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REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Definition of Language and Definition of Communication

The term 'Language' may be used to describe human behaviour on a particular occasion when an individual is speaking or writing and is hence said to be 'communicating in language'. This ability is considered to be the distinguishing mark of the human race. However, such behaviour is not random but takes place in accordance with a system. It is because of this behaviour that psycholinguists and neuro-linguists identify that area in the brain responsible for the acquisition of language. Psycholinguists study the 'language acquisition device' supposed to be an integral part of the human mind used by babies especially when they are learning to communicate in language. Neuro-linguists on the other hand identify specific 'language areas' in the human brain. Apart from language use for speaking, writing and signing, there are other forms of language like 'body language' and 'language of gestures'.

Many have made attempts to define language. Henry Sweet, an English Phonetician and language scholar defines language in the best possible way. He stated that "Language is the expression of ideas by means of speech-sounds combined into words. Words are combined into sentences, this combination answering to that of ideas into thoughts." The US linguists Bernard Bloch and George L. Trager formulated the following definition in their Outline of Linguistic Analysis (1942) : "A language is system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates."

Although language and communication are closely related, yet they are two very different entities. It has often been considered that language is the only means of communication, however, we know for a fact that in a noisy room or a crowded place it would be difficult to communicate using language. In situations like these, we use gestures, eye-contact and body postures to communicate what we actually need to say. Sometimes this form of non-verbal communication can be even more powerful than the expression of words. The urge to communicate imbibes the growth of language. Hence, the most important function of language is to facilitate communication.
Before venturing into an in depth study of business communication it is imperative to understand communication as a whole, its models and types and also various strategies employed to bring about effective communication. Defining communication has been a concern to many scholars as communication has been regarded as a natural process. The best definition so far appears to have been offered by the English critic and author, I. A. Richards who in 1928 defined communication as a discrete aspect of human enterprise: ‘Communication takes place when one mind so acts upon its environment that another mind is influenced, and in that other mind an experience occurs which is like the experience in the first mind, and is caused in part by all that experience’ (Richards, 1928). The simplest way to define communication is to look at it as an information process not only between two or more individuals but also with oneself within a particular context and situation.

There is an additional working definition of communication to consider that authors like Richard A. Lanham (2003) and as far back as Erving Goffman (1959) have highlighted. This is a progression from Lasswell’s attempt to define human communication through to this century and revolutionized into the constructionist model. Constructionists believe that the process of communication is in itself the only messages that exist. The packaging cannot be separated from the social and historical context from which it arose, therefore the substance to look at in communication theory is style for Richard Lanham and the performance of self for Erving Goffman.
Communication Theory

Communication stands so deeply rooted in human behaviors and the structures of society that scholars have difficulty thinking of it while excluding social or behavioral events. Because communication theory remains a relatively young field of inquiry and integrates itself with other disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, and sociology, one probably cannot yet expect a consensus conceptualization of communication across disciplines (Littlejohn, S.W. and Foss, K.A. 2008).

Communication has existed since the beginning of human beings, but it was not until the 20th century that people began to study the process. As communication technologies developed, so did the serious study of communication. When World War I ended, the interest in studying communication intensified. The social-science study was fully recognized as a legitimate discipline after World War II.

Before becoming simply communication, or communication studies, the discipline was formed from three other major studies: psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Psychology is the study of human behavior, Sociology is the study of society and social process, and anthropology is the study of communication as a factor which develops, maintains, and changes culture. Communication studies focus on communication as central to the human experience, which involves understanding how people behave in creating, exchanging, and interpreting messages.

Communication Theory has one universal law posited by S. F. Scudder (1980). The Universal Communication Law states that, "All living entities, beings and creatures communicate." All of the living communicates through movements, sounds, reactions, physical changes, gestures, languages, breath, etc. Communication is a means of survival. Examples - the cry of a child (communication that it is hungry, hurt, cold, etc.); the browning of a leaf (communication that it is dehydrated, thirsty per se, dying); the cry of an animal (communicating that it is injured, hungry, angry, etc.). Everything living communicates in its quest for survival."

