

Soft Skills *for* Technocrats

Vipin Kumar



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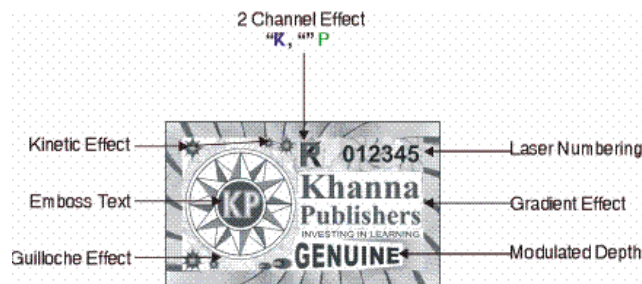
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Preface

In fact, Soft Skills are indispensable and play a vivacious role in the present information revolution age and serve a number of purposes in professional and engineering fields. Today it is a way of facilitating information about technical knowledge spreading all over the globe. No organization can stand without it as each person working there has to communicate important message throughout the day. It is also a way to share their knowledge and establishes mutual understanding amongst them.

In Today's world, we have two incredible virtues as a nation. The first one is the youngest population in the world and the second is the vibrant emerging knowledge economy. To build upon this strength, the need of the hour is to have trained professionals in soft skills. Several research unequivocally support that people and their skills are very critical to become successful in professional environment. This book is designed with a clear objective to identify the need of the present generation and empower them with the right set of skills, nuances & modes of Speech Delivery to make them employable. Author is of the view that there is a distinct mismatch between the economy and skills of the graduates, calling for immediate partnership of academia and industry to fill this vacuum of soft skills in young graduates leading to poor employability. As a result, students have good theoretical knowledge, but they lack soft skills. These skills can be mastered, and it can bring a charismatic appearance in one's personality.

Present book is an easy approach to soft skills required for technocrats and professionals and quite different from the books available. This book minutely discusses important skills required in the workplace. It incorporates bunch of soft skills details to fill the void between industry and academia. The proposed book intends to work on the core skills with the practical activity-based learning on author's own vast academic experience. The book includes various illustrations and activities to make learning a fun activity.

The content of this book is designed strictly as per the latest syllabus of A. P. J. Abdul Kalam University, Lucknow (formally known as U. P. Technical University, Lucknow). I hope that this book will satisfy all professional and technical students of UG and PG, having thrust for Soft Skills.

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Online course for English Grammar



Teachers/Students' resources

Unit 1



Basics of Applied Grammar and Usages

This Unit comprises the following topics:

- Basics of Communication
- Transformation of Sentences: Simple, Compound and Complex,
- Subject-verb agreement,
- Prefix and Suffix,
- Advanced Vocabulary: Antonyms, Synonyms, Homophones, Homophones,
- New word Formation,
- Select word power

1.1. INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

The English word Communication is taken from Latin word ‘*Communicare*’ means sharing. But in English, its meaning is multiplied. According to Murphy et. al., “*Simply stated, communication is a two-way process of exchanging ideas or information*”.

American Management Association says, “*Communication is any behavior that results in an exchange of meaning.*” Mr. B. Brown says, “*Communication is the transmission and interchange of facts, ideas, feelings or course of action.*”

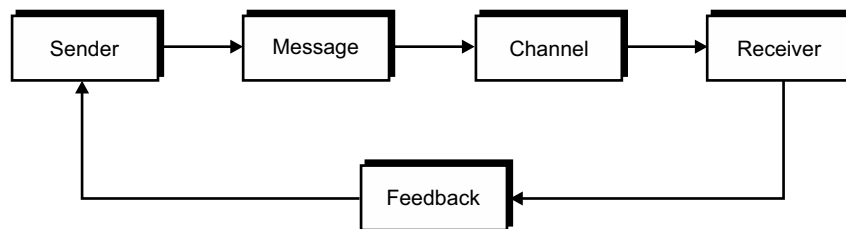
Like communication there is another term *i.e.*, conversation, that means “*informal talk involving a small group of people or only two*”. It is the most common form of face-to-face communication. It is equally important because it connects the people in their social and professional life.

1.1.1. Communication Cycle

Communication is a two-way process that requires two parties- the sender (encoder) and the receiver (decoder). The sender sends (encodes) the message through a channel (language or other means) and the receiver receives (decodes) the message. Finally, after analysing and understanding the message the receiver sends the feedback to the sender.

This communication cycle comprises five elements that can be abbreviated as SMCRF.

