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### Language barriers to effective communication

*Barreras del lenguaje para una comunicación efectiva*

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#### ABSTRACT

Globalization and communication technology are bringing the world closer together in a global village, including language barriers. The things that prevent us from understanding each other's constitute a common challenge to individuals, groups, international companies, governments, nations, and the whole world. This qualitative study aimed at exploring the factors that cause language barriers, their types, and their impact on effective communication and our life as well as ways to make people aware of the importance of overcoming them. The study concluded that language or semantic barriers arise from different subjects such as meanings and uses of words, symbols, images, gestures, languages and dialects.

**Keywords:** Communication, Language Barriers, Semantic Barriers, Understanding.

#### RESUMEN

La globalización y la tecnología de la comunicación están uniendo al mundo en una aldea global, incluyendo barreras del idioma. Las cosas que nos impiden entendernos constituyen un desafío común para las personas, los grupos, las compañías internacionales, los gobiernos, las naciones y el mundo entero. Este estudio cualitativo tuvo como objetivo explorar los factores que causan las barreras del idioma, sus tipos y su impacto en la comunicación efectiva y nuestra vida, así como las formas de sensibilizar a las personas sobre la importancia de superarlas. El estudio concluyó que el lenguaje o las barreras semánticas surgen de diferentes temas, como significados y usos de palabras, símbolos, imágenes, gestos, idiomas y dialectos.

**Palabras clave:** barreras del lenguaje, barreras semánticas, comprensión, comunicación.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human communication is a social interaction process. It is an essential part of our daily life. It is a process of creating, exchanging, sharing ideas, information, opinions, facts, feelings, and experiences between a sender and a receiver. Communication is fundamental to the existence and survival of individuals, groups, societies, and nations. Language is the most common tool of communication. It plays a vital role in helping people build a bridge of relationships. At the same time, language acts as a destroyer of bridges of human relations because it separates people from each other. Language continues to remain a barrier to convey our messages to people in the globalization and communication era. Language barriers are a common challenge in international business, aviation and social settings. They affect our daily life.

Language barriers are the root causes of many problems or obstacles in health care, aviation, maritime, business, and education. For example, (a) Effective communication between healthcare providers, patients, and families is critical for providing safe and quality healthcare. The results of a Canadian study about the negative impact of language barriers on quality of care and patient safety: Patients and interpreters described experiences where language barriers contributed to more inferior patient assessment, misdiagnosis, delayed treatment, incomplete understanding of patient condition, risks of medication errors and complications and prescribed treatment (Bowen: 2015). In the second example, Aviation researchers emphasize that over 60% of aircraft incidents are caused by human error (Sexton & Helmreich: 2000, pp.63-68).

The failure of crews to communicate effectively is one common type of error. According to the Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASAS) of NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), over 70% of the first 28,000 reports received were found to be related communication issues (Drury et al.: 2005). Therefore, ineffective communication is a global threat to aviation safety. The third example, increased globalization is forcing a growing number of business managers and employees to interact across linguistic boundaries (Lauring: 2008, pp.343-361). A German study titled "language Barriers in Different Forms of International Assignments" has connected language barriers to a series of organizational behavior phenomena. The results showed that language barriers have effects on the multinational corporation as follows: effects on employees' emotions, social identity formation, trust formation, power relations (Tenzer & Schuster: 2017, pp.63-100). The fourth example, the findings of a study about the impact of language barriers on the customers of English as a Second Language, suggests that language barriers generate negative emotional and cognitive responses and prevent the customers from taking specific actions such as seeking necessary information or complaining about a service failure. (Meuter et al.: 2015, p.371).

