**Factors affecting Communication effectiveness;**

A number of factors which may disrupt the communication process and affect the overall understanding and interpretaion of what is communicated are :

1. Status / Role

2. Cultural differences .

3. Choice of communication channel .

4. Length of communication .

5. Use of language .

6. Individual Perceptions / Attitudes / Personalities .

7. Known or Unknown Receiver .

**1. Status/Role**

The sender and receiver of a message may be of equal status within a  hierarchy (e.g. managers in an organisation) or they may be at different  levels (e.g. manager/employee, lecturer/student, business owner/clients).This difference in status sometimes affects the effectiveness of the communication process.

**2. Cultural Differences**

Cultural differences, both within or outside the organisation (for example, inter-departmental dealings and communication with outside organisations or ethnic minorities) may impede the communication process.

**3. Choice of Communication Channels**

Sender should choose the most appropriate channel for a particular purpose and keeping the person/receiver in mind.

Sending messages via inappropriate channels can send out wrong signals and end up creating confusion.

Choosing the appropriate channel needs :

* Considering all aspects of the communication process (interpretation, understanding, feedback).
* Determining all the possible barriers.
* Evaluating the complexity of the message and decide how it might be best conveyed .

Knowing--

* Who? ? Characteristics of the receiver(s).
* Why? 􀄃 Purpose of the communication.
* What? 􀄃 Content of the message.
* How? 􀄃 Oral, written, visual or a combination of all three.
* Where? 􀄃 Location of the meeting.
* When? 􀄃 Timing/time limit/expected response time.

**4. Length of Communication**

The length of the message also affects the communication process.

Sender need to be sure that it serves the purpose and is appropriate for the receiver.

Is the message too long or too brief?

**5. Use of Language**

The language used must be familiar to the receiver .

Poor choice of words or weak sentence structure also hampers communication.

Sentences must be framed correctly .

**6 .Individual Perceptions/Attitudes/Personalities**

Sometimes, the method of communication needs to take into consideration the receiver's personality traits, perceptions , age and preferred style.

EXAMPLE -The elderly and children, have different communication needs and preferences when  compared to young adults.

**7 .Known or Unknown Receiver**

Whether the receiver is known or unknown to sender also plays a major role in determining the effectiveness of the communication.

* A known receiver may be better able to understand the message despite having insufficient information as both sender and receiver have common experiences .
* An unknown receiver, on the other hand, may require more information and time to decode the message.

**BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION**

**(1) SEMANTIC BARRIERS**

There is always a possibility of misunderstanding the feelings of the sender of the message or getting a wrong meaning of it. The words, signs, and figures used in the communication are explained by the receiver in the light of his experience which creates doubtful situations. This happens because the information is not sent in simple language.

**The  semantic barriers are as :**

**(i) Badly Expressed Message:**

Because of the obscurity of language there is always a possibility of wrong interpretation of the messages. This barrier is created because of the wrong choice of words, in civil words, the wrong sequence of sentences and frequent repetitions. This may be called linguistic chaos.

**(ii)** **Symbols or Words with Different Meanings:**

A symbol or a word can have different meanings. If the receiver misunderstands the communication, it becomes meaningless.   
  
For example, the word ‘value’ can have different meanings in the following sentences:

(a) What is the value of computer education these days?

(b) What is the value of this mobile set?

(c) Value our friendship.

**(iii)** **Faulty Translation:**

A manager receives much information from his superiors and subordinates and he translates it for all the employees according to their level of understanding. Hence, the information has to be moulded according to the understanding or environment of the receiver. If there is a little carelessness in this process, the faulty translation can be a barrier in the communication.

**(iv) Unclarified Assumptions:**

It has been observed that sometimes a sender takes it for granted that the receiver knows some basic things and, therefore, it is enough to tell him about the major subject matter. This point of view of the sender is correct to some extent with reference to the daily communication, but it is absolutely wrong in case of some special message.