Various trends in communication can be differentiated by studying the types of models of communication adopted. Four types of communication models have been identified:
1. The Linear Conduit Model –

This is supposed to be the simplest model of communication and has been called the Conduit Model (Reddy, 1979) because it assumes that language serves as a means or medium for transferring a linguistic code or message from a source (sender) to a destination (receiver). Grice makes a distinction between information and communication. According to Grice, the ‘sender’ intends that the message will cause what is called an effect in the ‘receiver’. The receiver should, however, recognize this intention. This model also refers to the oldest theory of communication which is Classical Rhetoric wherein an addressor persuades or convinces his addressee about something. The main problem of this model that has been seriously challenged by the other three models is vagueness when it comes to the notion of effect on the addressee’s side and the notion of intention on the addressor’s side.

2. The Circular Dialogic Model –

This model emphasizes on the addressee taking a more active role in communication. The notion of effect alone is not enough. The intended effect will be apparent from the response, answer or action elicited. Without a response from the addressee it would appear that the addressor is speaking with himself or is indulging in a monologue. Thus, this model sees communication as a system of questions and answers. The only residue of the previous model seen here is the notion of intent. For any kind of communication to take place it is important that the communicators intend to take part in the conversation.

3. The Feedback Interaction Model –

Unlike the previous models, this model does away completely with the notion of intent. Communication can be defined as those processes by which human beings influence each other thus entailing that all behaviour is said to be communicative. It is because this model does not stress on mutual knowledge between two communicators that the problem of distinction between information and communication arises. The only problem to this solution is to define communication as involving information, the message that is conveyed and the understanding of the message.
4. The Self-regulatory (Autopoiesis) Model –

In the Autopoiesis Model, the communicators do not stress on transfer or creation of a message, nor are they interested in the creation of information or the understanding of the message. They simply integrate or assimilate elements from the current situation or environment and this in turn contributes to the communicator’s so-called self-regulation and self-creation. Importantly, communication here is not seen as a static structure but more as an ongoing process.

In addition to the above models discussed, it is helpful to examine communication and communication theory through one of the following viewpoints:

- **Mechanistic**: This view considers communication as a perfect transaction of a message from the sender to the receiver.

- **Psychological**: This view considers communication as the act of sending a message to a receiver, and the feelings and thoughts of the receiver upon interpreting the message.

- **Social Constructionist (Symbolic Interactionist)**: This view considers communication to be the product of the interactants sharing and creating meaning. The Constructionist View can also be defined as, how you say something determines what the message is. The Constructionist View assumes that “truth” and “ideas” are constructed or invented through the social process of communication. Humans do not communicate simply as computers or robots so that’s why it’s essential to truly understand the Constructionist View of Communication well. We do not simply send facts and data to one another, but we take facts and data and they acquire meaning through the process of communication, or through interaction with others.

- **Systemic**: This view considers communication to be the new messages created via “through-put”, or what happens as the message is being interpreted and re-interpreted as it travels through people.

- **Critical**: This view considers communication as a source of power and oppression of individuals and social groups.

Inspection of a particular theory on this level will provide a framework on the nature of communication as seen within the confines of that theory. A discipline gets defined in large part by its theoretical structure. Communication studies often borrow
theories from other social sciences. This theoretical variation makes it difficult to come to terms with the field as a whole. Many authors and researchers divide communication by what they sometimes called "contexts" or "levels". These "levels" of communication provide some way of grouping communication theories, but inevitably, some theories and concepts leak from one area to another, or fail to find a home at all.

2.3 Types of Communication

Any discussion on communication would be incomplete without referring to the different types of communication. Communication can be broadly divided into two types namely, Non-verbal communication and Verbal Communication.

Non-verbal communication –

The earliest forms of communication which have been brought about by man’s early experiments with vocal language are signals, signs and symbols. Signals like the telegraphic codes of dots and dashes that open and close the electromagnetic field of a telegraphic circuit have been the most widely used form of communication. American Indians sent smoke signals to convey a message. Pictures or drawings are the signs that we encounter on a daily basis. An example would be the signs along a roadway or a highway depicting landmarks, danger, men at work etc. Signs contain meanings which are of an intrinsic nature. A signal on the other hand is only a tool that helps in formulating an extrinsic meaning, like a scream for help. Symbols are more of an abstract nature. They are specific to an individual’s perception. There are symbols which are easy to decipher like a wedding ring or vermilion on the forehead of an Indian woman.

In addition to these, there is also the study of ‘Proxemics’ developed by an American anthropologist, Edward T. Hall. ‘Proxemics’ or the ‘silent language’ is a form of non-verbal communication which is culturally determined as in the physical distance or the closeness maintained between two individuals. Body gestures generate a vocabulary of body language known as ‘Kinesics’. Likewise, various other forms of
non-verbal communication include eye contact, body posture, body contact, head nods, appearance etc.

