CHAPTER — 4
APPLICATION
OF
GENERAL SEMANTICS
IN
BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
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Application of *General Semantics* in Business Communication

In the earlier chapter, it was established that there is a co-relation between *General Semantics* and Business Communication. In the present chapter, an attempt has been made to apply the *General Semantics* in Business Communication. *General semantics* is not any "philosophy," or "psychology," or "logic," in the ordinary sense. It is a new extensional discipline which explains and trains us how to use our nervous systems most efficiently. By applying the methods of *General Semantics*, disagreement may be reduced, some psychological disorders can be overcome, and reasoning will be improved.

The purpose of *General semantics* is served only when one applies it to real situations otherwise it would remain a fruitless activity. Alfred Korzybski himself said, “.....Experience shows that when the methods of *General Semantics* are applied. The results are usually beneficial, whether in law, medicine, business, etc., be they in the family, national or international fields. If they are not applied but merely talked about, no results can be expected.” Kenneth Johnson has also acknowledged, “By applying *General Semantics*, disagreement will be reduced, some
psychological disorders can be overcome and reasoning will be improved.”

With the emergence of new technological advances on information and knowledge, an important skill that is required is creating an environment that enables the business to connect and have contacts with its stakeholders. To build long lasting business relationships with the customers, clients, consumers, etc; communication should be clear, crisp and with clarity. To achieve success, professionals need to assess and respond to communication situations that occur constantly. Business Communication usually starts with oral form that needs to be materialized in a written form in the form of business letters, deeds and documents for which model varies with the nature of agreement. There are three main functions of business communication viz. to inform, to persuade and to promote goodwill. These functions make Communication the ‘life-blood of businesses. No business can develop in the absence of effective internal and external communication. Besides, communication skills of the employees are given high weighing at the time of their appointment and promotion as well.

**Three Principles of General Semantics**

It is a beneficial act to talk about the three principles of *General Semantics* at the outset of this chapter for initiating any talk on the
application of *General Semantics* in Business Communication. The problem of the matching of words to things, events and experience is tackled by Korzybski by using an effective analogy, in which Korzybski considers language as a kind of 'map' of the 'territory' of reality. In the same way that a good map has a structure or shape similar to that of the actual territory, language will be accurate to the extent that its structure parallels the things and ideas spoken or written about. They are:

1. **A Map Is Not the Territory:**

Alfred Korzybski opines that the words are only *maps* of reality; they are not the territory. He called this the principle of nonidentity. Simply one can say that that the word is not the thing it refers to.

2. **A Map Depicts Only Part of the Territory:**

Aristotle claimed that a thing either is or it isn’t and this makes sense to many of us. But Korzybski was of the opinion that the ‘all-or-nothing’ thinking excludes the middle ground that is equally important for the happenings of life on a large scale. Korzybski observed that the language had made us believe in an impractical two-valued system. Words promote categorical thinking and lead us to set up false distinctions.
3. A Map Is Self-Reflexive:

Korzybski refers to the process of drawing a map based on other maps as "self-reflexive." But the second-hand map can’t possibly reflect the features of the territory what 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.

This analysis leads to the premises of the General Semantics system which can be given by the simple analogy of the relation of a ‘map’ to the ‘territory’ with that of ‘word’ and ‘reality’ which can be applied to daily life and language:

1. A word is not what it represents.
2. A word does not represent all of the 'facts', etc.
3. Language is self-reflexive in the sense that in language we can speak about language.

