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Barriers to effective communication

Communication is creating, exchanging, and sharing ideas, information, opinions, facts, feelings, and experiences between a sender and a receiver. Communication barriers prevent communicators from delivering the right message at the right time and through the right channel (Radhika 99). This qualitative study aimed at exploring the factors that cause language barriers, their types, and their impact on effective communication and our life, as well as ways to make people aware of the importance of overcoming them.

Cultural diversity can make communication difficult, causing misunderstanding and costly problems (Morrison-Smith et al 45). Cultural barriers hinder communication among people from different cultures, making it hard for them to communicate or working with each other effectively. Every culture has its own set of accepted behaviors, thoughts, rules, standards, and beliefs forming its cultural identity. Culture significantly affects communication, making communication vary among people from different cultural backgrounds. Interaction between people from different cultures has a high probability of miscommunication due to their difference in language, beliefs, and values. People have different ways of thinking and understanding due to cultural influences, which brings about communication barriers (Wei 6). A person's standard is their own culture; the more another person's culture, behavior, language, and beliefs deviate from it, the more "other" they are labeled. This affects the understanding of message and creates hostility.

Language is a powerful communication tool that enables sharing ideas, thoughts, opinions, and emotional expression. The choice of words, grammar, and tone when using a language influences the effectiveness of conveying the intended message and establishing connections between individuals. Language is a common barrier to effective communication, mostly where words have more than one meaning or lack a common language between people (Galli 12). There are obstacles in the communication system that may prevent the message from reaching the intended destination accurately. Language becomes a barrier to communication depending on the way the message is originated and sent by a speaker, the environmental interruptions, and the receiver's understanding of the message. Wrong interpretations of a message can cause misunderstandings that lead to conflict, frustration, offense, violence, hurt feelings, and wasting people's time, effort, money, and lives. Communication barriers caused by language can be controlled by using simple, straightforward, concrete, accurate, familiar, and meaningful words and avoiding grammatical and spelling mistakes (Dayama et al 14). Speakers should provide room for giving and receiving feedback, hire bilingual workers and qualified translators, minimize the use of jargon, avoid ambiguous words, confirm understanding of information, use translation machines, and explain confusing messages for clear communication. By embracing linguistic diversity, individuals and organizations can foster inclusive interactions, leading to a more interconnected global community.

Factors that act as a distraction, either natural or human-made, hindering the flow of communication are physical communication barriers (Kapur 3). Noise, Surroundings, distance between people, time differences, and faulty modes of communication are all factors that can create a physical barrier. For example, inaccessibility to the manager's office in an organization acts as a physical barrier for the employees. Physical obstacles, such as inadequate lighting, old and broken equipment, or uncomfortable room temperatures, can filter information and restrict effective communication. Having good architecture, training, and maintenance can overcome physical barriers to contact. Physical distance and differences in time can also be managed by proper coordination. We should be cautious and work towards avoiding physical obstacles affecting communication.

Communication success depends on your ability to listen. Listening skills build good relationships and solve problems since it helps communicate effectively (Alzamil, 2021). The human brain gets bored while listening and easily gets distracted by topics unrelated to the conversation. When engaging in discussions, we should give the speaker our full and undivided attention and do our best to "hear between the lines" by listening to the more profound meaning, not just the words spoken. However, poor listening skills as a communication barrier can be overcome by practicing active listening, where individuals focus on the speaker, maintain eye contact, and avoid distractions (Baker et al., 2019). Creating a safe space for questions and active discussion participation further promotes effective communication due to better listening. Coaching supports individuals in improving their listening skills, ultimately breaking down language barriers and fostering inclusive communication.

Technology is vital in making communication easy with the advanced platforms for internal and external media (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz 45). Organizations use technology to facilitate communication, although it is still one of the main communication barriers. Technology affects communication in instances where people tend to misunderstand each other's message due to a lack of non-verbal signs such as body language, facial expression, and eye contact. Modern communication done through email, text messages, and phone conversations is a perfect communication medium; however, on the other hand, they reduce the possibility of face-to-face interaction, leading to more problems and misunderstandings between people. Excellent and appropriate coordination can be used to curb the gaps created by technology, reducing its effects on communication.

Semantic barriers are brought about by different subjects, such as meanings and uses of words, symbols, images, gestures, languages, and dialects. Knowing these barriers and using appropriate strategies can help individuals and organizations overcome these challenges hence a more effective communication. Although we cannot entirely do away with the communication barriers, preventive measures can be implemented to ensure good contact.

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