers

1. Aristotelian theory explains how the message affects the receiver, and consequently what the receiver of the message decides to do or not do as a result of the message s/he has received. This can be used in the formulating of advertisements and other persuasive communication tools used to convince customers about the utility of products and services.
2. Shannon and Weaver model: Noise or contextual disturbance **after** the message has been shaped and transmitted, may interfere with interpretation of the message. SMCR model: Context shapes the message **during** design, transmission, reception and interpretation stages.
3. Similarities: Source (Sender in K & L model), Message (Content in K & L model), Channel & Receiver.

Differences: K & L Model describes the role of feedback at the end of the process, while SMCR model emphasizes on the role of context at every stage of the process and the impact of context on the shape and interpretation of the message at every stage of the process.

SMCR builds on K & L model.

4. Dance's Helical model of communication

In 1967, Dr. Frank E.X. Dance proposed a model of communication that added another dimension to the models already being used to explain the process of communication. Dance (1967) proposed that communication is an interactive, dynamic process. He explained that the exchange of messages starts as a simple one on one transaction and in and through the process of this exchange it grows and evolves into something much larger than it was originally intended to be. The process of communication according to Dance (1967) is continuous and dynamic, and in and through this continuity, the scope of the message and its interpretation increases and covers a lot more ground than the sender or receiver of the message originally intended (Dance, 1967).

Dance's theory has been used extensively to explain the interactions between customers and service providers where the impact of advertising and persuading customers to buy products rests exclusively on the shape this helix takes and the ground it covers both on the consumer's and seller's side (Anderson & Wanninger, 1996).

Lecture 3: Questions

1. What is communicative competence and why is it important in the context of corporate communication?
2. What is the common factor in Hymes' and Crosby's understanding of communication competence?
3. Which aspect of Chomsky's understanding of communication competence became the subject of further argument for many years to come?
4. Describe Backlund's categories of communicative competence.

Lecture 3: Answers

1. Communicative competence refers to the ability to use language, tone, and communicative style in such a way so as to ensure the desired result after the message has been received and interpreted. Competence in communication helps sellers effectively design of persuasive and descriptive messages that can aid in selling products and services to people who might need them. Competence in communication helps customers ask the right kinds of questions about products they might be interested in, and decide whether to buy products and services or not, and find out how to effectively deal with the problems faced during the usage of these products and services.
2. Social context and language being used in that social context:

“Hymes (1971) argued that competence in social interaction situations was a result of competence in the language being spoken and the ability to use the language in a manner appropriate to the situation. This was further in consonance with Crosby's (1952-53) understanding of competence in social interaction as being specific to the social context in which a particular language was being used, in terms of the language being used.”
3. The lack of relationship between or independence of the processes involved in **Knowing** a language and **using** it (performance).
4. Backlund (1977) used the term 'communication competence' to reflect the synergy of the various definitions found in the literature on communication and communicative competence and classified these definitions of communicative competence into five main categories as Linguistic competence, Possession of competence, Contextuality, Appropriateness, and Accomplishment, and commented upon the importance of communicative performance in the inference of an individual's communicative competence. According to Backlund, as the name suggests, *Linguistic Competence* refers to competence in language skills.

Backlund's second category is *Possession of Competence*. In essence this category refers to the cognitive aspect of competence. Backlund noted that possession of competence includes the conscious and unconscious knowledge of the use of the cognitive facilities required to communicate competently in a given situation.

Backlund (1977) also noted that, according to this set of viewpoints, communicators who possess competence are likely to consciously use their inherent understanding unconsciously and their acquired knowledge of the communicative experience in combination with each other to communicate competently in a given situation. Backlund (1977) clearly differentiated the role of intention from competent communication in this category of communication competence, and said that it is not necessary for a person to know whether she or he will gain anything from a situation in order for her or him to communicate competently in a given situation. He also stated that this category of competence clearly results in the behavioral application of the cognitive aspect of competence. He also indicated that "communication competence may be seen as a set of knowledge and skill that can be taught and learned and that may exist in the person at the overt or covert levels" (Backlund, 1977, p. 14).

The third category of the ways in which communication competence has been studied, according to Backlund (1977), is *Context in Communication Competence*. According to this set of viewpoints, communication occurs in a context (Bakhtin, 1993). Therefore, it is very important to assess the nature of the communicative experience in relation to a particular context. According to Backlund (1977), a child develops an understanding of different types of contexts through repeated exposure to a variety of situations. Backlund (1977) classified context into three dimensions, namely, 'verbal', 'relationship', and 'environmental' contexts.