Written communication can also be treated as a form of non-verbal communication. It is usually a one-way communication unless the receiver replies. When there is an important and permanent need for information then the written form plays an important role. This form of communication is used when the topic requires detail, accuracy and precision and also when the audience is large and widespread.

Verbal Communication –

Many theories state that man is born with a natural instinct for speech. The origin of speech has always been a matter of dispute, so also, the fact that there are numerous languages that exist in the world. Edward Sapir, an American linguist anthropologist in the 1920s along with Benjamin Lee Whorf studied the probability of the evolution of language in terms of factors that affect the culture that an individual belongs to. This can be illustrated by the fact that Eskimos have several terms for the word, 'snow' unlike inhabitants of other cultures who would only use one word to describe snow. A message that needs to be conveyed successfully should be able to capture or draw the attention of the target audience. Bahl, Sushil(1996) lists the important characteristics of verbal communication According to them, verbal communication is

(a) an interaction that happens once and there are no written records that can be referred to.
(b) used in conversational form in the most effective way.
(c) a direct link between the participants who are the sender and the receiver.
(d) where the reaction is always immediate.
(e) that which provides an opportunity to explain or clarify the communication right away should the need arise.

Accuracy, Brevity and Clarity are the basis on which the main principles of verbal communication are structured. In business organizations the most common methods of verbal communication are face-to-face conversations, interviews, group
discussions, telephone conversations, meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops etc. In order to ensure effective verbal communication there are certain steps that need to be followed.

Firstly, the talk needs to be organized, the content of the talk should also be well prepared and planned and finally it should be well delivered. In addition to the three principles mentioned above, empathy, sincerity, relaxation, eye contact, appearance and posture are also principles that govern verbal communication to a very large extent.

Vocal qualities like pitch, volume, diction, accent, rate of speech and intonation play an important role in any kind of verbal communication. These account for the basic speaking skills. A speaker should always be alert as this gives the listener an impression that he or she is knowledgeable and aware about the topic of conversation. It is important to be pleasant and distinct while speaking. This also refers to pronunciation and the mechanics of speech which includes breathing properly, moving the tongue, lips and jaw freely and easily. Speaking effectively also means putting feeling or expression into the voice so the conversation does not sound dull and monotonous. This appears to the listener that the speaker has a genuine interest in the topic and is also concerned about the listener.

Talking on the telephone is also part of verbal communication. The first impression is usually the last impression, as the saying goes. Hence, it is the first interaction that defines or sets the tone of any relationship that may follow. Over the phone it is very important to be able to strike the right chord at the onset of the conversation. The listener is interacting with a faceless voice. Visual cues and feedback are missing in such a situation. There could be missing words or misunderstood messages. Hence, the speaker needs to be more cautious than he would otherwise be in a face-to-face interaction. Since, there are no visual cues, it is important to pick on the listener's mood and state of mind by trusting one's intuition. Assumptions about the listener cannot be made as the listener cannot be seen. The basic telephone rules would include being brief, courteous, resourceful and also speaking clearly and slowly. Since body language does not play a direct role here, the focus should be on what the speaker is saying and what is being said to him or her. Relaxing during the conversation is important as any sign of tension can be reflected in the voice of the speaker. Simple language should always be used and the speaker should always refrain from using
technical jargon. This may result in the listener not understanding what is being said and he may also develop an inferiority complex with respect to the topic being discussed or the subject at hand. Body language like head nods should be replaced by verbal affirmations like, ‘yes’, ‘I understand’ etc.

Verbal communication also includes the art of listening. This skill needs to be mastered as it is one skill which has been given lesser importance, especially in business organizations. More attention needs to be directed to this skill in order to ensure that the communication that takes place involves synchronization between the sender and the receiver. This will narrow down any form of communication gap as it is has been observed that most misunderstandings occur due to lack of listening skills. Communication is said to take place when somebody listens to the message and understands it, else it is considered to be noise. Listening serves as an encouragement to others as they will reciprocate in the same manner. Thus effective listening results in making others good listeners. In order to be able to solve problems and make the right decisions it is very important to gather all the important and relevant information and to be able to do so good listening skills are required. Hence, effective listening results in improved relationships, resolution of problems and better understanding of people.

