CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION
The theory of *General Semantics* was introduced by Alfred Korzybski in 1933, in his book, 'Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics'. The book caught the attention of the world in general and the United States in particular. The U.S. Government recognized Alfred Korzybski's firsthand experience of the war, his thoughts and contribution made towards war-free world. Hence, he was invited by the U.S. Government as a war lecturer. Later on, Alfred Korzybski became the citizen of the United States. His thoughts on *General Semantics* were getting attention of many educationists in the USA hence his works were introduced in schools and colleges. To channelize and organize the concept of *General Semantics* in a formal way, the Institute of General Semantics was established at 1234 East, 56th Street, USA. The outcome was that within a few years, the theory of *General Semantics* was experimented and applied successfully by many in various fields. The results brought a great pleasure to Alfred Korzybski as his theory was helped others, in many ways, to find, how it
was applied with benefits in professional or other fields. Charlotte Schuchardt points out,

"He was convinced that 'The man comes before his work' and that therefore the study of General Semantics naturally begins with the incorporation on its methods in an individual's own process of evaluation."

The Precursor cum Father of General Semantics

Alfred Korzybski was born on July 3, 1879 in Warsaw, Poland. He was the son of Ladislas Korzybski and Helena Rzewuska. Alfred Korzybski got married to Mira Edgerly in January 1919. He devoted the major part of his life in studying the human engineering. Alfred Korzybski died on 1st March, 1950. Alfred Korzybski was associated with the second Russian Army during the First World War. Alfred Korzybski, a very sensitive reader of human beings, saw the brutality and cruelty of war and was deeply affected. Pain and agony of that barbarian act of human beings at the time of war was constantly haunting him. In fact, they were constantly piercing him. The monologues are to be converted in the dialogues or conversations with someone but it may not be always possible for everyone, every time. But it became possible in the case of Alfred Korzybski as he put his pent up emotions down on a piece of paper. There is no exaggeration, if it is said that, this type of thinking...
proved to be a seed for his book ‘Manhood of Humanity: The Science and Art of Human Engineering’ published in 1921. When the book was to be published, Alfred Korzybski was thinking to call this work ‘General Semantics’ and certain related term had to be added in the title but the idea was not materialized at that time.

Alfred Korzybski did try to convey his ideology by writing the following books:


(2) Manhood of Humanity.

(3) General Semantics Seminar 1937, edited by Homer J. Moore, Jr. 2002

**General Semantics and Semantics: Two entirely different terms**

At the onset, it is imperative to differentiate between the terms General semantics and Semantics. The term ‘semantics’ in the phrase General Semantics could be a misleading term for many, so it is necessary at the initial stage to know the difference between ‘Semantics’ and ‘General Semantics’. Semantics is mainly concerned with the meanings of words. It suggests the relation between signs and the things they refer to. Semantics contrasts with syntax, which is the study of the structure of
sign systems. When analyzing languages, an analysis can be said to cover both the "syntax and semantics" concerning both the format and meanings of phrases in a language. Alfred Korzybski himself has defined the word 'semantics' as, "The word 'semantics' has derived its origin from the Greek word "Semantikos" which means "significant", from a verb "semainein", "to signify", "to mean". The word semantics appears in French as SA© mantique, as used by M.chel BrA©al during the 19th century, in his 1897 book published in Paris, Essaide SA © mantique, considered the first use of the term 'semantics' in the modern sense'.

The Wikipedia on General Semantics also spreads its thoughts about 'semantics' by highlighting in this way. "In linguistics, semantics is the subfield that is devoted to the study of meaning, as borne on the syntactic levels of words, phrases, sentences and even larger units of discourse (referred to as texts). As with any empirical science, semantics involves the interplay of concrete data with theoretical concepts. Traditionally semantics has included the study of connotative sense and denotative reference, truth conditions, argument structure, thematic roles, discourse analysis and the linkage of all of these to syntax".

Ralph Kenyon, an expert on the topic has offered his opinion about 'semantics', by saying, "Semantics typically refers to the field of study that is concerned primarily with how symbols (language) relate to their
referents in the 'real' non-verbal world. Included in this study would be the consistency of words to referents as well as the logical validity of statements." On the basis of the above mentioned explanations, it may be generalized that semantics is concerned with the meanings of words.