1. **Sender:** One who encodes the message and initiates the communication process. For effective communication, the sender should have effective communication skills (SWRL), a positive attitude, confidence, ample use of Body language, moderate pitch, and accent, good subject knowledge, etc.
2. **Message:** Message is what the communicator wants to convey. It can be a concept, idea, information, or feelings. The message should be interesting, innovative, moderate, etc.
3. **Channel:** In communication channel means Language. It must be common and intelligible to both, sender, and the receiver.
4. **Receiver:** The receiver is one who decodes the message. The receiver is equally responsible for making communication effective. He should be of attentive, alert, and positive nature.
5. **Feedback:** It is the signal of the receiver's response to the speaker after decoding the message by verbal (by words) or non-verbal (gesture, posture, eye-contact, signs, symbols, etc.). Finally, Receiver gives the Feedback to the sender.



Therefore, Communication is a two-way process between two parties- the Sender and the Receiver. It involves a sender who transmits an idea, information or feeling to a receiver and after understanding, the receiver sends the feedback to the sender. Communication is effective only if the receiver understands the same information or idea that the sender intended to transmit. It is only feedback that tells the sender that the receiver understood the message. Hence, communication is an exchange, not a give, as all parties must participate in this information exchange.

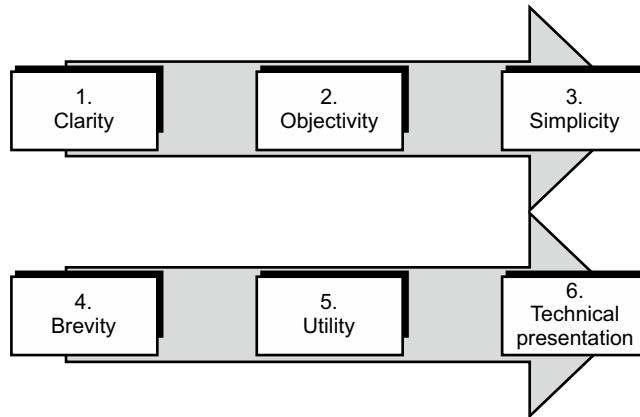


Despite verbal signals communication process may have nonverbal elements in speech such as the tone of voice, the look in the sender's eyes, body language, hand gestures, and emotions like anger, fear, uncertainty, confidence, etc. that can be observed easily. In fact, people trust nonverbal behaviors more than verbal ones. Therefore, Communication is a process, and if this process breaks down, communication will fail.

Today, it is a specialized branch of communication which is used in technical subjects. It tailors information for specific people. Therefore, communication means 'sharing of information in technical manner. According to Professor J. R. Nelson, "*It is specialized form of exposition—a form of discourse, distinguished from other forms in certain essential features*".

1.1.2. Features of Communication

Technical Communication is specialized form of communication because it has some specialized features. It is specific as it is for specific people and with a specific purpose. A technical writer has to inculcate such an effective and comprehensive communication that is easily intelligible to the audience. In the making of effective communication, a technical communicator should keep some points in his mind. Prof. S D Sharma beautifully highlights six important features of Technical Communication: Clarity, Objectivity, Simplicity, Brevity, Utility and Technical Presentation. These features may be abbreviated by: COS + BUT.



1. Clarity : Clarity in communication implies clarity of language (words and sentences) and clarity of ideas. Prudent communicators or writers always use normal words and sentence structures which are easily understandable to the audience. In fact, effective technical communication depends upon the amount of clarity. It is the sole responsibility of the communicator to execute it as much as possible. It is clarity that reduces ambiguity and obscurity and creates a clear-cut understanding. It solidifies and shapes a complex expression and makes it comprehensive even for common audiences. A conscious technical writer avoids ambiguity and chooses the words and expressions that are known to the reader. In fact, familiar and easy words convey the meaning more effectively. Examine the following sentences:

- *Would you be kind enough to help me?*
- *Kindly help me.*
- *He accomplished his new job with ease.*
- *He did his new job well.*
- *He located a new business job.*
- *He found a new job.*

2. Objectivity : Another important feature of Technical Communication is objectivity. It is the opposite of subjectivity. Objectivity in technical communication means that the author explains his message without being impartial or biased. He explains it without his personal viewpoint, experience, and mental attitude. This lets the recipient determine their own opinion. While general communication has personal feelings, ideas, opinions, and mental attitudes. A person who has a subjective viewpoint sees things only from his own position which is not of the universal bearing. Therefore, technical communication is fact-driven while general communication is opinion-driven. An expression representing sex or personality should be avoided like:

Subjective Expressions	Objective Expressions
I think/according to me	It is thought
Man-made	Manufactured
Manpower	Personnel, worker
Fireman	Fire-fighter
Repairman	Repair-technician
Congressman	Representative
Cameraman	Camera-operator

