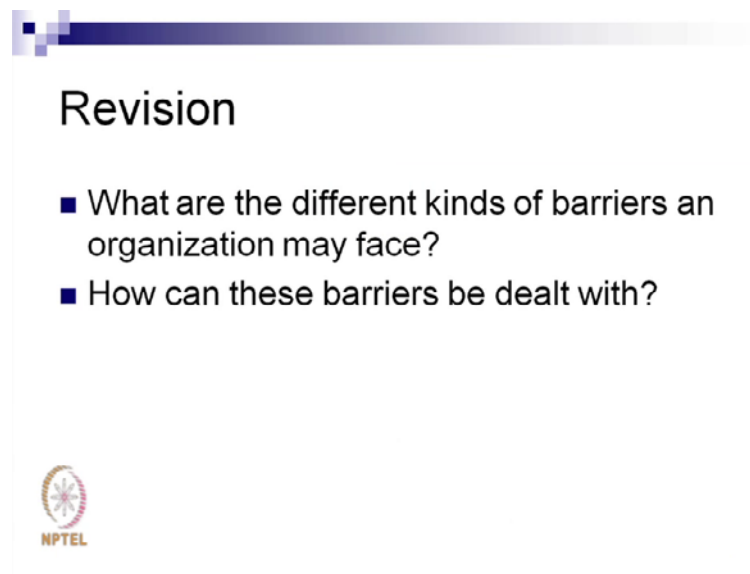


**International Business Communication**  
**Prof. A. Malik**  
**Vinod Gupta School of Management**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur**

**Lecture - 15**  
**Barriers to Communication (Contd.) and Listening**


Welcome back to the class on International Business Communication, we have been talking about different things relating to communication, we have been talking about barriers, we talked about what communication is, we talked about intercultural communication, we have talked about business communication in different settings. Today, we are going to finish the class on barriers there was still some bit left, and we will start with the importance of listening in business communication. Now, we have talked about different aspects, but listening as you will soon realize is one of the most important things in business communication.

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**Revision**

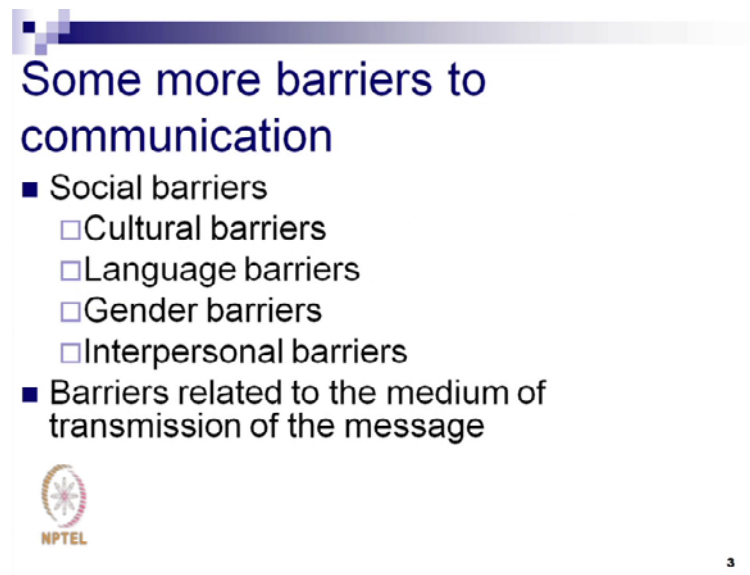
- What are the different kinds of barriers an organization may face?
- How can these barriers be dealt with?



So, let us get started. Revision as usual the first thing I would like you to think about again and discussion in class is, what are the different kinds of barriers an organization may face. And I had asked you to think about the kinds of barriers your organizations face, and how you deal with them and that is something that I would like you to discuss in class again today. What are the different kinds of barriers that organizations face, and how do organizations deal with these barriers, and how can individuals in different


organizations deal with these barriers. Once you discussed this then we can move on to the next part.

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**Some more barriers to communication**

- Social barriers
  - Cultural barriers
  - Language barriers
  - Gender barriers
  - Interpersonal barriers
- Barriers related to the medium of transmission of the message

  
NPTEL

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We had discussed about some of the barriers, some more barriers that one can come across in any form of professional or personal communication are, the first one is social barriers. And when we talk about social barriers we are essentially talking about interpersonal barriers to communication, the barriers we face when we are dealing with other people, when we are in a group or a meeting or you know in a team, the kinds of barriers we face in communication. And again none of these are mutually exclusive, none of these are essentially just by themselves, they occur in conjunction with the other types of barriers.