According to Backlund (1977), the *verbal context* is further divided into the "word context," the "sentence context," and the "topic context." The word context refers to appropriate usage of particular words within the context of other words that are being used at the same time. The "sentence context" refers to the organization of words being used together "in order to express a complete thought," and the "topic context" refers to the appropriateness of utterances within the context of the topic of conversation.

According to Backlund (1977), the next set of contexts is the *relationship context*. This context refers to the relationships of the interactants with one another. In consonance with the work of Crosby (1952-53) and Hymes (1971), Backlund noted the significance of adapting "the message and communicative behavior" to the participants in a relationship. Backlund (1977) also suggested that competence in relationships could be viewed as the ability of an individual to "determine the type and style of messages" and structure them in a manner most suitable while dealing with specific relationships (Backlund, 1977, p. 15).

The context of relationships suggested by Backlund (1977) can be compared to the concept of the microsystem in Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of social-emotional development of young children (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner's model is explained later in this chapter.

Finally, the *environmental context* refers to context outside the child's immediate environment. According to Backlund (1977), this context refers to the child's position

and ability to adapt to community level situations like places of worship, the playground, and the like. Bronfenbrenner (1979) referred to this level of context as the macrosystem in his ecological model of socio-emotional development of young children. According to Backlund (1977), the child's level of competence differs in each of these environmental situations. Backlund noted that repeated exposure to different types of situations enhances a child's level of adaptability to different contexts thereby resulting in an increase in her or his overall level of communication competence.

The fourth category Backlund (1977) classified communication competence into is *Appropriateness*. Backlund suggested that competence was a "socially judged phenomenon." According to this set of viewpoints, the onus of the perception of competence of the interactant lies with someone else, and hence the significant others a person was interacting with determined how competent a communicator he or she was (Backlund, 1977). In consonance with the work of Crosby (1952-53), Hymes (1971) and Riccillo (1973), Backlund (1977) suggested that the appropriateness of communication in a specific context or situation was determined by the social fabric of that situation and the "norms" governing the dynamics of that situation, including the norms governing the use of language and its attributes (Backlund, 1977, p. 17). In connection with the appropriateness of communicative behavior, Backlund (1977) suggested that appropriate behavior in communicative situations could be perceived as a "range of appropriate behaviors" rather than as a specific form of behavior. The locus of control in this case shifts outside the interactant, and the *appropriateness* of a specific set of behaviors is governed and defined by a combination of the contexts of interaction mentioned earlier.

Backlund's last category of viewpoints on communication competence was *Accomplishment*. According to Backlund (1977), this category of viewpoints deals with the outcome of a communicative experience instead of the intent or process of the interaction. The outcome of the communicative experience in this case, is related primarily to "effectiveness, success, and accuracy" of the intended and perceived message(s) exchanged during the communicative experience (Backlund, 1977, p. 17). This is similar to Chomsky's (1965) view of performance of a language. The locus of control in Accomplishment as a measure of communication competence lies outside the interactants.

Lecture 4: Questions

1. According to Trenholm and Jensen, what are the different aspects of interpersonal interaction competence, especially in the business environment?
2. What are personal constructs, scripts and social episodes?
3. What is the significance of the Attribution Theory or why did the need to come up with the attribution theory arise?
4. Describe self monitoring and its impact on interpersonal competence especially in the business environment.

Lecture 4: Answers

1. – What the situation is
 - Who one is dealing with, and
 - Who one is and “what kind of relationship between self and other is implied”
2. Personal constructs are, “mental yardsticks for evaluating objects, events and people (Trenholm & Jensen, 2002)”. They are judgements we make about people based on our perceptions.

‘Social episodes are “internal cognitive representations about common, recurring interaction routines within a defined cultural milieu.” (Trenholm & Jensen, 2002).’ These shapes of social episodes and the frames of reference they fit into, are termed as *scripts*.

Social episodes may be further classified as

- *Closed episodes*: When a situation is almost completely scripted or when a situation fits completely into a preconceived frame of reference and follows a predictable pattern e.g. Performance evaluation, entrance exams etc.
 - *Open episodes*: When participants enter a situation without any preconceived plan or with a very general one and the episode takes a shape of its own as a result of the interaction between the interactants, and which may or may not follow a predictable pattern e.g. Job interview, Team meetings etc.
3. “When people observe behavior, they want to attribute causes to behaviors they see rather than assuming that these behaviors are random. This gives them a feeling that they have a greater control over their environments.”
 4. “Just as we form impressions of others, we form and present images of ourselves to others. The awareness of images of self and the ability to adapt these images to the situation at hand has been referred to as self monitoring.” (Snyder, 1974, in Trenholm & Jensen, 2002)

Self monitoring may be classified into two primary categories (Snyder, 1974, in Trenholm & Jensen, 2002):

- *High self monitor*: A person with a seemingly more complex cognitive process who tries to put oneself into the other person’s shoes and tries to find out what the person one is dealing with and the situation one is in expects one to be. This leads to a high orientation towards identification and adaptability to different situations.