*General Semantics* is however, is something different. The phrase "*General Semantics*" is used as a technical term by Alfred Korzybski. He has his own way of distinguishing *General Semantics* and *Semantics*. "*General Semantics* is, in some ways, narrower than *semantics* but in most ways, much broader."5

Ralph Kenyon, one of the eminent scholars on the subject ponders his views, "*General Semantics* goes beyond *semantics* in that it includes the at-the-moment responses and interactions of the individual humans who participate in a communicative process. *General Semantics* truly represents an interdisciplinary methodology that invokes not only *semantics* but linguistics, grammar, behavioral sciences, psychology, etc." 6

Alfred Korzybski in the beginning framed this doctrine in a general way, and popularized it most on a large spectrum in his book, *Science and sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics*. Alfred Korzybski himself has pointed out: "It is much broader than *semantics*. It is, it is true, very much concerned with
language, with the meanings of words, with ways in which language works. However, it is also concerned with many other things: with people's behavior in general, with people's responses in which language plays no part". 7

Since *Semantics* is not the base of this thesis hence the question what is *General Semantics* can be answered as *General semantics* is a system that generalizes the principles and methods of modern science to all areas of human activity. Its principles and methods can be utilized to enhance the creative and critical thinking processes, and thus achieve better management in the day-to-day activities and relationships. *General Semantics* has made a great contribution toward freeing the human race to be fully human. The educational system can and will increasingly use *General Semantics* toward that end because *General Semantics* has features that make it acceptable to educators. Rachel Lauer has rightly said, "It is academic enough for the most bookish scholars, scientific enough for the most critical rationalists, and realistic enough for the most down-to-earth pragmatists." 8

**Application of General Semantics**

The central idea of *General Semantics* rotates around 'evaluation' which is very much close to 'critical thinking'. Korzybski did not call his work critical thinking but it is said that critical evaluation was at the heart of his
work. The probable reason for not using the term 'thinking' by Alfred Korzybski is depicted by Milton Dawes, "He used the term 'evaluation' rather than 'thinking' mainly because he considered that term a more accurate representation of the psychological process referred."9 

So, the important facet of this theory is to develop a new pattern of evaluation. Human beings are in normal conditions evaluated through language and behavior. Language helps in evaluating the issue through verbal aspect and with the help of non-verbal clues; one can judge and evaluate the human behavior. When language and behavior both are evaluated, one would have a better chance of judging the overall reactions of human beings to an event. General Semantics supports to cultivate the habit of evaluating objectively and find out better ways of maintaining human relationship so one could avoid unhappy situations and human problems. The thirst area of the concept of General Semantics is the thinking process of human beings and reactions of human beings to any event or incident. One of the simplest and primary ways of identifying General Semantics would be to think in a way an ordinary human being inquires, "What field it belongs to"? Alfred Korzybski answers, "It cannot be classified in any one field. It cuts across boundaries. It cuts across the classifications that are generally used in the academic world to pigeonhole this or that point of view".10
There are so many techniques and strategies of evaluating human behavior or any event but language provides the means and the environment by which this evaluative process occurs, much of *General Semantics* deals with studying the effects of language on our behavior, and vice-versa. Milton Dawes aired his views, “Without an awareness of what we are doing, and how we are doing, and how we are doing that we do, we stand little chance of improvement. *General Semantics* invites us to become more conscious of the ways we use language and the ways language uses us. It ‘invites’ us to become more conscious of ourselves as evaluators, map-makers, story tellers, individual and unique expressions of human consciousness, if we hope to improve our behavior to ourselves and others.”

Primarily, the main focus of Alfred Korzybski was on human beings and the world around them and the problems being faced by human beings. The success of his work encouraged Alfred Korzybski to introduce a new pattern or system of evaluation for human beings by themselves only to find out the solutions to the problems which they have been facing. George Doris explains, “*General Semantics* is the result of both his scientific and psychiatric studies, from which he inferred that the orientations of science and the orientations that result in sanity are very similar.”


Besides scientific and linguistic inputs, the application of *General Semantics* goes into non-verbal areas such as music, painting, and mental awareness. *General Semantics* is a new way of looking at life and it is a completely new way of thinking and behaving. George Doris opines,

"*General Semantics* is the study of the relations between language “thought” and behavior: between how we talk, therefore how we ‘think’, and therefore how we act. *General Semantics* can be related to the other language disciplines".\(^1\)

**Aims of General Semantics**

Milton Dawes posted his views about the main aim of *General semantics*,

“The main goal of Korzybski’s *General Semantics* is better human relationships at all levels of our human interactions – personal, interpersonal, societal, international. This can be accomplished by being highly and unceasingly attentive to the ways we speak, listen, understand, interpret, give meanings to, give values to, ‘think’ about and evaluate words, symbols and other features of our human and physical environments”.\(^1\)