The fifth example, language barriers, lack of communication, and miscommunication onboard merchant vessels is the primary cause of accidents at sea every year. During 1990 there were four Canadian pilotage incidents where ineffective communication between the Pilot and the Master had severe consequences. (a) In July 1990, the Enerchem Fusion ran ground, due to problems in confirming the Master's intentions of taking over the conduct of the vessel from the pilot. The vessel was carrying 8,000 tons of petroleum products, and although a severe pollution incident was avoided, the vessel was declared a constructive total loss. (b) Similar problems in communication intentions between The Master and the Pilot resulted in the grounding of the Lake Anima, a Norwegian chemical tanker. (c) During 1191 two further incidents resulted from a failure in the communication of intentions between a Master and a Pilot. The Irving Nordick grounded in the St. Lawrence River suffering structural damage. The lack of adequate information exchange between a Master and Pilot were contributing to an accident. The Yugoslavian Malfnska also ran ground because although both Pilot and Master had calculated the vessel's position, neither had consulted with the other, and the master did not know the pilot's intention. (Granek et al.: 2013, pp.e129-e135) There is an overwhelming international consensus on the negative impact of language barriers on our lives.

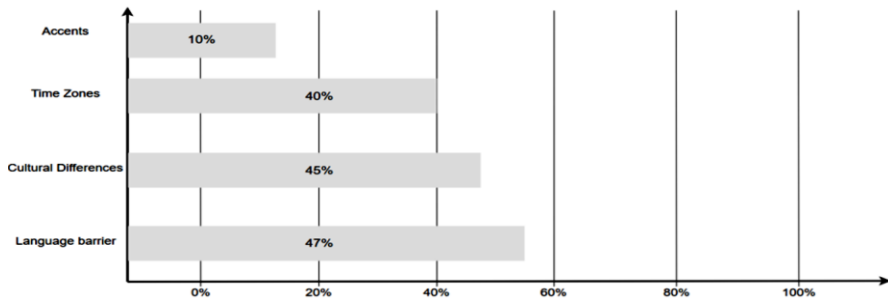


Figure 1. Global obstacles to communication (AIM Strategies Virtual Team Trends Report.2013-05-28)

Communication has numerous definitions (Marume et al.: 2016, pp.26-32):

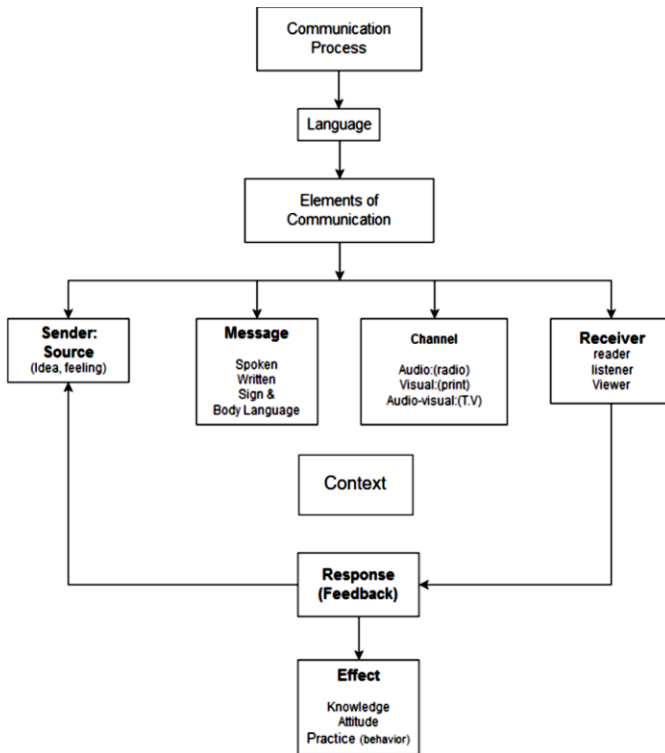
- 1- Sharing: of meanings, ideas, opinions, facts, feelings, experiences, information between a sender and a receiver.
- 2- Meeting of Minds: mutual understanding or agreement between the sender and the receiver on common issues. Communication occurs only when the message has been understood, and understanding occurs in the mind of the receiver. So we should speak to people according to their level of understanding to get our message across to them.
- 3- Understanding: effective communications happened when the receiver understood the message.
- 4- Getting feedback: feedback or response is critical to ensure that an accurate understanding of the message has occurred. A simple definition of communication is that the process of exchanging ideas, feelings, opinions, facts, information, and experiences between the sender and a receiver verbally (spoken, written and nonverbally, sign-language, and body language.) through a channel of communication. To understand the human communication process, one must understand how people relate to each other.