- *Low self monitor* on the other hand, focuses only on one's own self and finds out how to fit into the situation while retaining as much of one's own traits and styles as possible.

Research demonstrates that being adaptable (being a high self-monitor is one of the keys to social success) (Trenholm & Jensen, 2002)

The feedback from our environment helps us situate ourselves in our unique environments, and this in turn defines our perceptions about the stimuli coming from that our environment after we have situated ourselves in it.

This in turn, helps us understand what the environment wants from us, and what we can do to get what we want from our environment without disturbing the comfort zones of either.

Lecture 5: Questions

1. How may communicative effectiveness be described in the context of intercultural communication?
2. What are the different aspects of identity that determine how one adapts to one's social environment?
3. Define culture.
4. What is the difference between international and intercultural communication?

Lecture 5: Answers

1. Porter and Samovar (1994) feel that *Communicative effectiveness* is a function of and dependent upon interpersonal understanding, and interpersonal understanding in turn, is a function of similarity of perceptual orientations, systems of belief, and communicative styles of the interactants.
2. Your *self-schema* is a generalization about the self, derived from past experience, that organizes and guides your understanding of the information you learn about yourself from interacting with others." This is what one feels about oneself, who one views oneself as, and where one sees oneself in relation to one's environment. This is what determines the kind of signals one sends into one's environments based on one's understanding and acceptance of one's uniqueness balanced with one's belongingness to one's environment.

"Your *gender identity* is your fundamental sense of your maleness or femaleness. (Johnson, 2002)" Gender identity defines how appropriate one feels one's behaviors

are to the behaviors expected of one's gender. e.g. certain behaviors like a loud voice, animated gestures, etc. are considered to be inappropriate in the case of women in certain societies. So, in such societies, loud women or women who express their emotions more overtly, or animatedly, are considered to be 'un-ladylike' within that context.

"Your *ethnic identity* is your sense of belonging to one particular ethnic group. (Johnson, 2002)" Ethnic identity defines how connected one feels to one's ethnic community. e.g. many Indian families that migrated to Africa, or the United Kingdom, or the United States many generations ago still retain their Indian heritage and stay connected to Indian groups, and follow Indian customs and traditions, even though for several generations no one in their families has visited India.

Self acceptance is a high regard for yourself, or conversely, a lack of cynicism about yourself. (Johnson, 2002)" Self-acceptance should not be confused with narcissism. Self-acceptance has more to do with how confident one feels about one's own abilities and position and how responsible one feels about the way one feels. This, in turn, determines the quality and frequency of interactions one has with the significant others in one's environment.

3. According to Porter and Samovar (1994),
Culture is "...the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving."
Culture is "manifested through artifacts, concepts and behaviors" (Collier, 1994)
4. International communication deals with nationality, with communication across geo-political boundaries. This is the kind of communication that usually takes place among political leaders. Intercultural communication on the other hand is communication that takes place between people from different cultures, which may or may not span geo-political boundaries.

Lecture 6: Questions

1. How does Spitzberg describe intercultural communication competence?
2. Which aspects of an interaction event does Spitzberg describe as being essential to understanding communication competence between interactants?
3. According to Spitzberg, what are the skills of communicators dependent upon?
4. According to Spitzberg, what is relational competence a function of?

Lecture 6: Answers

1. According to Spitzberg (1994), intercultural communication competence is,

“An impression that behavior is appropriate and effective in a given context.”

Spitzberg (1994) describes *appropriateness* as the enactment of the ‘values, norms, and rules’ of the relationship between the interactants in an expected or as close to an expected manner (on both sides) as possible.

Spitzberg (1994) describes *effectiveness* as the achievement of the intended goal of the message especially in light of the costs incurred and alternatives available to the interactants in case the goals are not achieved.