*General Semantics* formulated by Alfred Korzybski posits a fundamental distinction between the sensory world of experience and the verbal world of symbols and language. *General Semantics* is concerned to some
degree with syntactic, semantics and pragmatics—all three areas but it emphasizes relationships between language and human behavior. As Kenneth G. Johnson says, "It utilizes our human ability to 'transcend ourselves and perceive ourselves in the act of perception'." Wendell Johnson opines, "General Semantics is not the 'study of words' or the 'study of meaning' as these terms are ordinarily understood. It is more nearly correct to say that General Semantics is concerned with the assumptions underlying symbol systems and the personal and cultural effects of their use. It is concerned with the pervasive problem of the relation of language to reality, of word to fact, of theory to description and of description to data—of the observer to the observed, of the knower to the knowable. It is concerned with the role of language in relation to predictability and evaluation and so in relation to the control of events and to personal adjustment and social integration." So, it is primarily concerned with the 'study of words' and 'study of meanings' but its main focus is on the relationship between language and reality. Alfred Korzybski expresses his thought in this way, "Here we come across a tremendous fact, namely a language, any language, has at its bottom certain metaphysics, which ascribe consciously or unconsciously, some sort of structure to this world."......He further says, "Neither Aristotle nor his immediate followers realized or could realize what has been said here. They took the structure of the primitive—made language for
granted and went ahead formulating a philosophical grammar of this primitive language, which grammar – to our great semantic detriment – they called ‘logic’, defining it as the ‘laws of thought’. Because of this formulation in a general theory, we are accustomed even today to inflict this ‘philosophical grammar’ of primitive language upon our children and so, from childhood up, imprison them unconsciously by the structure of the language and the so called logic, in an anthropomorphic, structurally primitive universe. ... We do not realize that tremendous power the structure of an habitual language has. It is not an exaggeration to say that it enslaves us through the mechanism of semantic reactions and that the structure a language exhibits and impress upon us unconsciously, is automatically projected upon the world around us. ... Now these structural assumptions and implications are inside our skin when we accept a language – any language. If unraveled, they become conscious, if not, they remain unconscious.”

*General Semantics* is basically concerned with ‘use of words’, ‘evaluation through language’ ‘critical thinking’ and functioning of the ‘human – organism – as – a- whole – in – an environment’. From a *General Semantics* perspective, successes and problems of human beings are functionally related to their discriminate and indiscriminate use of words. Milton Dawes opines, “*General Semantics* as a critical ‘thinking’
system provides us with principles, formulations and practical devices that we can use to help us become more attentive words. Distinctions are made between our words and their references.”

**Definitions of General Semantics**

Some of the standard definitions of General Semantics are:

I. “*General Semantics* is a new extensional discipline which explains us how to use our nervous systems most efficiently.” - Alfred Korzybski

II. “*General Semantics* is the study of relations between symbol systems and nervous systems as expressed in behavior.” - Robert Pula

III. “*General Semantics* is an up-to-date epistemology.” - A J. Samuel

IV. “*General Semantics* may be regarded as a systemic attempt to formulate the general method of science in such a way that it might be applied not only in a few restricted areas of human experience, but generally in daily life.” - Wendell Johnson.

V. “*General Semantics* is (1) the study or correction of human responses to symbols, symbol systems, sign systems, and sign situations, (2) a study of how a human nervous system works and ought to work, (3) an educational theory whose aim is to study the
evaluation processes of human beings, and (4) ultimately a non
verbal discipline of silence, of dissolving away the encrusted
verbalizations and abstractions, dogmas and creeds which envelop
most of us like layers of barnacles.”- S.I.Hayakawa.

VI. “General Semantics can be referred to as a general system of
evaluation and awareness. It provides a systematic methodology to
understand how you relate to the world around you, how you react
to this world, how you react to your reactions, and how you may
adjust your behavior accordingly.” -http://timebinding.org
(Accessed on July 1, 2008).

VII. “General Semantics deals with the study of how we perceive,
construct, evaluate and communicate our life experiences. It can be
considered an interdisciplinary study in that when you study
General Semantics, you integrate knowledge from many academic
fields—not just language and communication studies, but also
psychology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, physiology,
sociology, anthropology, etc.” -www.generalsemantics.org
(Accessed on August, 2008)

VIII. “General Semantics is a philosophy that deals with how people
react to things that happen around them based on meaning”. The
website further says, “The goal of General Semantics is for people
to know that when we simplify something, either mentally or in language, that simplification is not the same thing as the thing simplified. How people understand reality is not the same as what reality is because people do not know everything about reality. General Semantics teaches that there is always more to something than what is seen, heard, felt or believed.”- The Wikipedia on General Semantics.

IX. “General Semantics refers to a general system of evaluation – that is to say, a systematic methodology for individuals to use in understanding how they relate to the world around them, how they react to this world, how they relate to their reactions, and how they adjust their behavior accordingly. You could also say that General Semantics is concerned with the continual processes related to how we perceive what goes on, how our nervous systems construct those perceptions into some kind of cognitive experience, how we evaluate or respond to the experiences, and then how we communicate our experiences.” - Ralph Kenyon.
**Scope of *General Semantics***:

*General Semantics* encompasses an interdisciplinary approach to the study of language as a vital aspect of human behavior. *General Semantics* is based on the premise that language does not exist apart from the human beings who create, use and modify that language. A proper evaluation of language and the effects of language must not exclude the individuals engaged in using that language. The website www.fctworld.org has pointed out a few aspects of human behavior that concern with *General Semantics* methodology. They are:

1. Beginning with our perceptions of the world in which we live.

2. Our internal, nervous system constructions in which our sensory perceptions are transformed into sensory experiences or cognitive awareness.