So, you may have intrapersonal barriers which could be are attitudes and perceptions and symmetric barriers and all of that, and in addition to that we may also have these cultural barriers, which is what we talked about some time earlier are tendency to stereo type or tendency to not accept different points of view, are tendency to not accept different people. And you may have come across this at some point in your communication with people, when you must have seen this you know sometimes we do not like people.

We feel uncomfortable about people, they have not done anything to make us uncomfortable, they have not said anything to us to make us uncomfortable. But, somehow the vibes just do not match, so when we have that situation you know and

sometimes it is the cultural issues that make us feel uncomfortable around certain people. For example, and if you look at the color of clothes I am wearing today, I purposely wore this because we were talking about barriers.

Now, somebody in a western country may find this to be very festive, and somebody from say a westernized multinational company, may think that this is too informal for a professional official presentation like this. Why because I am wearing this deep pink color that has golden paint on it, and I am wearing a heavily embroidered [FL] which is silk, so it is like you know are you going to a wedding or something or are you coming here to teach a class.

Now, I am purposely wore this, so that you would feel the impact of this is in the class itself, some of you may feel you know what is this teacher, why is she wearing such, such fancy festive clothes. And somebody will say well it is the festival season [FL] and yet we are in India, and we really do not pay very much attention to the color of peoples cloths. But, then there are some cultural barriers we may face, and you say you know somebody who is who does not know the difference between professional dressing up and festive dressing up it is just not qualified to teach me about communication.

So, that may prevent you from listening to what I am saying and that may in turn result in some sort of casual interaction from your side to me, the next thing here is language barriers, which is our inability or unwillingness talk to people who speak a different language than ours. And some of you who have being in different states, and I am specifically referring to this class as a class in India I hope, other people, in other countries see this video and can also relate to it. But, India is as multicultural as it gets every state, has it is own dilate has it is own sort of languages.

For example, when I come from modern India and when I have come to Bengal, initially my instant was to find the Hindi speaking person. And if I found somebody speaking Punjabi I used to be thrilled my god you know this person is I can relate to this person I may not know the person at all. But, even if I do not speak Punjabi at home the minute I here Punjabi, my first instant is go up and start talking to the person in Punjabi because I feel more close to them.

On the other side, if I am in touch with or if I am working with the group of people, who are working on the same language as me. But, for whatever reason keep going back to

Bengali or Oriya or another language just because they are sure at that language I do not feel, so connected with them. And I feel somehow hampered in contributing to the discussion that is going on in the group why because we are not talking in the same language, we may be using English to communicate essential points to each other or even Hindi at times.

But, the Hindi is heavily laced with the Bengali accent and my Hindi is heavily laced with the Punjabi accent and so that can prevent us. Similarly, when we go abroad Indians I am sure feel this the minute you see a Hindi speaking person, we immediately gravitate towards, we go and campus and that is what happened to me, when I went to abroad. Everybody used to be in jeans and jackets and I grew up wearing jeans, so no big deal.

But, the minute I saw somebody wearing [FL] like this my first instance was to like oh god I come home, you know I have reached a place where I can find somebody is similar to me. So, I am sure this person has turmeric in their house, and I am sure this person eats the kind of food I do, and they know about dal and rice's and they know about dal and rajma, as and they know what [FL] are and immediately. Even if I do not know the person the first instant is to go and start a conversation with such a person, as appose to somebody who is wearing the completely different set of clothes.

So, you know these are language in cultural barriers are intact mind my first instant is to start talking in Hindi, I will look I crave for somebody to talk in Hindi with. Even though I am equally comfortable speaking in English, the next barrier that we face in communication with the other people are the general barriers, and I am sure you have noticed this in your interactions amongst your selves, especially people in smaller towns what happens.

When you go to a class when you are in a coeducational environment, you have been in a only in an only girls school and in only boys school to plus 12 you come to college. And you go to a coeducational college, and you are put in teams and you know girls have to work with boys. And what happens when you come to class one side of the class is only boys one side of the class is only girls you are put in separate hostels. But, when you come to class you do not want to sit with friends why because that you know there will be the going on oh my god.