2.4 Barriers to Communication

It has been observed that there are many factors that can hinder the process of communication. Differences in perception have been seen as one of the major causes of obstruction in communication. People tend to perceive things based on past experiences and knowledge gathered over the years. Hence, different people will view a particular situation with different perceptions and this could lead to barriers in communication. Making assumptions and jumping to conclusions result in misunderstandings and wrong information thereby hindering factual communication. Generalizing or stereotyping is that factor wherein the behaviour of different individuals belonging to the same group are thought to be the same. When one meets a salesman, it is assumed that all salesmen
are the same. The concept of “You’ve met one, you’ve met all” comes into play. This serves as a mental block thereby blocking all routes of communication.

When two people from two completely different backgrounds try to communicate, there may be a huge communication gap mainly due to lack of knowledge. Their understanding of the other’s background could be very limited thereby leading to all kinds of barriers in communication. Just as lack of knowledge could hinder communication, similarly, a lack of interest on the listener’s part could lead to no communication at all. The topic of discussion or the subject at hand should always have an appeal that could engage the interest of the listener and lengthen the time of concentration. Improving the vocabulary is important as a communicator can never be at a loss of words. In addition to this, careful preparation and planning can increase the confidence level of the speaker leading to an ease in expression. Communication should not be encouraged when one is going through very strong emotions. Invariably, such emotions can always be detected by the person one is trying to communicate with. Speech may then become incoherent and the actual message may not be conveyed, although there are speakers charged with strong emotions who can express themselves better. Strong emotions are said to bring out the best in them. The speech also sounds more interesting, less dull and the enthusiasm of the speaker is apparent. A difference in personality and behaviour may result in a huge communication gap. It may be impossible to change the personality or behaviour of the listener or the person one is trying to communicate with. However, it is imperative that the speaker should be willing to compromise on his or her own behaviour or adjust to the situation in order to bring about success in communication (Stanton, Nicky. 2004).

What has been discussed above pertains to barriers in general communication. However, in business communication numerous problems can occur in any stage of the communication process. This includes both formal meetings and friendly discussions. The language used by the sender should be one that can be comprehended and understood by the receiver. Problems with language can create ambiguity in any form of communication. Once the message is received, the receiver will then try to decode the message in his or her own terms depending on the receiver’s past experiences. There is also the notion of the receiver’s past learnings, perceptions and also whether or not there are past prejudices. “In the case of interpretation of a message, individual needs are important determinants of perceptions. That is why it is said that we see only what we
want to see!” (Bahl, Sushil, 1996). Humans tend to have a selective way of processing information. The receiver will always try to retain any information which is more relevant to him or her. Usually the rest of the information is ignored or discarded.

Relating to barriers in communication, Bahl and Sushil (1996) have rightly named three basic problems involved in communication.

1. The technical problem of achieving accuracy in communicating the message.
2. The problem of ensuring that the message conveys the desired meaning.
3. The problem of ensuring that the received meaning affects behaviour in the desired way.

In addition to these three basic problems there are common problems that may affect any two-way communication. The problem could be as common as outside noise which may lead to distractions or inability to hold attention of what is being said. The audience could comprise of different types of people with varied listening or language skills. Another important issue is that of culture differences resulting in probable misunderstandings. The subject matter or message could be of a complex nature causing a diversion in the audience’s interest. A prejudiced listener or one who has a certain amount of hostility will always serve as a barrier to communication. There are also certain audiences who are not all that comfortable in answering difficult questions. This dissuades them from participating in any form of interactive session or communication. There are also the sensitive issues which may not be dealt with in the way that they should result in further confusion and possible complications.

2.5 Language and Culture

The importance of culture in language and communication has always posed both difficulties and complications at both the theoretical and practical level. This is mainly due to the fact that nobody can enter into a communication without being part of a culture, which in turn is a complex and multifaceted entity. There is always the threat of misunderstanding and potential breakdown of communication because of the
different assumptions or unwritten rules which can come into play as a result of any minor cultural differences between us.

Firstly, assumption is one of the factors that lead to a communication breakdown especially in terms of culture. Secondly, different cultures have different approaches to communication.

Guirdham (1999), draws the distinction between high-context and low-context cultures. In the former, people rely heavily on the overall situation to interpret messages. In the latter, people rely more on the explicit verbal content of messages. One way to differentiate the two is in terms of the use of roles. In high context cultures, roles tend to be more formal and are characterized by much more of an emphasis on ritualistic behaviour. In low-context cultures, by contrast, there is more emphasis on personal style, and communication therefore tends to be less formal. Thirdly, problems can arise because of discrimination, in the sense that someone from one culture may look down upon someone from one culture may look down upon someone from a different cultural background. This is the basis of racism as, in this ideology, certain cultural ethnic or racial groups are deemed to be automatically inferior to others.