3. Our evaluations of our constructed experiences by which we determine significance, purpose, and 'meaning' and then our Communication of those evaluations through language, symbols, pictures, music etc.

**Technical aspects of *General Semantics***

Human beings 'see' the world through the structure of their languages; their attitudes, behavior, personal relationships, institutions, behavior,
personal relationships, society international relations, etc; are functionally related to the structure of the languages they use to communicate with themselves and others. They create their human world in the ‘light’ of their words. *General Semantics* deals with the processes involved in how one perceives, constructs, evaluates and communicates one’s life experiences. Alfred Korzybski expresses, “Language have structure, thus we may have language of elementalistic structure such as ‘space’ and ‘time’, ‘observer’ and ‘observed’ ‘body’ and ‘soul’, ‘senses’ and ‘mind’ ‘intellect’ and ‘emotions’, ‘thinking’ and ‘feeling’, ‘thought’ and ‘intuition’; which allow verbal division and separation or we may have languages of a structure of non-elementalistic structure such as ‘space-time’…” “If we use languages of a structure non-similar to the world and our nervous system, our verbal predictions are not verified empirically we cannot be ‘rational’ or adjusted” …… “We do not realize what tremendous power the structure of a habitual language has. It is not an exaggeration to say that it enslaves us through the mechanism of semantic reactions and that the structure which a language exhibits, and impresses upon us unconsciously, is automatically projected upon the world around us”.
General Semantics consists of training techniques and reminder intended to break mental habits that impede dealing with reality. Three of the most important reminders are: “Null-A, Null-I and Null-E”.

1 Null-A is non-Aristotelianism; General Semantics stresses that reality is not adequately mapped by two-valued (Aristotelian) logics.

2 Null-I is non-Identity; General Semantics teaches that no two phenomena can ever be shown identical and that it is more sane to think in terms of sufficient similarity for the purposes of the analysis one is currently performing.

3 Null-E is non-Euclideanism; General Semantics reminds that the space one lives in is not adequately described by Euclidean geometry.

The Three Premises of General Semantics

The theory of General Semantics is based on three premises:

1. *Map* is not territory:

   Words are only *maps* of reality; they are not the territory. He called this the principle of nonidentity. The word is not the thing it refers to.

2. *Map* is not all of the territory:
Aristotle claimed that a thing either is or it isn’t. That seems to make sense. But Korzybski said that all-or-nothing thinking which excludes the middle ground is responsible for a large portion of life’s miseries. He saw language as cementing us into an unhealthy two-valued system. Words promote categorical thinking. They lead us to set up false distinctions between body and mind, rational and emotional, time and space, us and them, good and bad.

3. Map is self reflexive:

Korzybski refers to the process of drawing a map based on other maps as "self-reflexive." But the secondhand map can’t possibly reflect the richness of the territory the cartographer would observe if he were actually on site. Korzybski described language as similarly self-reflexive. It’s possible to use words to talk about words. The process involves recognizing similar features among things that are unique while ignoring their differences.

**Chief Characteristics of General Semantics**

Some of the chief characteristics of General Semantics as mentioned by Alfred Korzybski may be highlighted here:

1. *Time binding*: The human ability to pass information and knowledge between generations at an accelerating rate.
Korzybski claimed this to be a unique capacity, separating us from other animals.

2. Things are different: No two things are the same. The same word could have different meanings in the different situations. This multiordinality of words makes the evaluation method more challenging and interesting. There are more elements, but these three in particular stand out.

3. The scope and power of *General Semantics* as a way of evaluating personal experience may be experimented and experienced with Korzybski’s emphasis on the human process of *abstracting* i.e. we abstract from our experience only a fraction of the totally, and that fraction is not ‘random’, but depends on our particular nervous system, our physical state at the time, our needs and objectives, etc.

4. Silence on the objective levels: As ‘the word is not the thing it represents’, Korzybski stressed the nonverbal experiencing of our inner and outer environments. During these periods of training, one would become ‘outwardly and inwardly silent’.

5. The system advocates a general orientation by extension rather than intention, by relational facts rather than assumed
properties, an attitude, regardless of how expressed in words, that, for example, “Rajesh ‘does things that seem foolish to me,’ rather than that he is ‘a fool’.

**Benefits of General Semantics**

By following some of the principles of *General Semantics* and then applying them, the theory of *General Semantics* could be beneficial. Some of the benefits of *General Semantics* have been enumerated by Ralph Kenyon. They are:

1. More effective, accurate, and discriminating communications with others, and with yourself.

2. More appropriate and desirable reactions, responses and adjustments to what happens.

3. A more accepting, empathetic, inquisitive, open-minded, and straightforward outlook that is less prone to prejudice, stereotyping, and dogmatic generalizations.