Communication takes two forms:

A-Verbal Communication: the exchange of ideas, thoughts, feelings, opinions, and experiences through spoken or written words.

B-Non-Verbal Communication: the exchange of ideas, thoughts, emotions, opinions, feelings, and experiences through sign language and body language (facial expression, eye-contact, voice, hand movement, posture).

The Communication Process is composed of the model or map of the communication process that shows the relationships between the elements or components of the communication process.



**Figure 2.** Presents the communication process, and how does communication take place?

The steps or elements or components of the communication process:

- 1- Sender (Source): The initiator of communication and the originator of a message. He is responsible for being sure the message is accurately received and understood.
- 2- Encoding: a process in which the ideas to be conveyed are translated into a code or set of symbols or some other format of expression.
- 3- Message: the idea, information, opinion, fact, feeling, etc. It is the heart of the communication process. It can be a Spoken, written word, sign language, and body language.
- 4- Channel: the medium used to convey the message to the receiver. The media of communication include radio, newspaper, telephone, TV, and internet.
- 5- Decoding: is the process of translating the message into a language that can be understood by the receiver.
- 6- Receiver: The receiver is the individual or individuals to whom the message is directed. (Listener, reader, and viewer).
- 7- Feedback: the response or reaction of the receiver to the sender's message. It may be verbal, non-verbal, or both. It can be either positive or negative. Therefore. Feedback is a must to ensure that messages have been understood and received and helps the sender and the receiver obtain mutual understanding.
- 8- Effect: the sender communicates in order to influence the receiver's knowledge attitudes and practice or actions (KAP).

The environment or circumstances in which communication takes place. How does the communication process happen?

- a- The sender has an intention or idea or feeling and meaning that exists in his mind. He encoded them into a message.
- b- The sender transmits his message through the right channel to the receiver.
- c- The receiver gets the message, decodes and interprets it based on his understanding of the meaning of the language and reacts or responds by sending feedback (new message) to the sender. Thus, he becomes a sender.
- d- The original sender now becomes a receiver and reacts to the response of the sender (receiver). Based on the results of the communication process, the change may happen in the knowledge, attitude, and behavior (action) of the receiver. Communication is an interactive process; its effectiveness is judged by how closely the receivers' understanding matches the sender's intention.

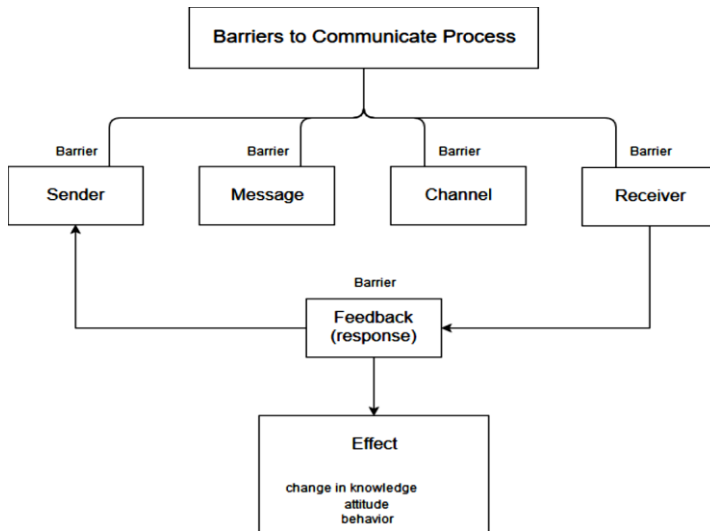
It is a communication between two or more persons in which the intended message is appropriately encoded, delivered through an appropriate channel, received and adequately decoded and understood by the receiver or receivers. (Effective Communication) It is a two-way process. It is crucial for communicating successfully with others. It enables people to build and maintain relationships and accomplish goals, jobs, and tasks.

The primary characteristics are as follows (Jureddi & Brahmaiah: 2016, pp.114-115).

- 1-Using language that is appropriate to others' level of understanding.
- 2- making sure others receive the information or knowledge.
- 3-Developing relationships with others.
- 4- Talking with others in a way that facilitates openness and honesty.
- 5-Completeness of the message.
- 6- Clarity of the message.
- 7- Integrity of the message.
- 8- Conciseness of the message.
- 9- Consideration of physical setting and the recipient.
- 10- Courtesy to be maintained.
- 11- Correctness of the Message.