So, we fear that plus we feel we have been, so and again you know that the society organizes itself, in different ways to stay control to stay as uncomplicated as possible, but when we have to interact to the people of other genders. Especially when we start doing this, there is some sort of a discomfort in communicating in speaking to and in our ability to understand, where the person from the other gender is coming across. And a very popular book that deals with this issue is men are from mars and women are from venus or the other way around I am sorry I do not remember the exact title.

But, I am sure what I am talking about and so you know we think on different planes because we have different priorities because; we grow up knowing that we will be looking after different things in our lives. That is pretty much where this difference comes from and of course, there are some inherent differences, also in the way we deal with things, women are known to be softer, and if you find the women who is very good with numbers who is into operations and finance.

You are like, how would this lady know what real operations is or how would this lady know what these numbers mean, you know there is something wrong, there is something wrong with her expertise. So, we find it hard to start believing these things, things are becoming more and more open now, many more women in disciplines like Engineering or even Civil Engineering as a post to Computer Science Engineering there is something that you might be able to relate with.

But, you know we are coming out more and more and of course, in management the typical thing that women choose is AHR or organizational behavior or stuff like that, but any way these are general barriers. So, these things prevent us from communicating with appears and as well as we would like to the next social barrier that we face is interpersonal barriers and this is what I was talking about earlier.

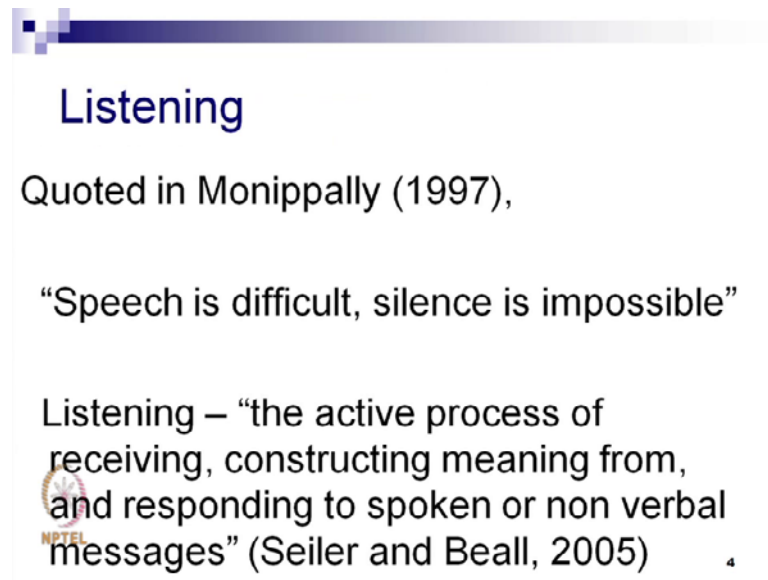
We just do not like the person, we have we get different vides from a person. So, you know I we all feel this for some reason we do not like some interpersonal trade, and that prevents us from expressing ourselves as freely and as clearly, as we would like to. Then the last one here is barriers related to the medium or transmission of the message, and this is something that I talked about in one of the earliest lectures. When we talked about the context difference in context and I showed a an experience with you guys somebody got offended.

Because, I choose a different channel of communication than the one this person who is comfortable with, I remember giving you the example of you know this card that I was the business card that I was going to get made. And I found it more comfortable for the other person, thinking that the other person would be as comfortable with email, as I was now I just send this person an email, asking him when the cards would be ready. And he thought that I was creating a negative record against him, by putting all this in writing.

So, that was the discomfort he said you could have just picked up a phone, and called me and asked me, why did you have to create a negative record about me that I did not get your business cards made. When I should have and I sawed that by using an email, I was giving the other person enough time to find out the details, and respond to me at his own convenience. So, you know there are different perspectives and we all have our opinions about which channel of communication, which medium of transmission of the message is the best.

And that in turn influences the context of the in which the messages being drafted, and the context in which the messages being interpreted. And that in turn results in miscommunication or problems with communication or difficulties with communication or our inherent difficulties in drafting, and receiving the message as clearly as we would like to or as clearly as the sender or receiver would like to. So, there are, so many factors violently related nothing mutually exclusive, and again this is not an exhaustive list of barriers of communication.

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## Listening

Quoted in Monippally (1997),


“Speech is difficult, silence is impossible”

Listening – “the active process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken or non verbal messages” (Seiler and Beall, 2005)

Let us move on to the next topic, which is listening and that is going to be the major part of what we cover today, listening quoted in this very nice book by professor Monippally who teaches at I m Ahmadabad, is and he has quoted the sentence in that book. And he says speech is difficult, but silence is impossible and I am sure if all of you were sitting here I would hear, a few giggles in the class. And silence is impossible you know I want you to really think about this, and we will talk about this more in the next class.

