

Unit 2: Verbal & Non-verbal Communication

Use of Language in Spoken Communication

Language is essentially a means of communication among the members of a society. The purpose of this paper is to show that a common language is one of the most important features of a community and the ceaseless use of the same language is the most certain proof of the historical continuity of a community of people. The need to communicate triggers both the occurrence and the development of a language and this need arises and becomes stronger and stronger when one has someone else to communicate with, i.e. where there is a society. In terms of linguistics, the study of language is a multidisciplinary Endeavour. Communication takes place not only orally, but also in writing. It is this plurality of aspects in studying the same object that makes language a perpetual phenomenon.

Principles and Practice of Group Discussion

What is it?

It is that form of discourse which occurs when two or more persons, recognizing a common problem exchange and evaluate information and ideas, in an effort to solve that problem.

Purposes

1. To solve a problem (decision making)
2. To exchange information (improve understanding)
3. To motivate
4. To plan a programme of action
5. To elect or select a person for a position etc
6. To entertain
7. To hear and discuss a report
8. To form attitudes
9. To release tensions
10. To train individuals

Procedure

- Understand and adopt proper technique
- Recognition of the problem as such by the group
- Listing of as many solutions as possible
- Critical thinking and testing of these hypotheses to find the most appropriate and feasible solution
- Acceptance or rejection of the solution or solutions by the group
- Putting the accepted solution into practice
- One of the group members should take up the role of the Chairman
- Size of the group not exceed 30 persons

Role of chairman

- Make physical arrangement for the meeting. Seating arrangement should be such that everyone can see the faces of all other members.
- Introduce the members
- Announce the topic and purpose of discussion
- Follow a plan
- Build a permissive climate
- Give or get classification of value statements
- Promote evaluation of all generalizations
- Protect minority opinion
- Try to get balanced participation
- Promote group cohesion
- Remain personally neutral
- Give a final summary of discussion

Role of members

- Talk one at a time. No private conversation
- Supply relevant information
- Contribute one point at a time
- Answer questions directly, specifically and briefly
- Listen attentively
- Don't deviate from the subject
- Open minded-willingness to change the previous opinion, if required
- Support the needed leadership
- Promote group harmony

GROUP DISCUSSION

What is a Group Discussion?

Group discussion is an important activity in academic, business and administrative spheres. It is a systematic and purposeful interactive oral process. Here the exchange of ideas, thoughts and feelings take place through oral communication. The exchange of ideas takes place in a systematic and structured way. The participants sit facing each other almost in a semi-circle and express their views on the given topic/issue/problem.

How does Group Discussion differ from a Debate?

Debate is competitive in nature while group discussion is a co-operative group process. In a debate, a speaker can speak either 'for' the topic or 'against' the topic whereas in a GD, the speaker can express both. The final decision or result in a debate depends on voting while in a GD, the group reaches group consensus.

Why is a group discussion an important activity at college level?

As a student, it helps you to train yourself to discuss and argue about the topic given, it helps you to express your views on serious subjects and in formal situations. It improves your thinking, listening and speaking skills. It also promotes your confidence level.

It is an effective tool in problem solving, decision making and personality assessment. GD skills may ensure academic success, popularity and good admission or job offer. Thus it is important to be able to take part in a GD effectively and confidently.

Participants should know how to speak with confidence, how to exhibit leadership skills and how to make the group achieve the goals.

The panel which normally comprises of the technical and HR (Human Resource) experts of the company will observe and evaluate the members of the team. The rules of the GD – the time limit, panel's expectations etc are explained after the initial introduction by the panel, soon after the topic or case to be discussed is given to the group members. The panel does not interfere during the discussion, it only observes. The panel at its discretion may provide some time to think over the topic or may ask them to start immediately. Each candidate is supposed to express their opinion either supporting or against the topic. The discussion carries on till the panel signals termination. It is left to the discretion of the panel to extend or cut short the given time.

The objective of a selection in GD is mainly to check your team playing skills. You have to understand the other persons' point of view, while making your point and ensure that your team as a whole reaches a solution or agreement that is both feasible and accepted by all team members.

There are four major areas of evaluation in selection GDs: subject knowledge, oral communication skills, leadership skills and team management.