While discussing communication it is also important to study the role of culture in language. Most learners lose sight of the fact that 'knowledge of the grammatical system of a language (grammatical competence) has to be complemented by an understanding of culture-specific meanings (communicative or cultural competence). (Byram, Morgan 1994). One of the main misconceptions that has permeated into foreign language learning or teaching is that if one masters the rules of the grammatical system of a particular language then one language can be easily translated into another. This belief has influenced the use of language in almost all spheres including communication to the extent that it has caused misunderstandings and cross-cultural miscommunications. Learning another language for communication or any other purpose is also learning the culture of the speakers of that language. What can be argued though is what is actually meant by culture and how can it be incorporated into language learning for communicative purposes or otherwise. "Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in the background, right from day
one. ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them” (Kramsch, 1993). According to Kramsch, communication requires understanding and understanding means putting oneself into the shoes of the speaker of the target language while always putting the target culture in relation with one’s own. More stress should be laid on the ‘cultural experiences’ rather than on ‘cultural awareness’ (Byram, 1994). The teaching of culture is hence seen as an integral part of foreign language instruction. However, learners need more in order to communicate in the foreign language.

In addition to linguistic knowledge, a vast amount of cultural information is needed (Byram, 1989; Brown, 1990; Morgan, 1993; Kramsch, 2000). As far as the process of becoming adapted to the new culture (acculturation) is concerned, research (Brown, 1986) has found that there are four stages. First, euthoria, which refers to the time when knowing little about the foreign language can be a source of excitement; second, culture shock that goes with feelings of irritability and anxiety; third, gradual recovery that means gaining confidence with the language; fourth, adaptation or assimilation related to language awareness and high level of competence. Needless to say, the role of the teacher is extremely important in each stage in order to help learners through the process of acculturation. Narrowing the scope, however, every time we meet culture there is a cognitive and affective process of seeing the cultured self and the cultured other, therefore, perception is seen as crucial (Nemetz-Robinson, 1985). The concept is that knowledge about culture helps discourse and enables people to communicate (Brown, 1990, Byram, 1997). Inevitably, there is a strong demand for linguistic fluency but cultural fluency is also needed (Byram, 1997). It is necessary to point out that dealing with cultural knowledge and understanding only is not sufficient. In addition to cultural knowledge and understanding, the weight comes down on cultural awareness and interpretation. (Byram & Fleming, 1998). It should be made clear that the aim of raising cultural awareness is to promote learning as well as to increase the motivation of learners.
2.6 Intercultural Communication

Attempting to do international business without prior cross-cultural training has often resulted in a huge communication gap. When people belonging to two different cultures attempt to do business it has very often been observed that cross cultural factors start affecting every aspect of the business. A need for cross cultural training has therefore been identified especially by many Indian IT organizations which need to equip their employees with skills required to do business in a global environment. This is however, not an easy task. Misinterpretations and misconceptions are common when the same situation is viewed differently by people from different cultures. The basis of inter-cultural relations are not about changing other people, but adapting oneself to another culture. In India, while earlier the focus was on training professionals working with software companies on international assignments, today it is an integral part of BPO culture for those personnel who have to interact with overseas clients.

Cross-cultural training can be divided into three categories—education, actual training and coaching. Education helps in understanding the impact of culture on individuals. Training is imparted on the basis of the skill set required in an organization. Coaching on the other hand is specific to projects within the organization which require consultation. The way cross-cultural training is imparted differs from country to country. In the United States, computer-based training is more popular and case studies are considered appropriate. In India, however, instructor-led training is the more widely used method and one that is easily assimilated by the learners (Internet Reference). Role-play is also considered as a method which captivates the interest of the learners.