Merely speaking, effective communication is the process of sending the right message to the right receiver through the right channel at the right time and place with the right feedback.

Barriers to Effective Communication are obstacles or problems that breakdown the communication process because they prevent the flow of information between a sender and a receiver. There are numerous barriers to communication, and these may occur at any stage in the communication process. They can be classified into the following categories: mechanical, physical, psychological, social, noise, religious, cultural, and language barriers.



**Figure 3.** Barriers to effective communication as described

Language is the most powerful tool of communication. Its function includes the: communication of ideas, thoughts, opinion and emotional expression, social interaction, using the power of sound, recording facts, expression of identity. However, at the same time, a common barrier to effective communication. Language or semantic barriers arise when many words have more than one meaning, and a sender and a receiver try to communicate in a language, which themselves do not understand properly. So, communication is not always successful. There may be some faults or obstacles in the communication system, which may prevent the message from reaching the intended receiver or its destination. Language barriers are generally arising in five areas: the way a message is originated and sent by a sender, environmental interruptions, and the way it is received and understood by a receiver. Language barriers are significant because they are often an impediment to building relationships with others. They can cause misunderstandings that lead to conflict, frustration, offense, violence, hurt feelings, and wasting time, effort, money, and lives of the people.

Summary, language barriers are semantic problems that arise during the process of encoding and/or decoding the message into words and ideas, respectively. They are one of the main barriers that limit effective communication. They are the most common communication barriers which cause misunderstandings and misinterpretations between people. They indicate difficulties that two people, who do not share a common language, face when they are trying to communicate with each other. They can also refer to the complete absence of communication between the two people who speak different languages.

The study aimed at exploring and understanding the factors, which create language barriers in a real-life, identify the nature of communication, critically examine the impact of language barriers on effective communication, our way of exchanging messages, making people, groups, governments and nations aware of the importance of overcoming them and making recommendation based on the study results for improving the effectiveness of communication.

The study focuses on the importance of language or semantic barriers to communication, their types, causes, impact on our lives, and how to deal with them effectively in order to get our messages across.

Research says that effective communication is difficult to achieve. In today's globalized world, effective communication is essential to building relationships between people by using verbal and non-verbal language as a tool of communication. Nevertheless, language can act as a bridge in communication with people, and a barrier (wall) which prevents people from exchanging simple, clear, and accurate messages. In the

communication era, language barriers divide and separate us by creating misunderstandings, misinformation, distortion, fatal errors, frustration disasters, conflict, and violence among people globally. Language barriers waste our efforts, time, and money. This study aims at identifying language barriers, their types, and discusses their impact on human communication and ways of overcoming them.

The study focuses only on language barriers to verbal communication.

## 2. METHODS

This qualitative study presents research aiming to explore factors, which cause language barriers in real life, give examples about the effectiveness of language barriers on communication, and discuss shown to reduce or overcome the language barrier of communication.

Research Questions:

- 1: What is the definition of communication?
- 2: What is the impact of language barriers on the communication process?
- 3: What are the barriers to effective communication?
- 5: What are the root causes of communication failure?
- 7: How can we overcome language barriers?

The Root Causes of Language Barriers:

The difference in Language: is the most obvious barrier to communication as two people speaking two different languages cannot communicate with each other. For example, an American goes to Egypt. He does not understand Arabic, and most people in Egypt do not understand English. So, when an American speaks, communication is worthless as the Egyptians do not understand it.

## 3. RESULTS

The Accent:

The use of words or phrases of people belonging to different places or regions may differ in meanings, interpretations even if their language is the same, which may lead to various kinds of conflicts and disasters? For example, in 1977, the deadliest air disaster happened in the Canary Islands. Two 747 jets, one Pan AM, one KLM collided on the runway at Tenerife airport, killing 583 travelers. Language played a significant role in the disaster. The co-pilot of a KLM radioed the control tower in a heavy Dutch accent " we are now at takeoff. " air traffic controllers interpreted the message that to mean the plane was ready to go but stopped short of the runway. However, the KLM plane had started its take-off run and rammed into a PAN AM on the same fog-laden runway. The tower did not understand the message and told KLM to stand by. Investigations showed that the primary language of the crew of KLM was Dutch, the air controllers' primary language was Portuguese. All were speaking English, but they used English as a second language that contributed to a lack of communication or misunderstanding between them. After reviews of cockpit recorder transcriptions determined that KLM pilot's use of non-standard phraseology during the critical moments leading up to the accident contributed to disaster (Lee: 2003).

