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## Language Barriers to Communication

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**Abstract.** Communication is one of the most important things in human beings life. The world today is obsessed with development. You will however agree with me that there can never be development if there is no effective communication. It is important that people understand each other for any communication to be termed as effective. I think by now you understand that language is an important factor. Unless you can speak one language, then you can never communicate effectively. This is what has led to people learning more than one language so as to bridge the gap and make sure that you can communicate with others outside your mother language. There is what is termed as the national language. This is the language that is used in the offices and helps countries with different communities who have different languages to communicate and understand each other effectively. Trying to learn a new language may be hectic and stressing and often requires one to invest a lot of time in it. It is however a worthwhile course as you may have an advantage when it comes to communicating with others of the second learnt language.

**Keywords.** communication, barriers, solutions to language barriers.

### I. Introduction.

Misunderstanding is the best example of effects of language barriers. It is fetal if two people are working in the same environment and face the problem of language barriers. Use of technical jargon and slang could lead to language barrier. Also people could be from different cultures or countries. Countries that had the same colonial powers are lucky as they have a common language that they can use. The accent and way other people speak could also lead to misunderstanding between two parties. Misunderstanding can lead to frustration at the work place which may reduce the productivity of the business. It is thus important to try and identify the cause of your problem and be patient with your partner. You can then work on resolving the problem together or try and learn the other person. You should however never let language barriers influence your relationship with your workmates negatively.

### Solutions to language barriers

If you realize that you are faced with the problem of language barrier, then you should as soon as possible find a way to go about the problem. This is important if it is with people that you spend a lot of time with. You can either try signing although it will be difficult as you begin. Trying communication through writing is also encouraged. It may also be a challenge especially due to grammar and spelling mistakes. You should also try to learn new languages to place yourself in a better place.

### Overcoming Language Barriers

To overcome language barriers within the workplace, there are a few things you can do:

**Translate all relevant documents** into the primary language of your employees. There are several free websites that translate text from one language to another. However, you have to be careful since the translation is not always in the exact same dialect as that of your employees. Also, sometimes the meaning of a word used in written translation does not

always correspond to the meaning you wish to convey in your work documents.

**Use an interpreter** whenever you give instructions or provide feedback to your employees. There may be someone in your organization who speaks both languages fluently enough to convey your message to your employees. Find someone who you trust to translate your instructions and feedback properly.

**Provide language** classes for your employees on the basic language requirements for your business. Teach them work words, phrases, warnings, and other critical communication elements that are necessary for them to perform to your performance standards. Teach the basics first. Give all of your employees a "survival" crash course in the predominant language of your workplace. Later, if you have the desire and the resources, you can provide additional opportunities for your employees to learn the language skills they need in order to "thrive" in the workplace.

**Use both telling and showing methods of training.** Simplify your training methods, particularly those that rely heavily on telling versus showing. Demonstrate what you want and then have the employees perform the function as you observe their performance. Redemonstrate as often as needed until the employees can perform the task successfully.

**Use visual methods of communication more than audio.** Show more than tell. Explain it with pictures as much as possible. Take a lesson from the airlines in how they convey their safety instructions. Use pictures in your instruction manuals rather than words. Almost every step in every process can be described in picture format. Give your employees signs, cue cards or other methods to help them learn.

**Use repetition.** As with any new concept, most people don't learn something the first time they hear it. Employees need to hear the same message over and over before they fully grasp it. Don't expect people to learn anything

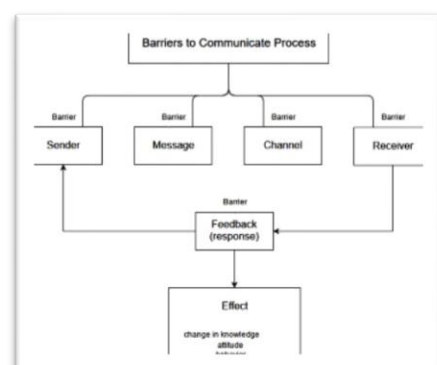
after being told once. This is true of all of your employees whether they have a language barrier or not.

**Never raise your voice or over-enunciate your words.** Talk slower, not louder. Speak clearly, not forcefully. People of a different language and culture can hear fine. They probably also are intelligent enough to grasp what you are saying if you intelligently deliver your message without talking down to them. Don't speak "Pidgin English." Speak correct English the correct way, just more clearly. People cannot learn the language right if you don't speak it right.

**Use simpler words with fewer syllables.** Be aware of the complexities of your words. Use more common words that convey your message in simpler terms. Again, don't talk down; just use a less complex vocabulary.

**Learn the basics of your employee's language.** If you want to communicate effectively and build rapport with your employees you should consider learning a few words and phrases in their language. Nothing sends the message that you value the diversity of your employees more than your willingness to learn from them. Have them teach you how to say hello, goodbye, please, thank you, and other important pleasantries you can use in your interactions with them.

**Have the employee demonstrate their understanding.** Don't assume the employee understands; check for understanding. Ask the employee to demonstrate that they know how to do what you have asked them to do.





## **Conclusion**

The reason is weakness in the logic, or refusal or proposal is due to lack of vocabulary or technical words. The effectiveness of communication is improved if we must identify the barriers of communication and discuss them to overcome them.

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