Subject Knowledge:

Participants must possess a thorough understanding of the topic on which they are supposed to speak. You must prepare yourself to talk on a wide range of subjects.

Be abreast of the current events, national and international affairs, burning social and economical topics, scientific and environmental issues, key newspapers' controversial topics and any experience that may be expected of an educated person. As a member of the group, you are expected to contribute substantially to the discussion. The originality of your ideas, your knowledge and initiative and your approach to the topic or case contribute to your success in the group discussion.

The best way to equip yourself is to read daily newspapers, good magazines, national and international journals and also watch new bulletins and informative programmes on the television.

Internet is the greatest boon which provides you with everything you are looking for. The World Wide Web is a vast database of current authentic materials that present information in multimedia form and reacts instantly to a user's input. The greater your knowledge of the subject, the more enthusiastic and confident you will be during the discussion. Once you have understood the topic or issue, you should be able to generate ideas as well as organize them so that you present it well. You will have the ability to analyze facts or information in a systematic way. A person putting forward new ideas that may work will be accepted as the natural leader of the group. The panel will observe the ideas put forward, their originality, the depth of analysis and their relevance to the topic. Problem solving skills are essential and do not hesitate to give solutions. Your approach to the case study will be observed keenly by the evaluators.

Oral Communication Skills:

If subject knowledge is important, communication skills is more important as without expression, the knowledge is of no use. As the exchange of ideas in a group discussion takes place through speech, one of the pre-requisites of success in a GD is the ability to speak confidently and convincingly. Good communication skills include active listening, clarity of thought and expression, apt language and proper non verbal clues.

Listening Skills:

One of the weaknesses of most human beings is that we love to listen to our own voice rather than listen to others. Listening is as important as speaking in a GD, unless you listen, you cannot contribute to the stated purpose of communication. It is extremely important to listen very carefully, only then you will be able to pick up the thread of discussion and continue. Only active participation as a listener in a group makes a person a good leader. A leader is identified by the panel.

Clarity of thought and expression:

Clarity is the art of making yourself clear to the audience. Only when your expressions are clear, you can convince your team and the panel. More than words, it is the tone in which they are spoken that conveys the message. You should not be too loud or too soft. A lively and cheerful voice with appropriate modulations will attract the audience. Proper articulation of words, achieved through phonetic accuracy is very essential slang, and artificial accents are to be avoided.

Apt Language:

The flow of language must be smooth. Use simple language and avoid long winding sentences. Appropriateness of language demands that there should be no errors of grammar. Do not use unfamiliar phrases and flowery language. Be precise. Be polite and courteous.

Proper non verbal clues:

Non verbal clues include eye contact, body movements, gestures and facial expressions. The panel very keenly watches the non verbal behavior of the team. They generally evaluate the body language cues of the team to determine personality factors such as nervousness, co-operation, frustration, weakness, insecurity, self confidence, defensiveness, etc. A candidate who appears professional is more likely to be noticed by the panel. A confident posture, appropriate facial expressions and meaningful eye contact with the team will create a good expression.

Team behavior:

Your group behavior is reflected in your ability to interact with the other members of the group. You must be mature enough to not lose your temper even if you are proved wrong. You must be patient and balanced. Your success in a GD depends on how well you play the role of initiator, information seeker, information giver, procedure facilitator, opinion seeker, opinion giver, clarifier, summarizer, social-supporter, tension reliever, compromiser, attacker, humorist and dominator. The selection panel notes the differences in the amount of participation of the members.

They observe the silent spectators, the ever dominating but not contributing much, member who participates actively exhibiting his knowledge and the moderate ones. Your ability lies in analyzing the problem well and making others to endorse your view. Finally while appreciating others point of view, you should effectively present yours without contradicting other's opinions.

Your ability in convincing the team is your success Leadership Skills:

The success of any team depends to a larger extent on its leader. The panel evaluates a candidate's personal skills which allow him to prove himself as a natural leader in the GD. Though there is no appointed leader in a GD, a leader emerges. Assertiveness, emotional stability, objectivity, self-confidence, decision making, discretion, initiative, good communication skills, patience, persuasiveness and adaptability are some of the

leadership qualities that are immensely useful in proving oneself as a natural leader in GD.