5. A better understanding of the background assumptions we bring to a situation.
6 Willingness and an ability to make accurate observations and reports.

7 A willingness to continuously test, examine, evaluate, and change our assumptions and behavior based on our observations.

**Conclusion**

*General Semantics* is a general system of evaluation and awareness. It provides a systematic methodology to understand how one relates to the world around oneself, how one reacts to any incident, how one reacts to the reactions of someone, and how one may adjust one’s behavior accordingly. *General Semantics* advocates that human beings should try to evaluate or judge any situation objectively. Alfred Korzybski made an experimental attempt to design the pattern of evaluation by developing the theory of *General Semantics* where he tried to establish that human progress, measured by advances in the sciences, engineering, technology etc. has resulted due to the application of what is known as a scientific method of process of problem solving. On the contrary, Korzybski found out that the lack of progress on a sociological level, measured by ongoing wars, rivalries, personal disputes etc. has resulted in large part due to out not applying a scientific methodology to the studies of language and human affairs. The brochure of 12th National Workshop on 'cognitive
language skills for the 21st century' reads, "As language serves as the basis for human communication and negotiation of conflicts, it follows that if our understanding of language is incomplete or flawed our abilities to solve problems through language, on personal and societal levels will also be flawed. Therefore, in "Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics", Alfred Korzybski proposed that as we apply language and communication habits, we may begin to increase the levels of individual and societal sanity".2

The theory of General Semantics is the result of his scientific and psychiatric studies as well. The main focus of Alfred Korzybski was on human beings and the world around them and the problems being faced by human beings that encouraged Alfred Korzybski to introduce any pattern or system of evaluation for human beings by themselves only to find out the solutions to the problems which they have been facing. The thirst area of the concept of General Semantics is the thinking process of human beings and reactions of human beings to any event or incident. General Semantics is the study of the relations between language "thought" and behavior: between how we talk, therefore how we 'think', and therefore how we act. Semantics is mainly concerned with the meanings of words. It suggests relation between signs and the things they represent. General Semantics differs from semantics as the main area of
General Semantics is the thinking process of human beings and reactions to the thing event. General semantics is basically concerned with ‘use of words’, ‘evaluation through language’ ‘critical thinking’ and functioning of the ‘human – organism – as – a whole – in – an environment.’.

There are so many techniques and strategies of evaluating human behavior or any event but language provides the means and the environment by which this evaluative process occurs, much of General Semantics deals with studying the effects of language on our behavior, and vice-versa. When language and behavior both are evaluated, one would have a better chance of judging the overall reactions of human beings to an event. General Semantics supports to cultivate the habit of evaluating objectively and find out better ways of maintaining human relationship so one could avoid unhappy situations and human problems.

So, General Semantics can be referred to as a general system of evaluation and awareness. Alfred Korzybski proposed that as one applies language and communication habits, one may begin to increase the levels of individual and societal sanity.

General Semantics encompasses an interdisciplinary approach to the study of language as a vital aspect of human behavior. General Semantics is based on the premise that language does not exist apart from the human beings who create, use and modify that language. A proper evaluation of
language and the effects of language must not exclude the individuals engaged in using that language. In short, people "see" the world through the structure of their languages; their attitudes, behavior, personal relationships, institutions, behavior, personal relationships, institutions, society international relations, etc; are functionally related to the structure of the languages people use to communicate with themselves and others. Human beings create their human world in the 'light' of their words. General Semantics deals with the processes involved in how one perceives, constructs, evaluates and communicates one's life experiences.

II

Introduction to Business Communication

It has already been proved that the success in any business, profession, service sector or bond of relationship is largely depended on the ability to communicate. If the organizations develop a systematic and well patterned communication process, they advance in business and can establish, develop and promote relationship with all the stakeholders of business in much smoother manner. It is equally important for an individual, too. It is a known fact that at every advancement in the professional or business fields, human beings need still better communication skills. Thus improvement in the communication skills improves the chances for success in every walk of life. One of the utmost
needs of almost all the human beings is to acknowledge their existence in the personal and professional sphere. The doors of opportunities can be opened with the master key ‘communication’.

**Growth and Development of Business communication**

The origins of the discipline of Communication can be traced to the beginning of the 20th century when many combined social and technological changes brought about new modes of human life. Human experience of time and space were being redesigned with the advent of the telegraph, radio, television, telephone, mobile phones, internet services as a result, the communication pattern got a new incarnation.

During the decades between 1930 and 1960, owing in no small part to the accelerating inventions of new modes of communication, including television and the digital computer, Communication gradually began to emerge from the periphery of separate disciplines within Academia to become institutionalized in academic departments around the world. At first this movement was sporadic and halting. Its relationship to the growing military and economic power of the United States, as well as the emergence of new media conglomerates and expanding consumer media markets, prompted many intellectuals to reflect on Communication as a potential discipline for addressing a new series of intellectual questions.
The discipline opened the new ways of communicating with the people within the organization and with the people outside the organization as well.