**(v) Technical Jargon:**

Generally, it has been seen that the people working in an enterprise are connected with some special technical group who have their separate technical language.

Their communication is not so simple as to be understood by everybody. Hence, technical language can be a barrier in communication. This technical group includes industrial engineers, production development manager, quality controller, etc.

**(vi) Body Language and Gesture Decoding:**

When the communication is passed on with the help of body language and gestures, its misunderstanding hinders the proper understanding of the message. For example, moving one’s neck to reply to a question does not indicate properly whether the meaning is ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.

**(2) PSYCHOLOGICAL  BARRIERS**

The importance of communication depends on the mental condition of both the parties. A mentally disturbed party can be a hindrance in communication. Following are the emotional barriers in the way of communication:

**(i) Premature Evaluation:**

Sometimes the receiver of information tries to dig out meaning without much thinking at the time of receiving or even before receiving information, which can be wrong. This type of evaluation is a hindrance in the exchange of information and the enthusiasm of the sender gets dampened.

**(ii)** **Lack of Attention:**

When the receiver is preoccupied with some important work he/she does not listen to the message attentively. For example, an employee is talking to his boss when the latter is busy in some important conversation. In such a situation the boss may not pay any attention to what subordinate is saying. Thus, there arises psychological hurdle in the communication.

**(iii)** **Loss by Transmission and Poor Retention:**

When a message is received by a person after it has passed through many people, generally it loses some of its truth. This is called loss by transmission. This happens normally in case of oral communication. Poor retention of information means that with every next transfer of information the actual form or truth of the information changes.

According to one estimate, with each transfer of oral communication the loss of the information amounts to nearly 30%. This happens because of the carelessness of people. Therefore, lack of transmission of information in its true or exact form becomes a hindrance in communication.

**(iv)** **Distrust:**

For successful communication the transmitter and the receiver must trust each other. If there is a lack of trust between them, the receiver will always derive an opposite meaning from the message. Because of this, communication will become meaningless.

**(3) ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS :**

Organisational structure greatly affects the capability of the employees as far as the communication is concerned. Some major organisational hindrances in the way of communication are the following:

**(i) Organisational Policies:**

Organisational policies determine the relationship among all the persons working in the enterprise. For example, it can be the policy of the organisation that communication will be in the written form. In such a situation anything that could be conveyed in a few words shall have to be communicated in the written form. Consequently, work gets delayed.

**(ii) Rules and Regulations:**

Organisational rules become barriers in communication by determining the subject-matter, medium, etc. of communication. Troubled by the definite rules, the senders do not send some of the messages.

**(iii) Status:**

Under organising all the employees are divided into many categories on the basis of their level. This formal division acts as a barrier in communication especially when the communication moves from the bottom to the top.

For example, when a lower-level employee has to send his message to a superior at the top level there is a lurking fear in his mind that the communication may be faulty, and because of this fear, he cannot convey himself clearly and in time. It delays the decision making.

**(iv) Complexity in Organisational Structure:**

The greater number of managerial levels in an organisation makes it more complex. It results in delay in communication and information gets changed before it reaches the receiver. In other words, negative things or criticism are concealed. Thus, the more the number of managerial levels in the organisation, the more ineffective the communication becomes.

**(v)  Organizational facilities:**

Organisational facilities means making available sufficient stationery, telephone, translator, etc. When these facilities are sufficient in an organisation, the communication will be timely, clear and in accordance with necessity. In the absence of these facilities communication becomes meaningless.

**(4) PERSONAL BARRIERS**

The barriers which are directly connected with the sender and the receiver. They are called personal barriers. From the point of view of convenience, they have been divided into two parts:

**(a) Barriers Related to Superiors: These barriers are as follows:**

**(i) Fear of Challenge of Authority:**

Everybody desires to occupy a high office in the organisation. In this hope the officers try to conceal their weaknesses by not communicating their ideas. There is a fear in their mind that in case the reality comes to light they may have to move to the lower level,

**(ii) Lack of Confidence in Subordinates:**

Top-level superiors think that the lower- level employees are less capable and, therefore, they ignore the information or suggestions sent by them. They deliberately ignore the communication from their subordinates in order to increase their own importance. Consequently, the self-confidence of the employees is lowered.