Poorly Misunderstood Language messages can confuse:

Miscommunication between the air traffic controllers and pilots is a safety threat globally. Although English is the international language of aviation, even when the pilots and air traffic controllers both speak English fluently, there are failures in the ways they hear it. For example, in November 1996, the pilot of Saudi Arabia Airlines Boeing 747 misunderstood an air traffic controllers' directive to descend and instead climbed, colliding with Kazakhstan National Airways cargo plane near Delhi, India killing 349 travelers (Cheng: 2015). It was

primarily blamed on a language barrier, involving pilots whose first language is not English. To avoid such a lack of understanding, which caused a fatal disaster, the pilot of the Saudi plane should have asked the controller to repeat the instructions for the second time, until understood.

#### Misusing Words:

Sometimes the sender misuses words, which may distort the message and lead to misunderstanding distorts the message. The sender should be accurate and familiar to both the sender and the receiver to avoid misunderstanding. For Example, The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) editorial guideline regarding reporting terrorism states:

We must report acts of terror quickly, accurately, fully and responsibly. Terrorism is a difficult and emotive subject with significant political overtones, and care is required in the use of language that carries value judgments. We try to avoid the use of the term "terrorist" without attribution. When we do use the term, we should strive to do so with consistency in the stories we report across all our services and in a way that does not undermine our reputation for objectivity and accuracy. The word "terrorist" itself can be a barrier rather than an aid to understanding. We should convey to our audience the full consequences of the act by describing what happened. We should use words which specifically describe the perpetrator such as "bomber", "attacker", "gunman", "kidnapper", "insurgent", and "militant". We should not adopt other people's language as our own; our responsibility is to remain objective and report in ways that enable our audiences to make their own assessments about who is doing what to whom (Li et al.: 2010, pp.385-391).

To avoid misunderstanding and get his message across, the sender should use accurate and familiar words to the receiver.

#### Using Abusive Words:

No one can bear rude language. For example, (a) In the Arab society calling a person "you pig" means "you are dirty" is an offending word. (b) The administration of- the Arab Bank based in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan- started establishing branches in the Palestinian occupied West Bank, but it was faced with a big language barrier that prevented it from using the word "Client "because it means" Traitor" or "spy" for the Palestinians the one who cooperates with the Israeli security. So, it used an alternative word "The beneficiary of the services". The use of rude words or expressions will provoke negative emotions. (c), When Russian President Vladimir Putin met British prime-minister Tony Blair in St. Petersburg in 2000, he spoke about Chechens' insulting attitude to Russians and illustrated this by an abusive slogan in Russian in a Chechen military camp:

Above us is Allah" and" under us goats" Blair was obviously puzzled as he could not see anything very insulting in translation. But the Russian word for "goat" is very rude when it is used about people. Blair could not see the insult because, as Chechens live in the mountains, above them is "Allah" and under them are mountain goats (Ter-Minasova: 2008, pp.297-342).

It sounds rather poetic than insulting. The sender should avoid rude words or expressions because they may hurt the feelings of the receiver and provoke emotions.

#### Using Jargon:

They are overcomplicated technical terms or unfamiliar words or abbreviations used by professionals like doctors, engineers, pilots, scientists to enhance communication by simplifying a particular concept to the receivers. For example: (a) in the computer jargon, 'to burn a "CD" means "to copy the data on a CD". To a common man, the word 'burn' may have a very different connotation.