**Shades of Business Communication**

There are two media of communication namely verbal and non-verbal communication. The word ‘verbal communication’ means ‘connected with words and the use of words’. It is said that words are the most accurate and powerful sets of symbols. The words may be spoken or written. Language uses sets of symbols to convey meaning, our body, consciously as well as unconsciously, conveys messages attitudes, moods, status, relationships, etc.

People do not communicate by words alone. In fact, there is much more communication where words are not used, instead the message is sent through other signals mutually understood by the sender and the receiver. These signals may originate in many sources viz, body language, sign language, paralanguage, haptics, proximities, etc. People do not communicate through words, signs and signals alone, they communicate through silence also. Silence, the absence of paralinguistic and verbal cues, also serves important communicative functions. Silence is more eloquent than words which contain in it the essence of generations of
experience. Silence for example, can allow one to organize one’s thoughts. It is not unusual to come across a situation in which nothing can express one’s response as effectively as silence. Silence can effectively communicate a number of responses.

Successful communicator makes a very effective use of facial expressions and gestures. Any intelligent observer can understand this ‘language’. What people say is often very different from what they think or feel. That is why it has been pointed out by psychologists that by reading the signals sent out by one’s body, people can tackle the ‘issue-at work or at home – before they become problems’. That is why it is said, “This communication is at least two-fold: the communication with others is grounded in a communication with one-self; in both cases, the relations are mediated by a "semantic environment." 23

Listening is an essential part of spoken communication. Speaking and Listening go together and oral communication cannot be effective without proper listening. Poor listening defeats the very purpose of spoken words therefore the receiver of the message must be attentive and receptive. That is why we can say communication begins with listening and it is, “the most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and to be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them”. 24 One cannot be an effective speaker unless one is a good
listener— one can’t speak unless one listens. It must, first of all be made clear that listening is a deliberate effort. It is not the same as hearing. While listening, the listener must discriminate, evaluate, appreciate and react. Listening heads the list of essential managerial skills; it provides most managers with the bulk of the information they need to do their jobs. In addition, lack of listening ability at all levels is a major source of work-related problems.

Business Communication includes: Drafting of different types of letters, memorandum, notices, agenda, minutes, advertisements, signboards, conducting meetings, press notes, speeches, etc. Business Communication is a dynamic, transactional process in which there is an exchange of ideas, linking the sender & the receiver towards a mutually accepted direction or goal. Generally, in every business organization, there is a fixed pattern of communication. Communication is a multidimensional or multidirectional activity in an organization.

**Definitions of Business Communication**

The term ‘communication’ is derived from the Latin word ‘communis’ which means to “share”, that is sharing of ideas, concepts, feelings and emotions. A few known definitions are necessary to advance the topics are listed below: 25:
1. "Communication is something so simple and difficult that we can never put it in simple words." - T.S. Matthews

2. "Communication is the process by which information is transmitted between individuals and/or organizations so that an understanding response results" - Peter Little

3. "Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons". - W. H. Newman and C. F. Summer Jr.

4. "Communication is any means by which thought is transferred from one person to another" - Chappel and Read

5. "Communication is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another" - Keith Devis

6. "Communication is the process of transferring meaning. In a business setting, this process sometime account for the difference between success and failure and also profit and loss and that is why communication is critical to the effective functioning of modern business enterprises."

**Functions of Business Communication**

Communication is an exchange of information, ideas and emotions with the help of words, letters, symbols or messages which brings about common understanding and response. There are three main functions of
communication viz. to inform, to persuade and to promote goodwill. In fact, Communication is the life-blood of business. No business can develop in the absence of effective internal and external communication. If such communication takes place among the members of the same or different organizations in order to attain commercial goals, it is called ‘Business Communication.’ Business communication is the communication between the people in the organization for the purpose of carrying out the business activities. It may be oral, verbal, written, etc. The exchange of ideas, understanding, within and outside the organization to achieve the business goals is known as business communication.

A business can flourish when all the targets of the organization are achieved effectively. For efficiency in an organization all the people (within and outside) of the organization must be able to convey their message properly. Proper business communication whether through writing or meetings can do wonders to improve the morale and the bottom line of a company. Business communication is a tool that allows you to improve the performance of employees, it allows improving the performance of the teams within the company, and it allows improving the performance of the entire organization, all with the common purpose to execute the organization’s strategy, reach its vision, and fulfill its
mission. In business communication the use of emails, memo and letters should be written in a way that produces the best results. Use the tone and level of formality that fits the objectives and the reader, and convey your thoughts in a concise and intelligent way.

“Business communication has always been of critical importance to the success of companies and corporate reputation is one of the most valuable and enduring assets. It plays a central role in the achievements of key business objectives such as creating shareholder value, attracting, retaining and motivating high quality people, enhancing reputation with all audiences, marshalling stakeholder support on public policy issues, creating consumer preference for products and services and minimizing the impact a crisis can have on a financial position and business prospects of a company.”  