2. - Individual system: Characteristics of the individual interactants
 - Episodic system: Characteristics of the physical and social environment the interaction occurs in
 - Relational system: Characteristics of the relationship between the two interactants
3. Conversational altercentrism (‘alter’ – other; ‘centrism’ – to focus upon) which indicates the ability to focus upon and respond to the other person(s) in the interaction situation in and through conversation or interaction

Conversational coordination, i.e. the ability to facilitate a smooth flow of an interactional encounter

Conversational composure i.e. calmness and confidence during conversation

Conversational adaptation i.e. balancing between the needs of self and the other person in and through conversation

4. According to Spitzberg, relational communication is a function of the following:
- a. The level of communicative quality in an established relationship perceived by the actor and the coactor
 - b. The perception on either side of the level of mutual adaptation and satisfaction achieved by the interaction in a relationship
 - c. “Mutual fulfillment of autonomy and intimacy
 - d. Mutual attraction

- e. Mutual trust
- f. Access to social support”, and
- g. Mutual integration of individual relational networks in and through interaction.

Lecture 7: Questions

1. How does Stewart (2002) define communication?
2. What is nexting?
3. What does one mean by the terms ‘language’, ‘talk’, ‘speech’, and ‘verbal communication?’

Lecture 7: Answers

1. According to Stewart (2002), “Communication is the continuous, complex, collaborative process of verbal and nonverbal meaning-making through which we construct the worlds of meaning we inhabit.”
2. Nexting means doing something to keep the conversation going, responding to what’s just happened, taking an additional step in the communication process. Whenever you face a communication challenge or problem the most helpful question you can ask yourself is, *What can I help happen next and how?* (Stewart, 2002)
3. Language: is a “set of principles that specify the relations between a sequence of symbols and a sequence of meanings.” McGlone & Giles (2011). “It is a ‘structured system of signs, sounds, gestures, or marks (*symbols*) that allows people to express ideas and feelings to others.” (Seiler and Beall, 2005)

Talk is what we do everyday

Speech is the transmission of language using vocal cords.

Verbal communication is communication using words, which is what language is made up of.

Lecture 8: Questions

1. Describe the Speech Act Theory.
2. What are the different categories of illocutionary speech according to Austin?
3. Describe the Cooperative Principles proposed by Grice in 1975.

4. What are the implications of Austin's Speech Act Theory and Grice's Cooperative Principles for social interaction?

Lecture 8: Answers

1. Speech Act Theory was proposed by Austin in 1962. This theory describes how meanings interpreted from spoken messages result in corresponding action. The types of meanings that may be interpreted may be:
 - Locutionary meaning, i.e. the denotative meaning. This is the interpretation of something at face value.
 - Illocutionary meaning, i.e. the connotative meaning: This is the interpretation of what has been said in the context of the situation in which it is said.
 - Perlocutionary meaning, i.e. the meaning associated with the action that is expected to follow the statement. This is the meaning that informs the listener what is expected to be accomplished as a result of what is being said.
2. Austin (1962) categorized illocutionary speech acts as:
 - Constatives: The statements that are assert something or state something with conviction, e.g. "affirming, alleging, announcing, answering, announcing, attributing, claiming, classifying, concurring, confirming, conjecturing, denying, disagreeing, disclosing, disputing, identifying, informing, insisting, predicting, ranking, reporting, stating, stipulating." etc. (**Kent Bach, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry - <http://online.sfsu.edu/kbach/spchacts.html> retrieved 20th Nov, 2012**)
 - Directives: As the name suggests, this category of words requires an action after the statement has been made. e.g. "advising, admonishing, asking, begging, dismissing, excusing, forbidding, instructing, ordering, permitting, requesting, requiring, suggesting, urging, warning." etc. (**Kent Bach, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry - <http://online.sfsu.edu/kbach/spchacts.html> retrieved 20th Nov, 2012**)
 - Commissives: This category of words indicates a commitment or promise to do something. e.g. "agreeing, guaranteeing, inviting, offering, promising, swearing, volunteering." etc. (**Kent Bach, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry - <http://online.sfsu.edu/kbach/spchacts.html> retrieved 20th Nov, 2012**)
 - Behabitives: These are statements that are made with the intention of eliciting an acknowledgment from the listener. All the speaker wants the listener to do when

the speaker makes these statements, is to listen and acknowledge the content of what has been said. Examples of behaviors include, “apologizing, condoling, congratulating, greeting, thanking, accepting (acknowledging an acknowledgment)” etc. (**Kent Bach, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry - <http://online.sfsu.edu/kbach/spchacts.html> retrieved 20th Nov, 2012)**)