(b)Grammar and spelling: Language barriers may arise when the sender makes errors in grammar and spelling. These mistakes can create communication problems in written communication. For example, a



person makes a mistake of typing "done", "don" " buy" "bye" "meet" " meat" "Lead" "lead" "red" "Read". They are understood by their context or pronunciation. The spelling and grammar checker of the computer does not label it as wrong as "don" is also a correct word. But the word can change the whole meaning of the sentence or make the sentence not understandable. To avoid such mistake, the sender must use dictionary to verify spelling, use spell-checker computer to ensure that spelling is correct or ask someone to proofread your writing(c) The 300-word language of aviation which consists of 300 words and terminology is a combination of professional jargon and plain English. It was created to avoid pilots and air controllers mishearing and misunderstanding each other and avoid potentially fatal accidents taking place. e.g. "roger" This means "message received and understood", "Wilco ": An abbreviation of "will comply", it means the pilot has received the message and will comply." Affirm", means "yes", and pronounced "AY-firm". (Lunenburg: 2010, pp.1-10) So, the sender should avoid using jargon and unfamiliar words or terms because they lead to misunderstanding and confusion and accidents. Following several such air traffic accidents. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) suggested English should be the international language of aviation, and that pilots and air traffic controllers - must have basic knowledge of it and take exams (Fischer et al.: 1996).

#### Using Slang Words:

Informal words and phrases used in communication that often exclude specific groups. Avoid idiomatic expressions or slang. American English is full of idioms. An idiom is a distinctive, often colorful expression whose meaning cannot be understood. From the combined meaning of its individual words, for example, the phrase "to kill two birds with one stone." Slangs leads to the misunderstanding of the message. The sender must not use slang in order to reduce misunderstanding.

#### Using Impolite Words:

Usage of rude or slang language can impede all the efforts of communicating verbally. Communicating in a foreign country can be confusing if no one speaks your language or any other language that you know. Similarly, it can be frustrating not to understand the meaning of certain words that the locals use. Even when they try to speak English, you may find some of the things they say impolite. For example, the Thais often use the common word "farang" when they speak to western people. This word may sound negative to Westerners. It makes them feel looked down upon and angry because Guava in Thai is called "farang". The same word is also used for white people." Farang" is a Thai form of the Arabic word "Ifrañji", which means white travelers, so Thais call white people "farang" regardless of their nationality and social status. To a Thai person, the word "Farang" does not have any negative connotations. (Wiener & Rivera: 2004, pp.93-101) The sender should not use words and expressions that belittle or hurt the feelings of others.

#### Misinterpretation of Words:

Semantic problems often arise because of the gap between the meaning as intended by the sender and that as understood by the receiver. This happens when the receiver does not assign the same meaning to the word as the sender had intended. Words can express a variety of meanings depending upon their, i.e., in the context in which they are used nature. For example, the word 'yellow' when used as an adjective can have multiple connotations depending upon its usage. 'Yellow', besides being a primary color, also stands for 'freshness', 'beauty', 'sickness', 'decay', " yellow cow for Jews" means "holy cow "and" yellow traffic light " means "caution"." Yellow race" means "Mongolians", "Yellow emperor". "Emperor of China". Hence, the receiver is free to interpret it in any of these ways based on his imagination, educational background, and experience. But for communication to be perfect, it is essential that the receiver must assign to it the same meaning which the sender had in his mind while encoding the message. Therefore, there is always a possibility of misinterpretation of the messages. Mostly, such problems arise when the sender does not use simple and clear words that can convey the exact meaning to the receiver.

#### Choice of Wrong Words:

A single word has different meanings for different persons. If both the sender and the receiver choose different meanings for the same word, then it causes a semantic barrier. Improper words may result in unclear or distorted messages and create a bad impression. For example, In Arabic Culture, the word" red

man"(communist) or a" man dressed in red "or a "man with a red face". Or a " bloody man". So, if people do not understand the words, they cannot understand the message. The sender should choose his words carefully in order to build gaps, build relations, and create understanding.

#### Using Ambiguous or Vague Words or Phrases:

They are not clearly or explicitly stated or expressed. Ambiguity arises when the sender and the receiver of the message assume different meanings to the same words, phrases, and sentences or use different words to convey the same meaning. A sender often assumes that the receiver can understand the meaning of these words, phrases, and sentences as he does. For example, The Israelis misinterpreted the text of the UN resolution 242 article (i)" Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied (the West Bank and Gaza) in the recent conflict.