A good leader should neither be very authoritative nor submissive but must be democratic. Such leaders see to it that all the members in the team participate and when there is a problem, try to deal with it amicably. Leaders should know how to deal with the 'bull dozers', who make noise but do not have any logic.

TO SUMMARIZE:

Advantages of a GD:

- Ideas can be generated, shared and tried out.
- Groups provide a support and growth for any endeavor.
- Combine talents to provide innovative solutions.

Roles in a Structured GD:

- Initiator
- Information seeker and giver
- Procedure facilitator
- Opinion seeker/giver
- Clarifier
- Summarizer
- Social supporter
- Harmonizer
- Tension reliever
- Energizer
- Attacker
- Dominator

What to do in a GD?

- Speaking is important; do not sit silently. Speak freely.
- Do not monopolize the conversation or talk too much.
- Give everyone a chance to speak.
- Maintain eye contact with everyone in the group.
- Show active listening skills.
- Do not interrupt anyone while they are speaking.
- Keep the topic on track and don't be irrelevant.
- Encourage someone who is silent to talk.
- Do not argue with anyone.
- Do not debate with anyone, while the group looks on.
- Do not repeat what has been said; be attentive; try to develop on ideas expressed or give out new ideas.
- Clarify your doubts and then proceed.
- Be brief.
- Do not commit grammatical errors while talking.

Some topics for Group Discussion:

- Terrorism in India • Religion should not be mixed with politics
- Morals & Values among Indians is Degenerating
- With Media Publishing and Telecasting Trivia, Censorship is the Need of the Hour
- We are not serious about saving Wildlife/Environment
- The education system needs serious reforms
- The Internet is an exercise in hype

- Is our Political System Reason for our Backwardness?
- Politics is run by the Barrel of Gun
- Corruption is the Price we pay for Democracy
- What India needs is a Dictatorship?
- Nuclear War cannot be won and should not be fought Should Research on Human Cloning be banned?
- Brain-Drain has to be stopped
- Should Animals be used for Testing New Drugs & Medical Procedures?
- Do NGOs in India Really Work for Others OR Work for their Own Vested Interests?
- Security Cameras & Privacy
- Advertisements Cheat People, Hence Should Be Banned
- What is the Difference between People who do Things Rightly and People who do Right Things?
- Are Peace and Non-Violence Outdated Concepts?
- Capital Punishment should be Banned or Allowed?
- Is Dependence on Computers a Good Thing?
- Every Cloud has a Silver Lining
- Nice Guys Finish Last
- Privatization of Higher Education
- How effective are Indian B-schools?
- E-Learning: A Substitute for Classroom Learning?
- Cricket as a National Obsession is a Detriment to Other Sports

- Public Speaking (Addressing Small Groups and Making Presentation)

- **Interview Techniques:**

Interviewing Techniques Interviewing is the opportunity to influence and persuade the employer that you are the best candidate for the position. It requires the three P's – Preparation, Practice and Performance. By striving to achieve the three P's you significantly increase your chances to make a good impression for the internship and/or job you desire. The following is a basic guide to interviewing – including information on preparation, practice and performance. But we'll start with what interviewers look for and the types of interviews you may encounter

Interviews range from conversations lasting a few minutes to several formal meetings, sometimes with more than one interviewer. The interview process allows you to demonstrate that you are the right candidate for the job.

The better prepared you are, the more relaxed and comfortable you will be when the interview questions begin. The following offers a few interview tips and suggestions on ways to refine your interview technique.

- **Do your research**

Before the interview, it is a good idea to gather information about the company that has the position vacant and try to relate your experience to the specific duties of the job opportunity available.

We suggest preparing a list of questions you want to ask about the organization and the position.

These could include:

- Do you have a detailed job description?
- Why is the position available?
- What training and induction will be given?
- What prospects are there for personal and professional development?
- What are the company plans for the future?
- What attributes would you hope that I bring to the job?
- When can I expect to hear from you?
- What skills and attributes do successful people at your company usually have?
- What do you like best about working at the company?
- What results are expected from me?
- What specific problems are you hoping to solve during the first six months?
- What communication style do you prefer?
- What are your goals for the department?