**Patterns of Business Communication**

Communication is also described as the magical adhesive that holds members of an organization together. All communication passes through some well-defined stages or positions in the organization. Everyone is familiar with the phrase ‘through proper channel’ which means that the sender of a written communication means to pass it on to the addressee through someone occupying an important position in the structural system of the organization. The ‘channel’ means the position or point
through which communication passes can be divided into two categories: a) Formal b) Informal. The formal channel of communication has four directions as per the nature of communication pattern. They are:

a) Downward Communication

b) Upward Communication

c) Horizontal (Lateral) Communication

d) Diagonal (Crosswise) Communication

The informal pattern of communication is popularly known as ‘grapevine communication’ which is not systematically patterned and structured and even not authentic but does contain some valuable information.

**The Process of Business Communication**

The process of communication involves following components:

1. Sender

2. Encoding

3. Message

4. Channel or Medium

5. Decoding

6. Receiver

7. Feedback
The process of communication may be presented diagrammatically as under:

1 2  3 4 5 6

Sender → Encoding → Message → Medium → Decoding → Receiver

7 Feedback

The process of Communication is graphically below on the basis of Berlo’s Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver Model of Communication.

(Model of Communication, acquired from the website http://en.wikipedia.org)
The schematic stage by stage representation of what goes on when a sender talks to a receiver-in the process of communication. At the stage one an idea (an event) occurs in the mind of the sender that stimulates the sender through eyes, ears or other sensory organs. At the 2nd stage (Encoding), the brain of the sender produces certain impulses which produce tension, preverbal feelings, emotions, ideas, thoughts, etc. which the sender then begins to translate into words, according to his accustomed verbal patterns and out of all the words he thinks off. The sender selects or abstracts certain ones which he arranges in some fashion and at the stage 3 (Message) then at the stage 4 (Channel/medium) by means of sound waves and light waves the sender speaks to the receiver whose ears and eyes are stimulated by the sound waves and light waves respectively and resulting nervous impulses travel to the receiver's brain and producing tensions-vibrations, preverbal feelings, emotions, thoughts, ideas, etc. which the receiver then begins to translate into words, according to his accustomed verbal patterns and out of all the words he 'thinks of'. This is the stage 5 (Decoding) where the receiver selects or abstracts, certain ones which he arranges in some fashion and then the receiver speaks or acts (Feedback), accordingly, thereby stimulating the sender or somebody else and the process of communication goes on and on- with complication, as indicated in the
accompanying text. “Feedback processes provide striking examples of self-reflexiveness and self reflexive relationships. A fairly practical way to approach this formulation is to recognize two general kinds of feedback: internal and external. The former is at play with the speaker whom is being reflexive about something he has just said, while the external feedback is operating when the speaker is sensitive to the restrictions of other people to what he has said.”

The Components of Business Communication

The important components of communication and their characteristics are as under:

Sender:

The process of communication begins with a sender, the person who has an idea and wants to share it. Sender is also called by other names such as communicator, transmitter, source, speaker, etc. For making the communication process effective “the sender should mentally visualize the communication from the receiver’s point of view.”

Encoding:

Encoding is the process by which a sender converts the ideas into symbols that comprises a message. Encoding may be treated as the process of refining the ideas and presenting them in a refined and acceptable form.
**Message:**

A message is any signal that triggers the response of a receiver. It is a subject matter of communication. Message is the refined form of idea. Message could be verbal or non-verbal. Verbal message is communicated by words and well supported by non verbal mode. In fact "the non verbal part of the message often expands what is being said by providing additional meaning. Bear in mind, however, that interpretation can alter the intended meaning of a message."  

**Channel or Medium:**

Communication channels or media are the modes through which message is conveyed. They serve as a link between the sender & the receiver. The choice of channel or medium should be selected on the basis of the interrelationships between the sender & the receiver. It also depends upon the urgency of the message being sent. Beside, one may consider factors such as importance, number of receivers, costs & amount of information while selecting the channel or medium. The choice of a channel can significantly affect the outcome of the communication.

*Channels:* represent the means by which sender conveys message i.e. oral, written or non-verbal.

*Media:* Media are the various tools or vehicles of communication such as letters, E-mail, telephone, T.V., etc.
Decoding:

Decoding is a reverse process by which a receiver converts symbols in the message into ideas.

Receiver:

The person who receives the information or for whom the information is meant is called the receiver. He is also known by different names such as communicate, addressee, listener, etc.

“The extent to which this person comprehends the message will depend on a number of factors, including:

(1) How much the individual knows about the topic
(2) His/her receptivity to the message,
(3) The relationship and trust that exists between a sender and a receiver, the receiver’s understanding and perception of the information being conveyed.”