"That calls for the total withdrawal of the Israeli army from the Palestine lands occupied in1967. The Israeli argument is that the withdrawal phrase in the Resolution was not meant to refer to a total withdrawal, because there is no word "all" or "the" before "territories" in the withdrawal phase. (Taylor et al.: 2013, p.35) The wording of the withdrawal phrase is vague or ambiguous, so it was misinterpreted by Israel because it was not clearly or explicitly stated. But anyway, it must be placed in the context of the rest of the resolution that calls for a total withdrawal of the Israeli Army from the Palestinian occupied lands in 1967. (b) Vague Phrases, such as: "It will be there as usual." or "The same as last time." The phrase " as soon as possible" could mean a couple of minutes or hours to the sender and a day or two for the receiver. (c) The word "Pope " is vague because there are two Popes for the Christians: Pope for the Western World and a Pope for Coptic Christians people in Egypt in the East. To avoid such misunderstanding, the sender should use clear, precise language, stating exactly times and locations and names. Choosing ambiguous words or terms to convey your message will lead the receiver to confusion and misunderstanding. You can avoid any ambiguity by repeating the term or using alternatives. Ambiguous communication means open to many different interpretations.

#### Language Barriers in the Same Langue:

A language barrier can appear when the sender and the receiver do speak the same language. People speaking the same language can have difficulty understanding each other if they are from different regions of the same country. Dialectical and accents differences, the use of slang and regional colloquialisms can create numerous problems that may lead to misunderstanding and gaps in communication. For example, an incident described as a type of the risks of not speaking the same language, the crew of a Lot Polish Airline Boeing 737 struggled to communicate with British air traffic controllers after their electronic flight displays went blank in instrument meteorological conditions following a departure from London Heathrow Airport. The Polish pilots are unable to communicate their problems to the British air controller. (Werfelman: 2008, p.3) Another example, the use of slang makes communication ineffective, such as the use of the word "grass" to describe marijuana in America can act as a barrier for the people who do not know the slang meaning.

#### Religious Language Differences:

Language barriers generally result from the lack of understanding between the followers of the three religions. For example, an American Christian, an American Jew, and an American Muslim all worship one God, but they have different names for God. "God" for Christians," Elohim or Yahweh" for a Jew, and "Allah" for a Muslim. Each one of them has a different concept for God. The sender should use dialogue to communicate with the receiver in order to overcome misunderstanding.

#### Regional Dialects:

People speak the same language, but dialectical differences can create misunderstanding and gaps in communication because the meanings, implications, and interpretations of words are different. For example, India uses over. Major languages, each spoken in one particular region and each language has a number of dialects and regional variations which might not always be mutually understandable. (Narayan: 2013, pp.236-8) Another example, although Arabs speak a common language (Arabic), some of them might have difficulty

understanding the meaning of the message and the feedback. This might also be a cause of obstacles in communication. Americans think Asians have an accent, and Asians think Americans.

No clear speech:

People who speak soft or in a small voice or heavy tongue or unclear words cannot be understood. The sender might be saying something, whereas the receiver might understand something. Though speaking common language, people might have difficulty understanding the meaning of the message and the feedback. This might also be a cause of obstacles in communication. For example, God delivered the message to Moses and asked him to preach it to Pharaoh first then to the Egyptians, but he could not get his message across because he was suffering from problem in his tongue that prevents him from speaking well. So, he asked God to cure his tongue." Moses said: " O my Lord, expand me my breast, ease my task for me, and remove the impediment from my speech, so they may understand what I say (Abdullah YA, p.370). Then he asked God to appoint his brother Aaron a mouthpiece (spokesperson) for him to be able to communicate his message effectively. " And my brother Aaron—he is more eloquent in speech than I. So, send him with me as a helper, to confirm (and strengthen) me, for I fear that they may accuse me of falsehood." (Ibid, p.22-473).

Using taboo words:

Some people may find it difficult to express their emotions or ideas, and some topics may be completely 'off-limits' or taboo. Taboo topics may be politics, religion, sexuality and sex, racism and any opinion that may be seen as unpopular.