Instances of cross cultural differences is seen in classrooms where the learners are quiet never asking questions as in their culture asking questions is considered as disrespect for the teacher. Similarly, there are teachers especially Americans who expect questions when they walk into a classroom as they are used to such learners in their country. In the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Industry where many young Indians interact with thousands of American clients on a daily basis many a time it is the little-known cultural nuances that spoil a situation. Keeping a client on hold over the phone is considered rude by Americans as they expect the agent to keep chatting.
Similarly, while silence is considered an insult in some cultures, it is seen as a mark of respect in others. Americans prefer being addressed by their first names and are not comfortable with being addressed as ‘Sir’ or ‘Madam’. These appear to be unremarkable but sometimes these small things are responsible for causing immense strain during a conversation. Certain gestures which are specific to a particular culture may be completely alien to another. An incident which occurred when an Indian delegation was to meet an American delegation for business talks can be cited as a classic example. When the American delegation walked in the Indian delegation stood up as a mark of respect for the guest delegation. The American delegation misinterpreted the gesture thinking that the Indian delegation wanted the Americans to walk out of the room. Although this deal was successful after the confusion was cleared, it still highlights the confusion that may arise when people from two different cultures interact or communicate.

Dhananjay Savarkar, head of training department, L&T Infotech, talks about scenario-based training where role play is of great importance in helping to sensitize Indian trainees to American culture. An article on the Internet, ‘Culture Matters: Challenges India Offshore Teams Face in Working with Americans’ sensitizes us to the need for a greater understanding and adaptability. It is for this reason that organizations now consider the adaptability factor right from the recruitment stage. Being the ‘hub’ for outsourcing of technology and business services functions, India presents an important case study of differences in business culture.

The BPO culture can actually be used as an illustration to explain Acculturation. We can consider a typical BPO setting in New Delhi for this purpose. Most of the minority employees coming from other states first undergo the process of acculturation when they are in constant contact with the dominant group ie. the Hindi speaking group. Then the second instance of acculturation is seen when they come in contact with yet another dominant target language group ie. the English speaking group.

1. Assimilation: If the learners show an inclination or tend to get influenced by the dominant group in both cases then assimilation is said to have occurred. Here learning then is seen to be highly progressive and within a relatively shorter span of time.
2. Integration: If the learners are able to blend both the cultures or are able to maintain both cultures simultaneously then integration is said to have occurred. Here learning occurs but at a normal pace.

3. Rejection: If the learners are not able to accept the other culture positively due to reaffirmation of the traditional culture then learning will be extremely slow.

4. Marginalisation: If the learners alienate themselves from both the cultures then what happens is learning becomes regressive wherein no learning takes place due to lack of communication or contact.

5. Biculturalism: If the learners are able to adjust to both cultures without one impeding the other then the learner is able to learn at a normal pace in a short span of time.

There are many factors that can contribute to these variations, including the level of acculturation of a particular group. It is therefore important to have a method of measurement of acculturation. The acculturation process affects a range of behaviors, values, and beliefs. All of the scales used to measure acculturation include items on second-language proficiency, because being able to communicate in the language of the host culture is a prerequisite to learning about it.

This is where we begin to talk about linguistic acculturation beginning with second language proficiency being a pre-requisite to learning a host culture. Defined by Brown (1980), as ‘The process of being adapted to a new culture’, acculturation is seen as an important aspect of SLA. Language is considered one of the most observable expression of culture in terms of how the learner’s community and the target language community view each other. It is because of this that in BPOs learners or trainees are first introduced to the culture of the target language group. Language is not the only tool for communication here. It is easy to speak with the target language native speaker in his language but it becomes meaningless if the context is not right. Hence, the importance of culture. If we take the example of the American culture, there are certain things in their culture which may be alien to us, like addressing elders maybe by a Mr. or a Mrs. Last name whereas here in India an elder becomes and uncle or an aunty for want of a better term. Other examples would be prom night, Halloween, American football, baseball, cheerleaders, etc.
Various theories have been advocated with respect to intercultural communication. In his Acculturation Theory Schumann's (1978) maintains that SLA is just one aspect of acculturation, and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group, will control the degree to which one acquires the target language.

According to Schumann, there are two types of acculturation:

1. The learner is socially integrated with the target language group, so much so that he or she is in constant contact with the target language. Here the learner needs to be positively receptive so that the ‘input’ of the target language becomes the ‘intake’.

2. All the characteristics of the first type are present in this second form of acculturation, however here the learner consciously or unconsciously adopts the life style and values of the target language group which he uses as reference groups.

In the first case we see that the learner is psychologically inclined to learn whereas in the second case the learner is socially inclined to learn. Similarly, in the BPO culture the learner will learn only if he or she keeps an open mind and an attitude which is receptive towards the target language group. Racism could cause a hindrance here wherein the target language group shows a negative attitude towards the learner. Socially the learner tries to keep abreast of the social and cultural patterns of American society and to a certain extent tries to develop or speak with the American accent to create that feeling of belonging.