‘Perception’ here refers to an individual’s view of reality. It is the result of many factors, including past experience, attitude toward the message and the sender, mental abilities such as intelligence, and communication skills such as speaking and listening. It is important to realize that person’s perception is not always accurate. One group’s perception of its communication style can thus be radically different from another’s and this perception will influence the way the group both sends and receives messages.
Feedback:
Feedback is the return message or response from the receiver to the sender after receiving & understanding the message. Feedback is an important component of the communication process because ultimately the success of the communication is decided by the feedback the communicator gets.

Correlation between Business Communication and General Semantics

While understanding and pondering upon the concepts of Business Communication and General Semantics, one can make out that there is a co-relation between both terms. Business Communication depends on interlinking of views and thoughts between two more parties to get expected results. Successful communication is possible when the sender can understand the receiver’s needs, abilities, limitations, etc and communicate in a way that the message reaches to the receiver. The sole purpose of any communication process is to convince other person about one’s ideas and this may be done effectively by understanding the receiver. For understanding the receiver in a better way, it is necessary for a communicator to evaluate the receiver. There are number of techniques and strategies of evaluating human behavior or any other events. Language provides the means and the environment by which this
evaluative process occurs. Man is the only species gifted with language. Language is used in the different modes of Business Communication.

The main goal of General Semantics is better human relationships at all levels of our relationships—personal, interpersonal, societal, international. This can be accompanied by being highly and unceasingly attentive to the ways people speak, listen, understand, interpret, and give meanings to give values to, ‘think’ about and evaluate words, symbols and other features of our human and physical environments. So the techniques of General Semantics can be directly or indirectly applied in Business Communication to evaluate the customer so the expected goal of a business communicator may be achieved. “In General Semantics, there is a strong belief that theory and practice are, and should be mingled for the benefit of both. General Semantics and Communication have provided the starting point for original work that seeks to understand how the principles derived from theoretical considerations play out in different domains of social practice.” So, basically Business Communication takes place either in a verbal mode or non-verbal mode or through both or through silence, too. When a communicator communicates in the verbal mode, he/she makes use of oral or written form of communication by using words. Words are nothing else but certain symbols containing meaning. They do not
convey the exact thing-event that the speaker wants to communicate. Either words reflect a close understanding of the thing-event of the sender or associated with the nonverbal symbols to convey it more effectively. There is a total reaction of the body and the use of words that makes the process of communication acceptable and understandable. Words could be deceptive but the words which are not spoken may be more effective.

The main aim of communication is to establish, promote and develop human relationships amongst the people with whom you are connected. Communication is a process of establishing relationships, bring about understanding and convincing people through speaking, listening, behaving properly, adjusting and experimenting the words, symbols, etc, at all levels of our human interactions- personal, interpersonal, societal and international. From a communication point of view too, our successes and problems are functionally related to our discriminate and indiscriminate use of words.

The primary application of Communication is in training individuals as well as groups to view their environments using the Communication world view and by applying its techniques, disagreement will be reduced, some psychological disorders can be overcome, and reasoning will be improved. Communication is also not any "philosophy," or "psychology,"
or "logic," in the ordinary sense. It is a human engineering, a discipline which explains and trains us how to use our words most efficiently, effectively and purposefully. *General Semantics* offers methods for general human adjustment in our private, public, and professional lives.

To know the customers, clients, agents, employees, advertisers, colleagues, etc. in a better way, the communicator has to evaluate not only the linguistic definition or even their responses, but others response to words and events in the fullest sense. Communication is also a tool for human relationship in people’s private, public, and professional lives. The structure of their forms of was found to be of pivotal importance in the history of human cultures. In listening process also, there is a relation between *General Semantics* and Business Communication, as listening too includes ‘evaluation.’ Experts on the subject believes, “If the communicator finds his/her place in the category of these exceptions then there are better chances of developing, maintaining and promoting relationship with clients, customers, agents, employees and the stake holders of the society. *General Semantics* is a theory of language and meaning that shares a great deal of methodological and theoretical positions with the contemporary study of human communication.”

Controlling of emotion is one of the important features of an effective communication. Along with Intelligence Quotient, the Emotional
Quotient is a vital component of a successful communicator. EQ encourages the controlling of one’s own emotion while communicating with others in general and with the client or customer in particular because the customer could inquire or raise any question to know about the product or services. His/her tone may not be good but you let it go and answer him/her with ease and sanity. EQ also suggests with reference to the Business Communication that the communicator should use emotions intelligently and respect the emotions of others. In the same way, one of the formulations of General Semantics intends to provide a mature, scientific, creative orientation is ‘delayed reaction’. It suggests that a delay of even a fraction of second permits the nervous system to consider alternatives. This delay would either provide a better option to choose or save you from entering into unnecessary arguments with the listener.

From a General Semantics perspective, the successes and problems of human beings are functionally related to their discriminate and indiscriminate use of words. The scope and power of General Semantics as a way of evaluating personal experience may be experimented and experienced by knowing the theory in detail by studying the terms used in the theory.
CITATIONS


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