3. Simplicity: Simplicity is another important feature of communication. It simply means that a communicator is expected to use simple words, phrases, sentence construction, and ideas as a technical person has no time to consult a dictionary. It makes the communication easy to understand and interesting. To acquire this, a writer works hard because he has to choose simple words and simple sentences instead of complex ones. In this way, he hardly uses complex words, compound sentences, and complex sentences. Along with this, he avoids lengthy sentences too because lengthy sentences generally make the sentence unintelligible. Lengthy sentences and many involved clauses should be avoided. Albert Einstein says, *“Everything should be kept as simple as possible, but not simpler”*. While writing or speaking, one should bear it in one’s mind that all technocrats and professionals are not language experts. Therefore, Complex words should be replaced by simple words like:

Avoid Complex words	Use Simple words
Strategize	Plan
Hereinafter	After this
Utilize	Use
Peruse	Examine
Demonstrate	Show
Visualize	See
Facilitate	Help
Compensate	Pay
Utilize	Use
Terminate	End

Brevity: Brevity is another significant feature is communication. It means *“shortness or conciseness of expression”*. Francis Bacon regards it as *“soul of wit”*. It is essential in technical communication because it maximizes information density as concise thoughts are more understandable than the longer ones. It also saves time.

Therefore, a technical writer should not use round-about sentences, expressions (circumlocution), and verbosity that confuse the readers, consume much time, and make the message unintelligible. To achieve brevity in speaking and writing, he has to avoid unnecessary words, long expressions, repetition, etc. He should also know the level of intelligibility of his recipients too.

Long Expressions	Short Expressions
To the fullest possible extent	Completely
At the later date	Later
At the present time/ moment	Now
At all times	Always/ Ever
Subsequent to	After
For the purpose of	For/ to
Despite the fact that	Although/ Even though
In the event that	If
Will you be kind enough	Kindly/Please

In fact, brief sentences make communication more effective and comprehensive because long sentence do no show pedantry but only confuse the readers or listeners. Look at the following sentences:

Except these, technocrats/professionals should cram frequently used “One Word Substitutions” to cut short the long sentences. For example:

- *Tortoise is capable of living on land and water.*
- *Tortoise is amphibious.*

Examples: *We are enclosing herewith the monthly statement for the payments due from you.*

Solution: The statement of (your) account is enclosed.

4. Utility: In technical communication, the utility is equally important. Utility means ‘*the quality or state of being useful*’. It means technical communication should have only important information without being irrelevant and untruthful. Technocrats or professionals have to presents only important and useful facts and information. There is none a business that has much time to read the irrelevant message which is not of any particular utility. In other words, technical communication is always useful and has no place for the information which is not useful for the technical people.

5. Technical Presentation: Other important feature of Communication is its way of presentation. Presentation literally means *'the way in which something is arranged, designed etc.'* Therefore, technical message requires a definite presentation style through different forms of technical communication like applications, letters, reports, memoranda, notice, circulars, and others. Not only in writing it is technically presented but also in oral communication it requires enough care. In fact, technical communication is quite different from general communication because of its presentation. A technical writer requires numerous technical styles like graphs, tables, images, data interpretation, images, visuals etc to make his presentation more effective and authentic.

Except these, communication contains technical message. It is mostly formal and has a set pattern. It is both oral and written and always meant for specific people.

1.2. APPLIED GRAMMAR

TRANSFORMATION OF SENTENCES (SIMPLE, COMPOUND, COMPLEX SENTENCES)

Transformation means to change and in English Transformation of sentences means to change the structure of the sentence without changing its meaning. For example:

He is too poor to afford a new car.

He is so poor that he can't afford a new car.

In Transformation, there are three types of sentences which are changed:

1. Simple sentence: It has one independent clause- a Subject and a Verb, expressing a complete thought.

Healthy people like to walk every day.

2. Compound sentence: It is a combination of two sentences having two main/principal clauses joined together with a conjunction. For example:

You can stay here or go there.

3. Complex sentence: It has one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. For example:

I am happy to know that you have been selected in a reputed company.

Let's analyze the conversion of the sentences from:

1.2.1. Two or more Simple Sentences to one Simple Sentence

Using some methods, we can convert two or more simple sentences into one simple sentence. Let's see some important methods by using:

1. Too:

My friend is so pompous that one can't believe him.

My friend is **too** pompous to believe him.

He is so shy that he cannot express him before others.

He is **too** shy to express him before others.

2. Participle: (When Doer is one)

He appeared in the examination. He went home.

Having appeared in the examination, he went home.

Turn to the right and then left. You will see your destination.

Turning to the right and then left, you will see your destination.