So, today I just want you to mall over this sentence now listening according to professor Monippally is the active sorry listening according to seiler and beall, is the active process of receiving constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken or non verbal messages. So, it is not only what goes on through your ear it is also what you see, it is what you hear in the context of where you hear it, how you perceive it, who is saying it all that contributes to how we listen please think about it.


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## Hearing and Listening

- Watch the following clip

(Downloaded from Youtube)

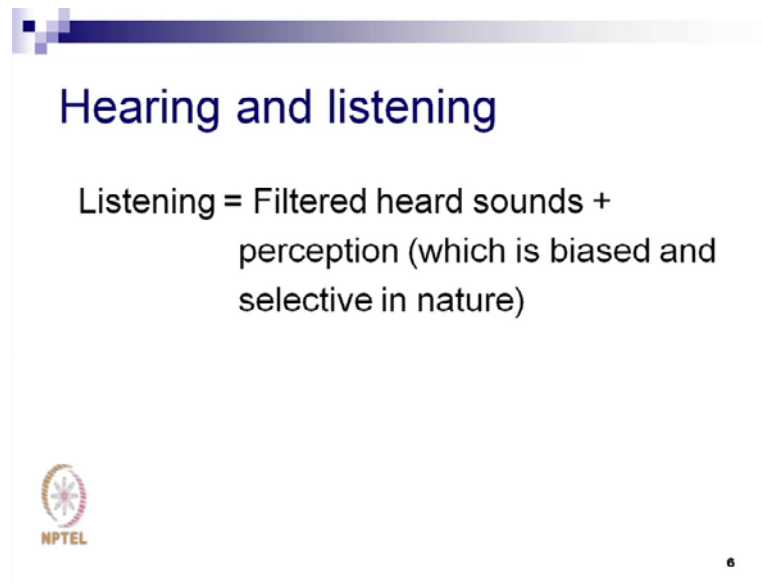


Now, I have something very interesting to share with you, we are going to see the difference between hearing and listening, and I think a class on listening is incomplete without this clip on Helen Keller's life. And you can look up on Helen Keller was on Google that I will just share this clip with you that I have downloaded from you tube. So, please watch this clip and discuss about it in class ((Refer Time: 14:41)) that is the end of this video and I hope I would like to discuss what you thought if this video.

I would like you to discuss how you viewed this video in terms of what you see around you, in your interpersonal interactions. And especially the implications of such things, in your work place and I would really like you to think about, how listening, how what is the difference between hearing and listening. The first thing that I would like you to discuss is what you think is the difference between hearing and listening, and after you had the discussion, and I hope it will take some time. We can move on to the difference that I think there are between hearing and listening.




(Refer Slide Time: 24:26)



**Hearing and listening**

Listening = Filtered heard sounds +  
perception (which is biased and  
selective in nature)



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Now, this is what I have studied and the listening I feel is filtered heard sounds, which is the sounds coming in through our ears from the environment, whatever we hear that is hearing. We filter this heard sounds, we separates the noise from the sense making sounds, and then we organize this sounds that make sense to us and perceive them in a pattern. For example, as I am teaching this class and now you can hear some sound here, now some of you may get distracted by the sound that I make with my [FL] over here on the table.

But, others who are more focused on learning or who have a better ability to filter out the sense making sounds, from the sounds that do not make, so much sense will be able to focus more on what I am saying, and may be even note down some points. Now, in this room there is no distraction, but it is possible that there may be some distraction where you are sitting for example, one of these days there were some banking going on during the class. And I made a mention away that you know that is noise and that can prevent you from communicating in the environment.

So, they could be the swans, they could be birds shaping, they could be people talking in the corridor, they could be some cell phone going off which I hope does not happen in your classes that is enough took no, no at IIT Kharagpur. So, we do not allow students to bring in their cell phones in to the class, and even if they do they have to turn their phones on silent mode otherwise no, no it just not permitted, we do not carry our cell

phones to class, so anyway. So, we flitter the sounds that we hear and we focus on the sounds that are making a lot more sense to us.