If somebody took above noted verbal description of an incident as what actually happened, then all kinds of mistakes might come out of that. But if one always realizes that it is only a map, and that different maps might be drawn for the same territory, then it becomes much easier to reconcile
differences. Whatever one can say about something isn't it. Whatever someone can say about a pen is not a pen. The pen is what it is; something that cannot be explained with words totally or one can say it is fundamentally unspeakable. If the notion is digested or accepted in the activities of day to day communication then language and models are of course very useful. When it is a matter of communicating the experience, the complexities increase as the communicator will use his/her stock of words and phrases, which won't mean exactly the same to anyone else and which will not exactly match the experience the communicator wants to refer to. The world is what it is. All kinds of maps and models of how the world works could be made and some of them could be very useful, and one could talk about them with great benefits. But the models and maps and any words one can put together can never do more than approximate the actual world or the actual phenomena being examined. The actual territory is beyond verbal description. If the verbal maps do not correspond to the facts they are supposed to represent, the parties involved in the process of communication are likely to have misunderstandings and disappointments.

The profound thinking of S.I.Hayakawa clarifies, “The human being, like any other creature, begins to make his acquaintance with the extensional world from infancy. Unlike other creatures, however, he begins to
receive, as soon as he can learn to understand, reports, reports of reports, reports of reports of reports, and so on. In addition, he receives inferences made from reports, inferences made from other inferences, and so on. By the time a child is a few years old, has gone to school and to Sunday school, and has made a few friends, he has accumulated a considerable amount of second- and third-hand information about morals, geography, history, nature, people, games — all of which information together constitutes his verbal world" ..........“Now this verbal world ought to stand in relation to the extensional world as a map does to the territory it is supposed to represent. If the child grows to adulthood with a verbal world in his head which corresponds fairly closely to the extensional world that he finds around him in his widening experience, he is in relatively small danger of being shocked or hurt by what he finds, because his verbal world has told him what, more or less, to expect. He is prepared for life. If, however, he grows up with a false map in his head — that is, with a head crammed with false knowledge and superstition — he will constantly be running into trouble, wasting his efforts, and acting like a fool.... “We all inherit a great deal of useless knowledge, and a great deal of misinformation and error, so that there is always a portion of what we have been told that must be discarded.”

The issue is what is a map? In the present context, the main map is
‘communication’ which has so many sub maps and the main map and sub maps have their own territories. Business Communication, Corporate Communication, Human Communication, Psychological Communication, Sociological Communication, Cultural Communication, etc are the various forms of the map called ‘communication’. All communication passes through some well-defined stages or position in the organization. These channels are the sub maps of the main map communication. They are:

a) Formal b) Informal

(a) Formal Channel of communication: Formal channel of communication follows certain definite, predetermined directions. Formal communication moves Upward, Downward, Horizontally and Diagonally. These forms of communication just do not happen by themselves. They are carefully thought out and well designed. Great care is taken in their design and movements.

(b) Informal Channel of Communication: In addition to the official communication, there exists a lot of communication among the employees working at different levels. This communication is unofficial and does not follow the formal channels of communication. It is called informal communication & grapevine. It follows no set lines, or any definite rules but spreads, like the grapevine, in any direction anywhere like a wild fire.

Man is the only species gifted with language. Language is used in different
modes to communicate with each other. From this viewpoint, there are two sub maps of the main map called ‘communication’; they are verbal and non-verbal communication. The word ‘verbal communication’ means ‘connected with words and the use of words’. The words may be spoken or written. The non-verbal communication talks about that nature of communication which takes place without using the words. Sometimes, the words which are not spoken could be heard more clearly. “The problem of the "meaning" of words is therefore not dissociable from either the context in which words are used or the condition of the subject who speaks them. Moreover, *General Semantics* takes seriously the non-communicative order of the world and of the subject as conditions of speech and interaction. Thus, in order to understand the relation of language to individual human thought and behavior, or perhaps the relationship between cultural variability and linguistic heterogeneity, it is necessary to take account of the multi-valence, multi-ordinal conditions by which human beings experience the world. That language is already a set of presuppositions about the world; and that thought and language are co-constitutive of individual action and behavior - these are conditions of a human being's experience of the world prior to their ability to speak about the world. In short, *General Semantics* - as part of a period of flourishing new thought in the human sciences - proposes like its intellectual kin to order the study of human experience within a paradigm of communication by reflecting on the nature of language.”"4
In Business Communication, mapping the situation is very important; the mapping of situation is based on cultural, environmental, sociological, contextual, psychological meaning of words. Meaning is not language related but it is contextual. The world is made up of so many people having varied cultures, traditions, languages and beliefs. The main purpose of Business Communication is to inform, persuade and promote goodwill so that the expected results may be achieved. By applying General Semantics in Business Communication, the above mentioned purpose can be achieved with a success.