3. Nominative Absolute: (When Doers are more than one)

The police came. The thief ran away from there.

The police **having come**, the thief ran away from there.

The award was given to the winners. All were happy.

The award **being given** to the winners, all were happy.

4. Infinitive (To + verb/ Infinitive without To)

I sold everything including my car. I paid all my debts.

I sold everything including my car **to pay** all my debts.

All of you work hard. You want to pass IAS exam.

All of you work hard to pass IAS exam.

5. Preposition: (Showing Reason)

I am thankful to all of you. You helped me a lot.

I am thankful to all of you **for** helping me a lot.

6. Adverb Enough + to (Cause-Effect)

Sohan is intelligent. He can solve this riddle.

Sohan is intelligent enough to solve this riddle.

1.2.2. Simple Sentences to one Compound Sentence

Two or more Simple Sentences to one Compound Sentence: *Compound sentences are formed with the help of Coordinating conjunctions and not by Subordinating because it has two clauses of equal rank. Learn following Coordinating Conjunctions:*

F	A	N	B	O	Y	S
For	And	Nor	But	Or	Yet	So

The others are: else, still, either, neither, both.....and, now, etc.,.

- My friend is poor. He is happy. (Simple)
My friend is poor but happy. (Compound)
- Go fast. You will miss the train. (Simple)
Go fast or you will miss the train. (Compound)
- He is rich. He is hard-working. (Simple)
He is rich, for he is hard-working. (Compound)
- He worked hard. He scored good marks. (Simple)
He worked hard, so he scored good marks. (Compound)
- Walk quickly. You will not catch the train. (Simple)
Walk quickly; else you will not catch the train. (Compound)

- I was busy. I helped him. (Simple)
I was busy, still I helped him. (Compound)
- He is no good. He is not bad. (Simple)
He is neither good nor bad. (Compound)
- John is hard working. He is honest. (Simple)
John is both hard working and honest. (Compound)

1.2.3. Simple Sentences to one Complex Sentence

Two or more Simple Sentences to one Complex Sentence: Complex sentences are formed with the help of Subordinating conjunctions because of having two clauses Principle and Subordinating Clause(s). Learn following Subordinating Conjunctions:

These are: as soon as, while, before after, since (time), so that, in order that, that, lest (purpose), as, since, because (reason/cause), so that (effect), as far as, as long as (manner), if, unless, provided that, as if (condition), though, although, however, yet, notwithstanding (contrast), as much as, no less than, than (comparison) etc.,

The methods of conversion are:

(i) **Adverb Clause:** (Reason, cause, condition, comparison, time, place or any contrast)

- *I got admission in IIT Kanpur. I worked hard. (cause)*
I got admission in IIT Kanpur because I worked hard. (complex)
- *I didn't get any promotion in this organization. I am happy. (reason)*
Though I didn't get any promotion in this organization, I am happy. (complex)
- *We shall accept your invitation. You sign our proposal. (condition)*
We shall accept your invitation if You sign our proposal. (complex)
- *I completed my assignment. I uploaded it on AWS moodle. (time)*
I had completed my assignment before I uploaded it on AWS moodle (complex)

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About the Book

This book is designed with a clear objective to identify the need of the present generation and empower budding technocrats and professionals with the right set of communication, workplace and presentation skills, nuances and modes of speech delivery etc. to make them employable. Author is of the view that there is a distinct mismatch between the economy and skills of the graduates, calling for the immediate partnership of academia and industry to fill this vacuum of soft skills in young graduates leading to poor employability. As a result, students have good theoretical knowledge, but they lack soft skills. These skills can be mastered, and they can bring a charismatic appearance to one's personality. The present book is a practical approach to soft skills as each important topic is followed by some practical activities for the students.

About the Author



Dr. Vipin Kumar is currently working as Assistant Professor of English, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, KIET Group of Institutions, Delhi- NCR. He has a wide experience of more than 16 years in academics and research. He was conferred a Doctorate Degree in English in 2007. He has a keen interest in research in English Literature, language and communication. He has been teaching English Literature, Communication Skills, Corporate Communication etc. to UG and PG students of different branches. He has also been awarded as CEGR Certified Academic Leader from the Centre for Education and Growth and Research. He is also a certified Human Values and Professional Ethics Trainer from IIT Kanpur. He is a renowned author of the book "*Technical Communication Skills*", OPH, New Delhi and "*Soft Skills for Engineers and Professionals*", BlueRose Publishers, New Delhi. He has created a self-paced MOOC titled "*English Grammar for Employability*" on Swayam: NPTEL/AICTE Online Platform, Ministry of Education, Government of India.



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