Types of Interviews

Phone Interview – This is typically a brief and focused conversation used to screen you “in or out” of a more in-depth face-to-face interview. For a list of do’s and don’ts regarding phone interviews go to: Capital Region Campus Career Center 2

Traditional Interview – The interviewer uses broad-based questions that require factual responses. Some examples of traditional interview questions are:

Can you describe yourself?

- ♣ What are your strengths? Your weaknesses?
- ♣ Why should I hire you?

Behavioral (or Performance-Based) Interview – This type of interview probes into your past behavior regarding certain situations. The concept of the behavioral interview is that future success can be predicted through past performance. Some examples of **behavioral interview questions include:**

Can you describe a time when you had to use your analytical skills and you were successful?

- ♣ Tell me about a time when you failed at something and how you dealt with it?
- ♣ Can you talk about a situation where you were asked to show leadership?

Situational Interview – In this type of interview you are presented with a hypothetical situation (usually a “real-life” situation that you would confront on the job and/or in the workplace), and you’re asked to explain what you would do. It is meant to assess your analytical, problem-solving and judgment skills.

Stress Interview – This is an interview that assesses your ability to deal with stressful situations and/or positions. The interviewer may use interviewing techniques that cause you stress to see how you will react.

Second or Subsequent Interview – It’s the final step in securing a job offer. The goal for the employer in this interview is to focus on your specific skills and qualities, and to better determine your organizational fit.

It is important to note that traditional, behavioral, situational and/or stress interview questions can be encountered within one interview situation. They are not types of interviews typically used in

- **Look the part**

Dress for success! At an interview it is extremely important to look, act and dress professionally as you won't have a second chance at making a good first impression. Ideally, a business suit should be worn. Clean shoes, clean finger nails and clean well groomed hair are important. If wearing a black or very dark suit, make sure there is no dandruff or specks of fluff on the shoulder.

We can't overemphasise how important first impressions are. Research has shown that an interviewer has made an impression within the first eight seconds of meeting the person. The remainder of the interview is spent confirming this opinion, or turning this opinion around.

- **Plan ahead**

Be prepared! Below are some of our job interview preparation tips:

- Practice interviewing - Enlist a friend (better yet, a group of friends and colleagues) to ask you sample questions. Practice making eye contact.
- Video record your practice sessions - Pay attention to body language and verbal presentation. Eliminate verbal fillers, like "uh," and "um." Practice using positive body language to signal confidence, even when you're not feeling it.
- Handle logistics early. Have your clothes, resume, and directions to the interview site ready ahead of time, to avoid any extra stress.

- **Anticipate likely questions**

To get to the motivations and working style of a potential employee, employers often turn to behavioural interviewing, an interviewing style which consists of a series of probing, incisive questions. This may sound a little intimidating, however with a little preparation you can feel confident before the interview.

Behavioural interview questions are aimed at establishing various core competencies relevant to the role, such as teamwork, creativity and innovation, decision making ability, business awareness or conflict resolution. The interviewer is looking for examples of past behaviour that demonstrate these competencies.

Sample behavioural interview questions include:

- Describe a situation in which you didn't meet your stated goal, how did you handle it?
- Tell us about a situation in which you encountered resistance from key people, how did you convince the person or people to do what you wanted?
- Describe a situation in which you took the initiative to change a process or system and make it better, how did you identify the problem? How did you go about instituting change?

- **Prepare interview answers**

Interviewers will follow up your preliminary answers with further questions about your actions.

To prepare for these types of interview questions, the following tips might help:

- Review your research about the company and the position.
- Make a list of key attributes for your desired job.
- Write sample interview questions that are likely to uncover the attributes you identified

as important.

- Create answers to the sample interview questions based on a template such as “Situation – Task – Action – Result” with specific details from your work experience. This is known as the STAR technique:

Situation - Describe a situation you were in eg. A colleague was struggling with performance.

Task - Tell them what you decided to do eg. I sat down with my colleague to discuss how I could help.

Action - Describe what you actually did eg. I gave my colleague examples of how I improved my own performance.

Result - Tell them what happened as a result of your actions eg. His/her performance improved dramatically.

- Practice answering the interview questions and follow-up questions so that you are very familiar with several detailed examples.