As indicated above, acquisition of language skills involves not only conversation, but also analysis, reflection, cross-cultural interpretation, collaborative problem-solving and critical thinking. Learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) are in a different situation than foreign language learners in that they have more opportunities for day-to-day contact with the culture and language. Truly, learners want to have a good command of the foreign language; therefore, they need competence in grammar and vocabulary.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis pertains more to linguistic relativity. 'It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and
that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection' (Sapir, 1963). According to this hypothesis, speakers of different languages have different opinions and different perceptions of the world. The more dissimilarity two languages have in terms of their lexical categories, the more differences will arise in the world views of the speakers of the respective languages. Sapir (1921) in his book 'Language' discusses at length about the non-technical view of language. It is through this that Sapir traces language through human history and geographical variation as a means of symbolic communication. The internal form of symbolic communication characterizes the thought patterns and processes and also the life-styles of the speakers.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has two forms 'linguistic determinism' and 'linguistic relativism'. The former holds the view that the language we speak 'determines' our perceptions and views about the world. Whorf refers to the Native American language Hopi which does not make the same tense and aspect distinctions that English does. Hence, according to him, Hopi Indians will perceive the world and the passage of time very differently from the way English speakers do. The latter is the weaker form of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. It states that different languages encode different categories and hence speakers of different languages perceive the world differently. This can be illustrated by examples like colour distinctions. Russian has different words for dark blue and sky blue whereas in English the addition of the words 'dark' and 'sky' expresses the difference. Similarly, in Italian, you ride 'in' a bicycle and you go 'in' a country whereas in English, you ride 'on' a bicycle and you go 'to' a country.

This hypothesis is controversial especially with regard to the stronger form. The Hopi Indians may not have a tense system in their grammar but they do have a sophisticated concept of time which makes up for the lack of a tense system in their grammar. Politically correct language also falls under this hypothesis where in an abortion debate, some refer to the 'right to choose' whereas others to the 'right to life'. The phrases are different and may indicate different ideologies but the motive is to sway public opinion.

The Sapir and Whorf hypothesis theorizes that thought and behaviour are strongly governed or influenced by language. Both Sapir and Whorf focused mainly on
the relationship between language, thought and culture. Their studies deal mainly with
the theory that culture determines the language that we speak which in turn influences
our thoughts about the world and our experiences in it.

Fishman (1972) has stressed on certain claims of this hypothesis. One claim is
that, if speakers of one language have certain words to describe things and speakers of
another language lack similar words, then speakers of the first language will find it
easier to talk about those things. Eg. Vocabulary of any trade or profession like Medical,
Law etc. In many bilingual communities, studies show that emphasis has been laid on
language use in a particular context. Joshua Fishman (1972) talks about ‘proper’ usage
which refers to the usage that would be expected in certain contexts. He was trying to
establish patterns of language use taken from language choices made by speakers. He
stressed on the concept of ‘domains’ wherein he argued that in stable bilingual
communities, languages were associated with different domains of use. The concept of
domain was introduced by Fishman mainly in multilingual settings in order to specify
the role relationships within which habitual language use occurs (1964, 1965, 1966).
Relevant domains for describing language use in many relatively complex multilingual
societies would probably include family, friendship, religion, education work sphere,
and government (1966). Fishman lays emphasis on ‘domains’ mainly because he uses
this concept to differentiate between stable and unstable bilingual societies. In the
former, language use is specific and there is no use of the ‘other tongue’ in the same
context. However, in the latter it has been observed that the use of the ‘other tongue’
alternatively is apparent and this usually occurs in the domains of family and friendship
that is, in a less formal context.
Communication has become vital to business growth since our economy has firmly based itself on information, rather than manufacturing. Customers, employees, investors, suppliers, and the general public now expect a high level of communication and candour from the companies that operate in their community (Michael B. Goodman, 2004). The author here is referring to the strategic importance of corporate communication. A corporate communicator should possess a good expertise in both written and spoken communication. One should also have a clear understanding of the communication process as a whole. Excellent interpersonal skills both face to face and telephonic are also considered a basic requirement for the job role of a corporate communicator. Apart from having a strong sense of curiosity one should also be media savvy. An active listening skill is one thing that any corporate communicator cannot do without. In addition to these, the keyword is advocacy. A good corporate communicator should possess a fierce sense of loyalty to the organization he or she represents.