And we perceive this sounds, and our perception is biased I want to learn this from this particular lecture and so I select only what the teacher is saying, I select I focus on what is up on the board, I focus on what I have just seen. We are talking about listening I showed you a video, you may be I hope your thinking about that video, and you are focusing on the video that you saw and what I am talking about, and are able to connect the two. And I know if this class is been broadcast in India, and you are sitting in India and watching it this some of this clip must have reminded you of a very popular movie called black, which is based on Helen Keller life anyway.

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## Why listen?

- Information
- Evaluation
- Empathy
- Socialization or dialogue
- Enjoyment



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So, that is what listening is now why should we listen, we listen for various reasons we listen to get information, we may listen to evaluate what is going on in our environment. We may listen to empathize with people around us, which means train understand their point of view, we could also listen to socialize or have a dialogue. And please discussing in our class how this would happen, and I want the teacher teaching the class to pass this lecture, and after the discussion is complete here is my take on it.

When we engage in dialogue or when we socialize, we speak to somebody we share our point of view we listen to their point of view, we filter out whatever they have said to us, we choose the points that we want to respond to in a biased an selective manner. And

then it take those points as stimuli for our next conversation or next the next part of the dialogue, we have with them. And of course, we listen for enjoyment music classical musician, sitting in on this classical music competition or sitting on in on Indian ideal or American ideal or whatever you have out there, listen to look for false this, they listen to evaluate.

Let us take that example, we take the example of a program like American ideal or Indian ideal, and you have all this musician coming in and sharing this their skills with the audience. So, this the people sitting in the audience who are came on becoming the next American ideal or the next Indian ideal are listening for information, what are they singing, what kinds of things are appreciated by judges what, you know what classical complexities or what complexities of classical music do this musicians get into.

So, people sitting in the audience who want to either teach things in class are or who want to train people for the next American ideal or Indian ideal or people who want to participate in the next American or Indian ideal, are listening for information. Evaluation the judges sitting there or evaluating, where is this person going wrong what can I improve the teachers the people who have thought this budding Indian ideals or the people. Who have thought the people who are upon the stage performing, their teacher sitting in the audience, could be listening for evaluation, where can I have this person improve.

The judges would be saying, where is this person going wrong, where can I deduct marks where do I see a potential for the next American ideal or Indian ideal, where can this person be groomed. Empathy people who have participated earlier, and have lost or people who participated earlier in the American ideal or Indian ideal, could be listening and there could be empathizing with this persons I had the same experience, and I face the same kind of problem. And I this person you know I can feel what this person is feeling up there on the stage.

Socialization or dialogue, well in that case there is no socialization or dialogue expect of course, the persons family is sitting and they are saying see my kid performed, so well and see your kid did not performed, so well, so that kind of thing. And again enjoyment, people like us we are some of us may not be connected in any manner to these people, but when we hear a good piece of music, we enjoy it we remember some names. And

then we forget it you know it is it helps us to lighten our mood on a Saturday night or a Sunday night when these programs are broadcast. And then we look forward to the next Saturday and Sunday where will hear more complexities, more good music and so that is why we listen to these programs.

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Alright what happens when we do not listen, when we are not receptive to the signals coming from our environments, when we do not listen, when there is a mismatch between the goals and perception of the message? The message has a goal, and the goal is decided by the person drafting the message, the goal is decided by the creator of the message. Now, when there is a mismatch between the goal of the person, and the perception of the receiver which is me, it causes loss of information.

Something is lost, I am not receiving it in the spirit that it was tended to be broadcast, there is misinterpretation and that loss of information, results in misinterpretation or lack of appropriate interpretation. I do not think I need to go too much into detail about this, we have talked add megrim about the difference in context, resulting in a difficulties with communication. And this misinterpretation or lack of appropriate interpretation leads to conflict eventually.

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**Types of listening (Angell, 2004)**

- **Active**
  - Listening to learn
  - Critical listening
  - Sensitive or empathic listening
  - Dialogue listening
  
- **Passive listening**
  - Listening for pleasure
  - Casual – Polite and conversational