A map is useful, if it fits the territory, words are useful if they fit the facts. Awareness that verbal maps which do not fit the facts can cause misunderstandings keeps the communicator vigil and encourages him/her to use appropriate words which could match with the reality. Alfred Korzybski, “We should say that the map was wrong, or that it was an incorrect map, or that the map has a different structure from the territory.” Otherwise, a false map that fails to correspond to the facts and may lead to the following:

- A shareholder’s feeling of insecurity, developed when companies do not keep their promises.

- A businessman’s unrealistic fears of policemen, income-tax officer, Sales-tax officer, food inspector, etc. sometimes implanted
in the mind by unjust competitor’s threats.

* The disappointment of young businessmen who believed that anyone who is innovative, honest and hard-working can be a successful businessman — and who followed the formula but did not achieve the desired goal because they failed to consider other factors that contribute to success.

* So many management students say that they worry during the vacation about entering a leading management college because their seniors give them a terrifying account of rough initiations, difficult subjects, and lots of project work. The students who accept this map, worry; others who don’t accept it as correct make one of their own by visiting the college and observing what happens there.

One has to think about the premise that ‘A map is not the territory,’ or one can say ‘A word is not what it represents, to get the meaning of the different words.

For example,

- The word ‘Board’ which could be notice board, sign board, advertising board, black board, board of members, board of studies, etc. So the word ‘board’ has multiple connotations based
on its practical aspects.

- The word 'letter' could have multiple meanings like Business letter, official letter, personal letter, an English alphabet, newsletter, etc.

### Abstraction

*Abstraction* is one of the important features of the theory of *General Semantics* that can be very effective to eliminate the confusion or misunderstanding. Abstraction could be put into practice by applying the two technical terms: Intesional orientation and Extensional orientation which were introduced by Alfred Korzybski. Intensional orientations may be explained that the orientations based on verbal definitions, associations, etc; largely ignoring the observations as if they would involve a 'principle' of 'talks first and never minds life facts'. Intensional orientation is the world of words about the events and things. Intensional meaning is the meaning of a 'word' in terms of other words and by extensional meaning; it is meant the 'actual reality' to which those words refer to. Extensional orientations are based on ordering observations, investigations, etc first and the verbalization next in importance. Extensional orientations are the world of the events and things. The world of things which can be touched, seen, heard or otherwise experienced is called the extensional world.

The world of abstractions is not only a game of vision; it is also a game of
observing, being observed, and observation. Whence the important to relation to some major thinkers in Communication, among whom one famous figure said that, in a manner to describe some of the new dilemmas of communication systems in society, that the world outside is not the same as the pictures in our heads. These three levels of abstraction are interesting insofar as - from the point of view of the study of communication - they separate "experience," "representation," and "judgment." These three distinctions entail that thinking and acting are precisely the practice and process of placing these faculties into relation across these three levels of abstraction. The current systems of interactions with the world are engaged in selecting data from the world, organizing and generalizing them. An abstraction, to put it simply, is a kind of summary of what the world is like, a generalization about its structure. The world of events and things, and the world of words about events and things.

An important comment available on ‘mcole@ucsd.edu’ that says, “General Semantics is concerned with the relation of communication to human conflict, to the necessity of sustaining relations with others, of maintaining social structures and public institutions, and of fostering a critical relationship with the world. We also note that, just as there are presuppositions to the "meanings" we attribute to words, so are there "expectations" about the behavior of others with respect to the order of
things in the world."  

To be more effective in communication, the communicator must provide concrete information i.e. following the principle of extensional orientation. How "facts" are common to "us" in a communicative society is not self-evident; the answer provided by *General Semantics* is quite suggestive; facts are dominant in *General Semantics*’ therapeutic modes.