With increased globalization, corporations are paying attention to the languages in which they conduct their business. Businesses that operate globally bring together people from different cultures and traditions, who were educated through different learning processes, and who operate in different political systems and regions with different levels of industrial development. Language affects the ability of multinational organizations to function in the global market. Yet, the need for corporate language policies has not been adequately recognized in strategic management literature or communication literature. Research in the field of the economics of language was rare prior to the 1960s (Krishna S. Dhir, 2004).

There are two kinds of business communication, internal and external. The former deals with communication within the organization itself, that is, between the management and the employees. The latter on the other hand, deals with communication between the organization and the external customers or clients. In both instances, communication could be in the form of information, messages, instructions etc. This is essential for the proper functioning of the company or organization in the most efficient manner and also to keep the external customers or clients adequately informed of the
developments. Similarly, the methods of communication that can be employed could be both spoken and written, direct and indirect (Bahl, Sushil. 1996). Also, it is not necessary for them to be sophisticated and expensive. These modes can be used in organizations which are larger as they may add value to an already existing system. Good business communication is a two-way process which requires a flow of information horizontally and vertically. It requires the communicator to try and ensure that the message is understood. It also requires the communicator to listen to and take account of the response or reaction to the communication. Above all, business communication involves people. Good workplace communication involves everyone in the company. But, to be effective and to produce results, it needs to be organized, systematic and sustained like any other activity. It is primarily the responsibility of the managers to create conditions and establish the policies, procedures and practices which will promote effective communication with employees and people outside.

Bahl and Sushil (1996) talk about the importance of feedback. According to them, good business communication can be achieved if six basic requirements are not only met but also understood. The needs and wants of both the internal customers (employees) and external customers (clients) should be taken care of. Communication should always be two-way for it to be effective. The communication should be both systematic and sustained. There should be a true sense of commitment from the top management at all times. There should also be a sense of involvement among all employees. Finally feedback from the external customers has to be accepted positively. The whole idea of ensuring effective business communication is to be able to deliver and perform as an organization. The target audience should feel valued at all times and there should be a sense of mutual understanding between the target audience and the communicator. There should also be a certain degree of sensitivity to the fact that there exists various differences between people and that this is not only normal but also legitimate. A sign of preparedness is seen as a performance trait, hence, experimenting with new techniques and approaches is seen as an effective innovation. The key for a communicator to be successful is introspection which should be done regularly. In addition, feedback from other trusted sources at the supervisory level of even peer level should be accepted positively. More importantly, should things go wrong then the blame game should be avoided. Instead a joint solution for the matter would be a more welcome approach. It has been often observed that communication usually solves more
problems than it creates. Any form of business communication fails mostly because of avoidance to communicate rather than from an abundance of it. Many business organizations stress on the ‘Transparency Principle’ which involves being open about a situation or a problem and dealing with it rather than hiding it and letting it grow. This is a principle which needs more nurturing in the Indian context in order to be able to create a more positive impact.

Communication in business is a function of four basic conditions – what is it that has to be communicated; for whom is the communication meant; cost of the communication; and personal preferences of the sender. The theory of communication involves understanding of the ‘sender’, ‘coding of the message’, the ‘message’ itself, ‘decoding of the message’, and the ‘receiver’. Any break in the chain results in the message not being understood and the communication not taking place. (Bahl, Sushil. 1996).

There are three forms of business communication, namely, verbal, written and non-verbal. Verbal communication is oral communication which includes personal conversations and interviews which can be either telephonic or face to face. It also includes meetings which are part and parcel of any organization in general. This form of communication is usually two-way and elicits an immediate response from the receiver. Written communication, on the other hand, is usually one-way, that is, from the sender to the receiver, unless the receiver responds (writes back). With the development of print and electronic technology written communication has advanced greatly today. Non-verbal communication is a more interesting form of communication which supports both oral and written communication. This form of communication ranges from audio-visuals, flipchart and blackboard, slide and video projectors, to other electronic gadgets and items. In order to have a sound feedback system or process monitoring of communication policies and practices must be an ongoing process. Monitoring draws out weaknesses in communication so that remedial action can be taken. In fact, monitoring and feedback is a cyclic process which is documented by what is called a communication audit. If this is followed as a regular process there will be very less room for error and more scope for a better performance.