Perhaps surprisingly, the point most people forget to expand upon is the result of the action they took. Naturally it is better to use an anecdote with a positive outcome, but if this isn't possible explain what you learnt from the situation and how you would do it differently next time.

- **During the interview**

To be on the safe side, bring a spare copy of your resume to the interview. We advise arriving at least ten minutes early as interviewers are unimpressed by lateness and will rarely accept excuses from prospective employees.

A firm (but not bone crunching) handshake with a big smile will do wonders when you first meet your Interviewer. Some small chit chat from the reception area to the interview room will also help. These are the vital seconds (not minutes) in making your first impression.

Body language and other forms of non-verbal communication are important elements in the way an interviewee performs. Appearing relaxed and trying to act naturally is easier said than done but good appearance is mostly a matter of assuming a position that you are comfortable with.

We suggest sitting up straight, leaning forward slightly and always maintaining good eye contact with the interviewer or panel. Looking disinterested will limit your options.

If offered a drink this can help and can be used as a prop to perhaps give you some time to answer a difficult question. By accepting a drink it does show that you are fairly confident and reasonably relaxed.

Always treat the interview as a two way discussion and answer questions honestly, directly and keep to the point. Everyone present will be focusing their attention on you, so clouding your answer with jargon or evading the issue will be more obvious than you think. If you are not certain about a particular question, do not be afraid to ask if it can be rephrased. Listen, never interrupt and answer only what is asked.

There are common questions which arise in most job interviews, and while you should be prepared, try not to rehearse answers that are too precise. We suggest a better approach is to work on broad subject areas that are likely to come up during the interview. Some of these areas include:

General background - Often the first question is a request for a summary of your background. People applying for their first job should focus on extra curricular activities,

education, and qualifications. It is quite acceptable to repeat major points you have outlined in your resume or letter of application.

Qualifications - A specific question often asked is "Why do you think you are qualified for this position?" Qualifications, in this context, mean all qualifications which could make you suitable for the position including educational, employment-related and personal. In most cases, this may be the question that will win or lose you the job, so your answer needs to be clear and memorable.

Experience - Here is where your research pays off. Your answer should include details about relevant employment, community or educational experience and a discussion of the nature of the industry, the organisation and the position itself.

Reasons for applying - If you are applying for your first, or one of your first jobs, your answer should describe what you find appealing about the position, how you prepared yourself for a career in the organisation and how you believe your present job equips you for the position in question.

Career objectives - Be ready to discuss your long-term aspirations. Your best approach is one that indicates you have thought about your career in these terms and have taken some action towards realising your ambitions.

Crisis management - In some organisations, employers give candidates questions designed to test their ability in situations or crises. You should try to find out the most common type of dilemma for employees in the job you are seeking and formulate an intelligent response.

- **Sample interview questions**

- What job would you like if you had a completely free choice?
- Why are you seeking a position with our company?
- Why do you want to be a *****
- How do you cope with pressure situations? Be ready to give an example.
- Have you come across a situation like this?
How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
- What are your greatest achievements to date?
- What objectives did you set yourself at the beginning of your career or study?
- Have you achieved those objectives?
- What interests you most/least about this job?
- Describe your own personality.
- Describe a situation where you have... (as mentioned earlier, this is the style of questioning used in competency based interviewing, so have relevant examples at the ready.)
- What salary are you looking for? (Do your homework beforehand!)

Towards the end of the interview, you will usually be asked if you have any questions of your own. Be confident when asking your questions and use them to score additional points in your favour.

At the end of your interview, smile and thank the people involved for their time. While decisions and job offers are usually made some time after the interview(s), should an offer of employment be made at the conclusion of any interview you attend, ask whether the offer will be confirmed in writing. Also, it is not unreasonable to request a short period of time to consider the offer before formally accepting.