Faulty Translation of Words:

A translator is a person who makes a written transfer of a message between two languages. Effective translations must be done with accuracy, clarity, and impartiality. For example, the literal translation of Kentucky Fried Chicken: KFC's slogan "Finger-lick in' good" in Chinese is "Eat your fingers off." (Cho et al.: 2007, pp.309-329) The lack of sufficient knowledge in a language can cause misunderstandings, which may lead to big losses in money, effort, time, and potential customers internationally. To solve this problem, companies should hire competent translators in the language and culture of the customers. But for communication to be perfect, it is essential that the receiver must assign to it the same meaning which the sender had in his mind while encoding the message. Therefore, there is always a possibility of misinterpretation of the messages. Mostly, such problems arise when the sender does not use simple and clear words that can convey the exact meaning to the receiver.

How to Overcome Language Barriers?

Language barriers prevent people from sharing their ideas, thoughts, and feelings, experience, information, and expectations, give feedback or communicate effectively. Here are some of the main solutions to reduce or eliminate them (Drury & Ma: 2002):

- Choose familiar words and language to the receiver to avoid miscommunication.
- Avoid using vague, ambiguous, or confusing words, terms, jargon, and phrases, idiomatic expressions, or slang.
- Avoid using difficult words, complex sentences, unnecessary information. Use short, simple sentences.
- Check meanings. When communicating across cultures, never assume that the other person has understood.
- Think in terms of your receiver.
- Use your receiver's language.
- Keep your message simple to promote effective communication.
- Use simple, clear, accurate, and correct and familiar language.
- Avoid slang or use of culturally or technically specific expressions or terminology.
- Select your words carefully. Choose simple words, phrases, and short sentences.
- Use language appropriate to the level of understanding of the receiver.

- Use familiar language to the receivers.
- Ask for clarification.
- Frequently check for understanding by asking for feedback.
- Politely ask for clarification and avoid any assumptions.
- Avoid idioms, technical terms or jargon.
- Use plain language where possible.
- Hire qualified interpreters and translators.
- Hire bilingual employees.
- Use repetition because people need to hear things more than once to understand and remember it.
- Use verbal and non-verbal messages appropriately.
- Be respectful: Language barriers can be frustrating. They require patience, understanding, and consciousness.
- Used visual methods of communication to explain complicated concepts such as pictures, diagrams, photos, graphics, charts to help the receiver understand what the sender is trying to convey. "A picture is worth a thousand words."
- Individual linguistic ability is important to train your people.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Communication is the process of exchanging ideas, feeling, information, knowledge, facts, opinions, and emotions between a sender and a receiver. Effective communication is sending the right message to the right receiver at the right time via the right channel in order to change the receiver's knowledge, attitude, and behavior. Language barriers are things that prevent people from understanding each other. They are a common challenge to individuals, groups, international companies, governments, nations, and the whole world. The study concluded that language barriers are factors that block or significantly distort effective communication. They arise from different meanings and uses of words, symbols, images, gesture, languages, dialects, accents, linguistic ability, technical terminology or jargon, volume of voice, ambiguous words, mispronunciation of words, faulty translation, wrong interpretation of messages, misunderstanding of messages, complicated messages and different individual linguistic ability of the sender and the receiver, poorly understood and poorly explained words and messages.

Language barriers can create problems of miscommunication such as misunderstanding, misinterpretation of messages, distorted messages, misinformation, confusion, mistrust, uncertainty, frustration, weak and wrong feedback, aviation and marine accidents and disasters, deaths, tension, conflict, violence among people. They can Leads to Factors that hindering effective communication. The best strategy to promote effective communication and get messages across is to bridge the language barriers by: using simple, clear, concrete, accurate, familiar and meaningful words, avoiding grammatical and spelling mistakes, giving and receiving feedback, hiring bilingual workers and qualified and licensed translators, minimizing the use of jargons, avoiding ambiguous words, regional dialect and, confirming understanding, using translation machines, avoiding shouting and sarcasm and mimicry, explaining confusing messages to people. The future of individuals, groups, societies, and nations depends mostly on their ability to communicate effectively with others in a globalization and communication era.

Recommendation: Based on the above findings, we recommend the following:

- More studies on language barriers and their effect on customers.

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