3. Grice (1975) proposed that speakers and listeners contribute to the understanding of a conversation by cooperating either intentionally or unintentionally on the following rules (or maxims as stated by Grice) in a conversation:
 - Quantity: According to this maxim, both the speaker and the listener put forth an appropriate amount or quantity of information to keep the conversation going.
 - Quality: According to this maxim, both the speaker and the listener put forth information that can be perceived as believable by the other. Grice (1975) proposed that the speakers share information that they believe to be true, but practically one realizes that it is more about the believability by the other that is more important to the speaker when sharing information rather than one’s own belief in the truth of the information.
 - Relation: According to this maxim, the relevance of the information being shared is crucial to the continuity of the conversation. To keep the conversation going, the participants in the conversation share information that is relevant to the topic of discussion. If and when this maxim is refuted, the other participant(s) either leave the conversation or bring it back by filling in the gaps or changing the flow of the conversation.
 - Manner: According to this maxim, the participants in the conversation say what they are saying in the most orderly, clear and concise manner.
4. The implications are:
 - Nexting
 - Adaptation of conversational style
 - Management of public image

Lecture 9: Questions

1. What is nonverbal communication?
2. Based on the usage, how may nonverbal acts be classified?
3. Describe the different kinds of body codes that may be used in nonverbal expression.

Lecture 9: Answers

1. "Nonverbal communication includes all behaviors, attributes, or objects (except words) that communicate messages that have social meaning." (Angell, 2004)
Speaking literally, 'non-verbal' communication is any communication without the use of words.
2. According to Ekman and Friesen (1969, in Littlejohn, 2002), based on the usage, nonverbal behaviours could be classified as:
 - a. *Communicative acts*: "Used deliberately to convey meaning." e.g. Nodding one's head when one sees and acquaintance pass by. The nod of the head conveys that one has acknowledged the existence of the acquaintance who just passed by.
 - b. *Interactive acts*: Acts that "influence the behaviour of the other participants." e.g. Turning one's hand palm up, and moving the forefinger towards one's own self. This would mean that the person in the direction of the finger is expected to come towards the person moving his/her finger.
 - c. *Informative acts*: Acts that convey information without the actual or overt intention to convey information or meaning. e.g. Establishing eye contact with someone and walking towards them would, in most cultures, be interpreted as one's intention to speak with the person one is walking towards.
3. *Body codes* may further be classified into
 - a. *Oculesics*, i.e. Expression transmitted through our eyes. This may further be classified into two broad categories. The 'eye behavior' we use to express our intrapersonal environment, and the 'eye behavior' we use to connect with environment outside of our bodies.
 - b. *Kinesics*: Kinesics refer to movement and the messages conveyed to the environment through the way the body moves.
 - c. *Vocalics*: These body codes refer to the use of our voice apparatus to add meaning to the words we use.

- d. Olfactics: Another type of body code is olfactics or the treatment of smells and odors in one's intra and interpersonal environment.
- e. Physical appearance: One's treatment of one's own body sends out signals into the environment as to how one wants to be treated by the people one is around (Burgoon, Guerrero & Manusov, 2011).

Lecture 10: Questions

1. Describe Hall's categorization of personal space or proxemics.
2. Are Hall's specifications regarding proxemics absolute?
3. How do nonverbal behaviors support verbal behaviors?

Lecture 10: Answers

1. In 1963, Edward T Hall used the term proxemics to describe the treatment of personal space between people and what this treatment indicated regarding the relationship between interacting parties.

According to Hall (1963), the personal bubbles of people could be classified as follows:

Public space (12 ft plus): This was the size of our bubbles when we were in a public place.

Social space (4 to 12 ft): This was the size of personal bubbles perceived by people in social situations like parties, and social functions etc. This was the amount of distance at which one could expect to see a familiar face in social situations.

Personal space (1.5 to 4 ft): This was the space within which one would feel comfortable having family and close friends. i.e. close but still at an arm's distance. One could touch people and still not too intimately.

Intimate space (0 to 1.5 ft): This was the space in which one would let only intimate relationships enter.

2. No. Hall's specifications regarding proxemics are not absolute. The descriptions regarding different categories can be applied to different cultures, but the specifications regarding the size of different categories of personal space varies

from culture to culture. For example, Hall's specifications for social space in a sparsely populated Western country may be similar to the specifications for public space in a much more densely populated country in another part of the world.

3. Ways in which nonverbal behaviors support verbal behaviors:

- Repeating
- Contradicting
- Substituting
- Complementing
- Accenting
- Relating
- Regulating