Extempore:-

Extempore speech is something which is spoken without any prior preparation or rather delivered on the spot.(sometimes a minute or two is given to organize the speech)

Following things are evaluated in an extempore speech :

- How quickly one can imagine and speak on the topic
- How one begins and ends the speech creating an impression on the audience
- Confidence - measured by the tone, hand gestures and facial expressions of the speaker
- Clarity of thought
- Stage presence and how one connects with the audience

As I have mentioned above, meaning of extempore speech is a speech or spoken anything without preparation. It is also known as spontaneous speaking or impromptu speech. The topic is given on the spot at the time of speech. That's why people become nervous when it comes to situation speaking (extempore speech). Unlike, the prepared speech you won't get a lot of time to writing down and practicing the speech. You will be on the stage and have to deliver without any prior preparation. The importance of the extempore speech is it helps you think and develop presence of mind and it directly helps your brain to react fast.

What are the things that are evaluated in an extempore speech?

The main objective of extempore speech is to evaluate or check the knowledge of candidate about specific topic and how he/she reacts at the time while speaking.

1. Presence of Mind: Judges/crowd will evaluate that how quickly your brain process.
2. Beginning/opening and ending: How you begin and how you end will create an impression on audience.
3. Thoughts: It describes the clarity of your thoughts.
4. Last but not least "confidence": An extempore speech is the best way to measure your tone at the time of speaking, facial expressions and movement of your hands.

What topic would i have to speak on extempore competition?

There are hundreds of topics out there on you can prepare for. Here are some extempore topics on what you can prepare for.

How to overcome the fear of Extempore speech | How to prepare for Extempore Speech?

So you probably are seeking the solution of this problem. How to overcome the fear of extempore speech? Or How to deliver an extempore speech?

So here is the answer, if you are really a hardcore introvert like me then i will suggest you some points that will help you in situation speaking.

1. Let me tell you what... Its very hard for a speaker to speak about the topic that he/she doesn't know. So you have to seek some ideas and example of extempore speech will definitely help you.

2. What? : What the topic is all about? You can start your extempore speech by introducing the topics.
3. Why?: Why that “topic” is important for people or what are the advantages and disadvantages of those topics.
4. Current Affairs: Let the audience know about the current importance of that topic and we shall proceed or what we can do about it.

- **Presentation skills**

- Objectives

1. Understanding the nature and importance of presentation skills.
2. Knowing different pre-planning steps.
3. Identifying the four important steps in preparing an effective oral presentation.
4. Learning how to structure and organize a presentation
5. Reviewing techniques for effective delivery
6. Learning how to handle stage fright

Importance of presentation skills

We may not be all professional public speakers but we may have to make a presentation at some point or time or the other. Whether one is student, a professional engineer, an academician, or a business executive, one may have to make oral presentation in front of ones colleagues or professional peers. A professional student may be required to make presentation in the form of progress report, student seminars, research presentations, and so on. Business executives may have to introduce a new product that their company has launched, to present a new plan that they want others to know about, or they may just have brilliant idea that they would like to share with their colleagues.

Oral Presentation

An oral presentation in the form of oral communication. It is participative two way communication process characterized by the formal and structured presentation of a message using a visual aids. It is purposeful or goal oriented, communicates a message to an audience in way that brings about the desired change in their understanding or opinion.it is flexible, changing as well as complex and varied.

Speeches are intended to celebrate an occasion, to felicitate a person, to welcome or bid farewell to someone or to inaugurate a function, while oral presentation raise a particular issue for discussion.

- **Stages of presentation**

- Planning and presentation

Planning a presentation involves defining the purpose, analyzing the audience, analyzing the occasion, and choosing a suitable title.

- Know the audience
- Stimulate the interest in the audience

- Be sensitive to the needs and expectation of the audience
- Know her purpose
- Analyze the occasion
- Fit the material to the time at his disposal

➤ **Preparing the presentation**

Preparing the presentation involves developing the central idea and the main points, gathering supportive material, planning and visual aids.

- Deal with speech anxiety effectively
- Develop the required confidence
- Seek precise and relevant examples

➤ **Organizing the presentation**

Your presentation should be organized into three distinct parts: introduction, body and conclusion.

The opening of the presentation should convince the audience to listen to it.

- Get the audience attention
- Introduction to the subject
- Establish the credibility
- Preview the main ideas



➤ **Rehearsing the presentation**

Rehearsal should be planned and conducted properly and systematically.

- Plan and rehearsal
- Rehearse before live audience
- Timing during rehearsal

1. What is the purpose of the interview?
2. What should you do before the interview?
3. What are the most common interview questions?