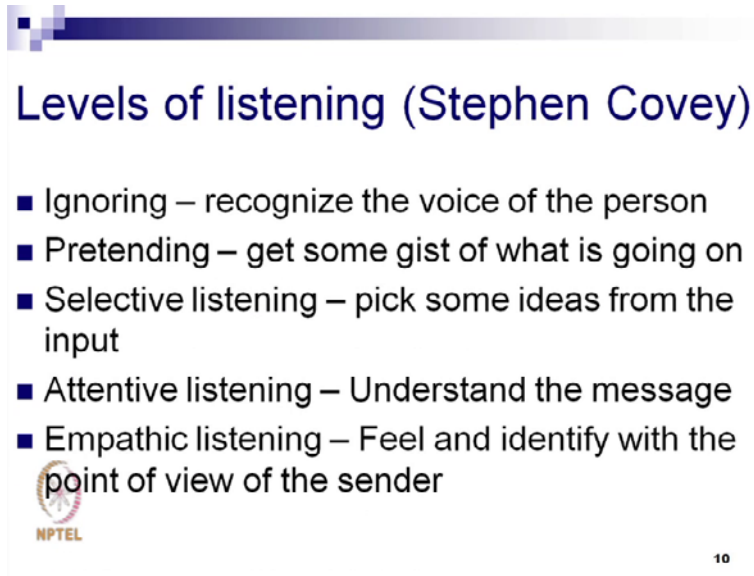
Some types of listening according to Pamela Angell, we have two different types of listening, we have active listening and we have passive listening. When we listen actively, we listen to learn we could be listening to learn things, we are actively paying attention to what is coming to us, we could be actively listening to provide a critical feedback may be sometimes even to criticize. Again this is very similar to what we were just talking about, you are listening to evaluate, we could be listening to a sensitive or empathic listening.

When we when somebody is sharing some emotional experience they had with us, we are listening to be sensitive, we are listening to put ourselves in their shoes and then try and understand their point of view. Dialogic listening or dialogue listening is when we are actively listening for clues for our next conversation, what can I pick up from whatever is coming to me, and how can I draft my next message. So, that is actively paying attention to what is being said.

In next part here is passive listening in which we listen for pleasure, music and casual polite and conversational you go to a party, you listen a little bit, you hear something if you get the other things and so that is polite and conversational listening. So, you know you go the another party with the same people after 6 months, and you again ask them how old their children are and what classes their children are in. And that is polite, and

conversational sort of you know it comes and goes it is just sort of passes by and we are in there.

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## Levels of listening (Stephen Covey)

- Ignoring – recognize the voice of the person
- Pretending – get some gist of what is going on
- Selective listening – pick some ideas from the input
- Attentive listening – Understand the message
- Empathic listening – Feel and identify with the point of view of the sender

NPTEL

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So, I am sure you know who Stephen covey is and according to him, the levels of listening are ignoring which is what we do in big parties, and big gatherings and big meetings and we go to these meetings. And lots and lots of things are going on, and we are trying to listen for things that pertain to our work, so what happens is we are listening and lots of people, and big conference and I know x was there. I recognize the voice of one of my colleagues.

But, I do not actively listen to what is being said, somebody asks me, so and so there who was there at that gathering and I remember, but I do not really remember what this person said. So, that is ignoring the very basic level of listening, pretending is when we try and get some gist of whatever is going on, we try and pick up a few cues regarding what is going on. Just to have a great idea, just to have a sorry a rough idea as to you know, what do we need for the next conversation.

But, that is pretty much it selective listening on the other hand is when we pick some ideas from the input, we are actively looking for the ideas that pertain to our work for our next input. Pretending is I know what was discussed, but if you ask me in the specifics I do not remember, but when we selectively listen, I am selectively listening, I am actively

listening for things. That I need to draft my next message to this audience or to another group of people or if I want to tell my boss, what was discussed specifically in my area.

Then I will go this meeting I pick up cues, but if it is something that completely is on a completely different plane, then I do not really pay attention to it. Attentive listening is what I hope is going on this class, I really hope that you are listening to what I am saying, and we are trying to understand what is being said in class, and this is what we trainers hope. The trainees are doing you actively listen to every beaten piece of the message that is coming to you. And place it on the whole and try and understand the whole message.

And empathic listening is then you actually can identify, oh my god this poor lady has to sit in front of a camera, and give us all this complicated information about communication. And she has to do it, you know 40 times and so that is empathetic listening, which I hope some of my colleagues can identify with I enjoy this, but then some of my colleagues can identify even. They can I am, so all of my colleagues know how much work goes into planning these lecture. So, that is empathic listening you know saying that, one hour of this presentation would have taken at least 7 to 8 hours of preparation to prepare all of the stuff.