**(b) Barriers Related to Subordinates**

**(i) Unwillingness to Communicate:**

Sometimes the subordinates do not want to send any information to their superiors. When the subordinates feel that the information is of negative nature and will adversely affect them, an effort is made to conceal that information.

If it becomes imperative to send this information, it is sent in a modified or amended form. Thus, the subordinates, by not clarifying the facts, become a hindrance in communication,

**(ii) Lack of Proper Incentive:**

Lack of incentive to the subordinates creates a hindrance in communication. The lack of incentive to the subordinates is because of the fact that their suggestions or ideas are not given any importance. If the superiors ignore the subordinates, they become indifferent towards any exchange of ideas in future.

**Common Barriers to Effective Communication:**

* **The use of jargon.** Over-complicated, unfamiliar and/or technical terms.
* **Emotional barriers and taboos.** Some people may find it difficult to express their emotions and some topics may be completely 'off-limits' or taboo. Taboo or difficult topics may include, but are not limited to, politics, religion, disabilities (mental and physical), sexuality and sex, racism and any opinion that may be seen as unpopular.
* **Lack of attention, interest, distractions, or irrelevance to the receiver.** (See our page [**Barriers to Effective Listening**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/ineffective-listening.html) for more information).
* **Differences in perception and viewpoint.**
* **Physical disabilities such as hearing problems or speech difficulties.**
* **Physical barriers to non-verbal communication.** Not being able to see the non-verbal cues, gestures, posture and general body language can make communication less effective. Phone calls, text messages and other communication methods that rely on technology are often less effective than face-to-face communication.
* **Language differences and the difficulty in understanding unfamiliar accents.**
* **Expectations and prejudices which may lead to false assumptions or stereotyping.**  People often hear what they expect to hear rather than what is actually said and jump to incorrect conclusions. Our page [**The Ladder of Inference**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/ladder-of-inference.html) explains this in more detail.
* **Cultural differences.**  The norms of social interaction vary greatly in different cultures, as do the way in which emotions are expressed. For example, the concept of personal space varies between cultures and between different social settings. See our page on [**Intercultural Awareness**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/intercultural-awareness.html) for more information.

There are many ways of communicating and the way we communicate is key factor of what we really are trying to put across. Factors that may influence our communication are; eye contact, body language (i.e. posture), tone of voice, gesture, and facial expression. Here are examples of how each of those would influence the way we communicate.

Eye contact allows us to guess another person’s thought and feelings by just look at their eyes. For example if I was talking to someone and they were looking away I’d get the feeling that they are bored and not interested. Also if I was talking to someone and during the conversation I raised my eye it suggest that I am listening and excited or either shocked depending on the topic.

**Body Language.**

Posture is part of our body language. For example if I was talking to a boy I liked I’d be facing towards him and chatting, however if my body was not facing towards hom this suggest that I am not really interested. Also if when sitting down chatting to a person if they are leaning back this can send the message that they are either relaxed or bored, however if they are leaning forward this implies that they are interested.

**Tone of voice**

Our tone of voice is really important when conversing. For example if you talk really fast and loud this may suggest that you are angry. However if you talk in a slow calm voice then this shows that you are rather being friendly.

**Gesture**

Gesture is the movement of the arm, hand and head used to help us understand what a person is trying to say. For example when trying to communicate but speech is not possible people use hand gestures. The common hand gestures are the peace sign (the index and middle finger raised and apart), okay gesture (closed fist held with the thumb extended upward) and the not okay (closed fist held with the thumb extended downward).

**Face Expressions**

Our face usually shows our emotional state. Our facial expression shows whether we are sad, angry, happy ,surprised scared etc. For instance, if someone’s facial expression was a big smile and wide eyes this may suggest that they are happy.

