

The process of Communication. Barriers in cross-cultural business contacts.

Encoding-decoding of messages.

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What is communication:

- System of conveying
- thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and information
- to others
- through speech, actions, writing.....
- Much more than
- “spoken” language (just understanding the meanings of words)
- gives us great insight into why the people think
- and act the way they do.

The process of Communication

- ***Western approach (ex. David Berlo's, 1960, *The process of Communication*):**
- **Communication has an instrumental function and it's effectiveness is evaluated in terms of success in the manipulation of others to achieve one's personal goal.**
- ***Components of communication: source, encoding, message, channel, noise (barriers- your messages may not be received as you intended), receiver, decoding, receiver response, feedback and context.**

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3

Verbal barriers (related to what you say or write):

- **1. Inadequate knowledge or vocabulary.** Do you know your audience enough? How much they are informed about the background? Abbreviations
- **2. Differences in interpretation:** Denotation refers to the literal, dictionary meaning of a word. Connotation refers to the subjective, emotional meaning that you attach to the word. *Plastic, broad, bad, aggressive, workaholic, corporate raider, head-hunter, formal, briefly/shortly.*

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4

Verbal barriers (related to what you say or write):

- **3. Language differences and use of expression (ex. est. Normal, interesting food. In diff. Cult.: good coat, healthy/organic food)**
- **4. Over-abstraction and ambiguity: far, close, few, a little bit, some, several, hot, cold**
- **5. Polarisation: black/white, good/bad (ex. "service" in Sharm-el-Sheikh)**

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5

Non-verbal barriers

- **1. Inappropriate or Conflicting signals** (which goes in contradiction with your verbal message in the context of your local culture)
- **2. Differences in Perception** (mental filter: who is speaking, how she/he looks, sounds like in the context of the given culture).
- **3. Inappropriate emotions (Prejudices - automatically rejecting certain people or idea, stereotyping – placing individuals into categories)**

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6

Prejudice & Stereotype

*Prejudice (negative) : contact theory by Gordon Allport "The nature of prejudice".

The reference group (one is wishing to belong).

- Stereotype is the broader term used to refer to negative or positive judgements made on the basis of any group membership.
- Was first used by journalist Walter Lippman in 1922 to describe judgements made about others on the basis of their ethnic group membership.

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7

Culture shock is response when individual enters host culture.

- The form of stress connected with the functioning in a new culture is called a cultural shock (reverse culture shock).
- Was popularised by anthropologist Kalvero Oberg (1960) to describe the feelings of disorientation and anxiety.
- Experienced by 30-60% of business people.

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Stages of culture shock:

- **1. Initial euphoria.** (New, intriguing, exciting. Escape!!!Lasts about 3 weeks)
- **2. Irritation and hostility.** All focus is on the differences between the home culture and the new culture. Physical differences (food/streets/homes); Sensory differences (climate, hygiene); Cultural differences (habits, customs, attitudes, interpersonal relations).

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9

2. Irritation and hostility.

- **Lasts 3-4 month. The worst case- psychological symptoms: constantly benchmarking the new culture against home culture; absent-mindedness; fear of being cheated....**
- **Wish to call himself/herself not by name, but WE RURITANIANS...**
- **Length & strength of 2 stage depends on many factors, there are different reactions.**

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3. Gradual adjustment.

- **Flight and fight:** rejection, regression, disapproval. **The ENCAPSULATOR** :adjusts to “expat culture”, encapsulates self in “culture bubble”, i.e. little England, little Germany. Minimum contact with the local culture, maximum with expat culture.
- **Cultural empathy:** optimism, humour, tolerance, curiosity, cross-cultural education. It makes most successful cultural adjustment and reaches the stage 4.

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11

- **Goes native:** falls in love with local culture, gives up allegiance to own culture, adapts life-style and turns “more Roman than Romans themselves”. **The absconder:** adjusts to local culture. Minimum contact with expat culture, maximum with local. (Most rare)
- **4. Adaptation or bi-culturism:** The cosmopolitan: adjusts to both expat and local culture. Has foot in both worlds. About equal contact with expat and local culture.(makes most successful cultural adjustment).

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12