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**The stages of effective listening**  
(Seiler and Beall, 2005)

- Hearing
- Understanding
- Remembering
- Interpreting
- Evaluating

 NPTEL

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The stages of effective listening again according to Seiler and Beall, are hearing excepting the sounds that are coming in from the environment, understanding making

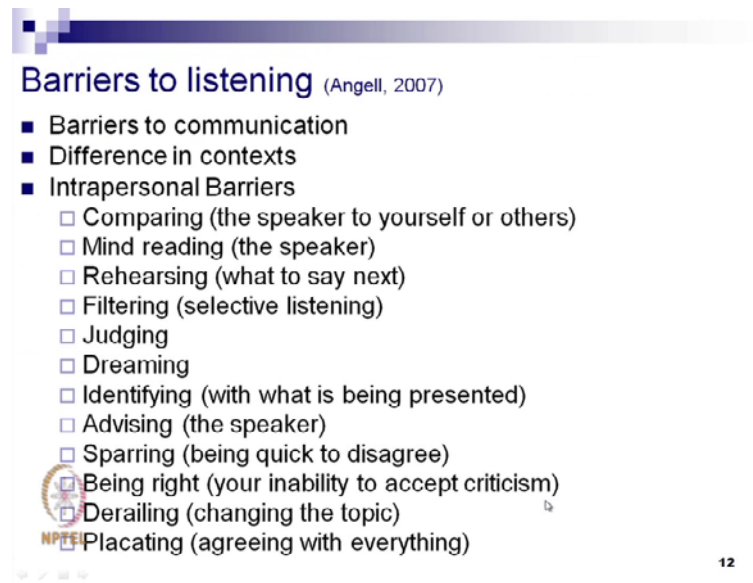
sense after sounds. And again understanding of course, what is simplicity in understanding is the selective selection of appropriate signals, our bias in accepting those signals, and making sense organizing those signals to make sense of whatever is coming at us. Remembering which means I need to remember, what I have said and what I am going to say.

And where the stimulus came from and what I need to connect it with interpreted interpreting. So, I you know you create a file in your computer and you save it, and you ideally give it to me in that has a tag attached to it, something that relates to something some a bigger picture. And then you put it in the appropriate folder and that is what remembering is all about, I remember whatever comes to me in light of some cues that will help me, bring it back when I need it.

I interpret whatever I hear, I interpret I put it in a context and try and understand what it means, what it can implicate, who can be connected with it, how do I need to draft my next response. And in light of all of this I evaluate the message and then decide do I need to respond to it, do I not need of respond to it which folder does this going to favorable, unfavorable, comfortable, uncomfortable. Needs to be responded to or does not need to be responded to, this is for enjoyment, this is urgent this is arcade I will need it after the year. But, I do not need it today this is family, this is business this is that. So, that is evaluating understand the message and context is interpreting, then and placing it on the appropriate folder is evaluating and that is these are the different stages of effective listening. So, hearing understanding, remembering, interpreting and evaluating.



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**Barriers to listening** (Angell, 2007)

- Barriers to communication
- Difference in contexts
- Intrapersonal Barriers
  - Comparing (the speaker to yourself or others)
  - Mind reading (the speaker)
  - Rehearsing (what to say next)
  - Filtering (selective listening)
  - Judging
  - Dreaming
  - Identifying (with what is being presented)
  - Advising (the speaker)
  - Sparring (being quick to disagree)
  - Being right (your inability to accept criticism)
  - Derailing (changing the topic)
  - Placating (agreeing with everything)

NPTEL 12

Some barriers to listening, the barriers to listening are and again I even we can deal with this next time, before we come to the barriers I really want to show you a very interesting clip.

(Refer Slide Time: 39:00)



**Implications for managers in the current business environment**

- Understanding and developing competence in verbal, non-verbal and digital communication
- Global villages
- Travel
- Personal lives
- International interactions
- Changing political scenario

NPTEL 13

And then maybe, we can come back to the barriers, but first let us look at the implications from managers in the current business environment. What are the implications from managers, what are the implications of listening for managers in the current business environment. The first implication here is understanding and developing

competence in verbal, non-verbal and digital communication, we need to develop competence, we need to become effective, and to in order to do that the first thing we need to do is be responsive to signals, be sensitive to the signals coming at us from our environment.


And unless we do that we cannot draft an appropriate response, so that is understanding and developing competence in verbal, non-verbal and digital communication. The second reason is that, we are now a small world, we are global villagers is very easy to be connected to different people, sitting in on different parts of the planet and that increases the complexity in our communication, that increases the difficulties with our communication. And so we need to listen actively we need to be much more sensitive to what is coming to us from our environments.