. There are the communication barriers;

* Deafness
* Blindness
* Dumb/Muteness
* Language
* Slang
* Environment

M2: I will also review the strengthens and weaknesses of the strategies used in health and social care environments to overcome barriers to effective communication and interpersonal interactions.

**Blindness**

Blindness is the loss of sight/vision. To overcome the barrier of blindness, braille and speech can be used to communicate. Braille is a writing system used by blind people to be able to read, “Braille characters are small rectangular blocks called cells that contain tiny palpable bumps called raised dots”. For example in a care home, the lunch menu can be written in braille for a person who can’t see the menu. Also another way to overcome this barrier is by either having a big print menu or spectacles for the client so that it’s clearer. In addition using language to describe things is a very useful way to communicate to a blind person for example when meeting a blind person it is effective to make them aware that you are there and who you are and also what you may look like?

The advantages of using braille is that braille allows the visually impaired to understand quicker and get things done easily and faster as well as allowing them to be more independent . The disadvantages are the not all visually impaired people know how to use braille also not all people’s fingers are sensitive enough to use it.

I believe that braille is effective as it makes the visually impaired very independent and makes life a lot easier. I believe that braille could be more effective if it had been taught in schools to everyone not just the mainstream students. This will not only benefit the visually impaired but someone who is not visually impaired because in life if they do come across a blind person they will be able to still communicate with them.

**Deafness**

Deafness is the loss of sound. To overcome the barrier of deafness sign language can be used to communicate. Sign language is using gesture and signs to communicate to a deaf person for example at a hospital a deaf patient can communicate with their doctor using sign language .Another way to overcome the barrier of hearing disability are by using clear speech so that the person can lip-read, this will involve using a lot of eye contact because you would need to make your face visible for the person trying to lip-read. Also using technological aids to communicate is also very effective, these are facilities to help with communication for example hearing aids are small devices that goes behind ones ear which strengthen a person’s hearing.

The disadvantage of using sign language is that light is always need, people cannot communicate with each other in the dark also not all hearing impaired people know sign language

**Dumb/muteness**

Dumb/Muteness is the inability of speech and is often associated or linked with deafness. However, the technological aid of text-to-speech can overcome this barrier .Text-to-speech is computerised equipment that allows a muted person to type what they want to say and then it will translate into speech form. Also makatons can be used to overcome this barrier. Makaton is a language programme for developing language using speech, signs and symbols. For example in a childcare centre Makaton is used a lot with pre-speech babies and toddlers like picture cards and gestures.

**Environment: (Space. Noise. Location. )**

Space- The space between people is very important when communicating because little space between two can make a person uncomfortable .For example if â€¦.wanted to talk to..and the space between them was 1 finger away from each other and its someone you aren’t close to then.the person may feel very uncomfortable and may not be listening probably or is not giving the right responses back or even too much of a distance can lead to misunderstanding. Noise- If there is a lot of background noise it will be harder for people to hear each other when communicating and mixed messages may be received.

**Language:**

Language can become a barrier as the person you may be trying to communicate with may not be able to speak the same language so therefore the communication is received but not understood. However, to overcome this barrier interpreters/translator are people who will translate and forward your message to the person who you are trying to communicate with by talking to them in their language. For example if the doctor only spoke English but his patient would only be able to speak Turkish a Turkish interpreter would translate to her what the doctor is saying to her or if the doctor does know how to speak Turkish he should use his patients preferred language.

**Slang**

Slang is an informal way of speaking which consists of words and phrases that may not be found in the standard dictionary. Slang is mostly used by the younger generation within specific social groups and communities. It consists of words shortened as well as words such as “piff” which would mean good looking or “sick” which means cool/awesome. Jargon is quite similar but it is not informal, it is technical terminology words and phrases used by particular professions. For example a doctor uses the scientific terminology for DNA which is “deoxyribonucleic acid “rather than DNA. To overcome this barrier it is best to avoid using slang and use the formal standardized Eng