And we needs to be able to understand, where the person is coming from, what the context of this person may be, and how this you know what do I need to do in order to get my work done. That is pretty much it in the business environment, we want people to be able to understand what we are saying, we want to be able to understand what they are saying. We also want people to be able to understand, what we are saying and get our work done and vice versa.

So, global villagers travel we travel for pleasure, we travel for work and again everything depends on we may know everything under the sun, we may be experts in whatever we do. But, unless we are able to share that expertise with people who can put that expertise to use or expertise is of no use, please listen to what I said very carefully, I could be an expert on anything under the sun. Unless I am able to share my expertise, with someone who can use that expertise, what I know is of no use it does not mean anything.

And that is why all these things are important, we need to listen in our personal lives, we need to be sensitive in order to be exceptive in our inter personal relations. International interactions definitely in light of whatever we have discussed about intercultural and international communication, we need to be able to receive these signals and select appropriately. And in light of the changing political scenario, we need to be able to listen and figure out what can make sense, what can go wrong, what I can tie these things to in the bigger global environment.


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## In-class exercise

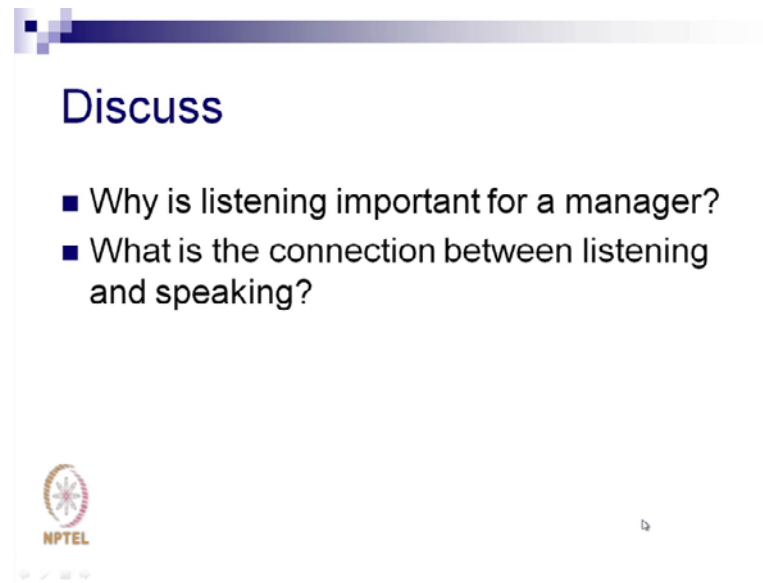
Watch the following clip from the movie,  
'The King's Speech'

(Permission to use the clip awaited)



I have an in-class exercise for you, please watch the following clip from the movie the king's speech, if you have a chance please watch the entire movie yourselves, but and I will sort permission to use this clip and I hope I will get it. So, this is a clip and is in two parts, the first part actually deals with the situation, and the second part shows you what happens after this exercise has been done. So, please be patient I will need to adjust the clip a little bit, but let see this clip and then we will discuss some more. ((Refer Time: 42:46)) Now, I want you to see you saw what happen, the next one minute clip is going to focus on what happens, when he hears the recording and please give me seconds to shift this, to the appropriate place. I just have to wait here let us take of course, maybe we can pause it, we can pause it the recording for a minute. ((Refer Time: 54:17))

(Refer Slide Time: 55:39)



The slide features a blue gradient header bar. Below it, the word "Discuss" is written in a large, bold, blue font. Underneath, there are two bullet points, each starting with a blue square. The first bullet point asks "Why is listening important for a manager?" and the second asks "What is the connection between listening and speaking?". At the bottom left of the slide, there is a circular logo with a star-like pattern inside, and the text "NPTEL" below it. At the bottom right, there is a small mouse cursor icon. At the very bottom, there are some small, faint navigation icons.

We saw what happened, and in class I would like you to discuss what just happened, please discuss this, please also discuss why listening might be important for the manager. In addition to what I have just told you, what are the specific activities in which listening can help a manager, and I would like you to discuss what is the connection between listening and speaking, can be is listening always beneficial, do we always need to listen.

What can listening interfere with, what is the connection between listening and speech, how does listening contribute to speaking, how does listening affects speaking. Think about these things, discuss these things and we will talk some more in the next class, the next class will exclusively focus on listening and the barriers to listening and the applications of the listening, in the business environment.

So, thank you for today.