The important point which is found in the theory of *General Semantics* is that "it is impossible to know everything" or "it is impossible to fully speak about anything" which limits on communication. The constraints imposed by a semantic environment are the same that make semantic reactions possible.

While the objective world is constantly shifting, the "verbal world" can shift and remain the same.

In communication, not only words but even some of the pictures and posters are to be understood by the communicate keeping in mind the concept that different people understand different thing-events differently in different situations at different times. A few pictures are incorporated here to support to the above mentioned statement.
Are they audiences or buildings?
How many Horses are there in Picture?
‘Me’ Attitude:

In Business Communication, a lot of importance is given to ‘you attitude’. ‘You attitude’ suggests that while communicating with others always one should take care that the listener’s or receiver’s view point and contribution are acknowledged so the psychological barrier may be removed and the listener could be involved in the process of communication. The theory of General Semantics introduces the concept of ‘to me’ attitude that is very crucial as individuals vary considerably in the way they sense things.

➢ Instead of saying, ‘This way of advertising is useless’, the communicator should say, “This way of advertising seems useless to me.”

➢ Instead of saying, ‘The manager of this firm is very corrupt’ let us say ‘The manager of this firm appears very corrupt to me’.

➢ Instead of saying, ‘The product is not successful’ let us say ‘It seems to me that the product is not successful.’

Here communication may be regarded as a game as said by Kenneth Johnson, “Communication may be regarded as a game in which the speaker and the listener (writer and reader) struggle against the possibilities of confusion.”

It can be summarized here by saying here that communication should
be regarded as a process in which the speaker and the listener, or writer, and reader, constantly fight against the forces of confusion;

- Expect to be misunderstood- expect to misunderstand others and be taken as the process of minimizing confusions between the communicator and communicate.

**Delayed Reaction**

The formulations of *General Semantics* are intended to provide a mature, scientific, creative orientation. The important feature of *General Semantics* 'Delayed Reaction' could be applied in Business Communication to get the better results and minimizing misunderstanding. Be a critical thinker while communicating in any business situation, i.e. take a little more time before delivering any judgmental statement. The story given below provides the wonderful example of the same.

**The Story**

One old man was sitting with his 25 years old son in the train. Train is about to leave the station. All passengers are settling down their seat.

As train started young man was filled with lot of joy and curiosity. He was sitting on the window side. He went out one hand and feeling the passing air. He shouted, "Papa see all trees are going behind".
Old man smile and admired son feelings. Beside the young man one couple was sitting and listing all the conversion between father and son. They were little awkward with the attitude of 25 years old man behaving like a small child.

Suddenly young man again shouted, "Papa see the pond and animals. Clouds are moving with train". Couple was watching the young man in embarrassingly. Now it's start raining and some of water drops touches the young man's hand. He filled with joy and he closed the eyes. He shouted again," Papa it's raining, water is touching me, see papa".

Couple couldn't help themselves and ask the old man, "Why don't you visit the Doctor and get treatment for your son."

Old man said,"Yes, We are coming from the hospital as Today only my son got his eye sight for first time in his life".

Moral: "Don't draw conclusions until you know all the facts".

**Time Binding :**

Through the use of language, human beings have been able to bind time. By 'time binding', human beings of one generation have been able to communicate with human beings of another generation. As a result, people are in a position to learn from the records of their knowledge and
experience. Human beings are able to communicate their knowledge and experience through language to them that helps in building a vast storehouse of knowledge. Through this knowledge, human beings have managed to achieve their present state of superiority. Words are one of the important symbols through them people are in a position to convey their impression of reality. As a time-binder, one can accumulate knowledge from the past and communicate what one knows to the future. Human beings can accumulate knowledge from the past and communicate what they know to the future as time-binders. By 'time binding', human beings of one generation have been able to communicate with human beings of another generation. As a result, people are in a position to learn from the records of their knowledge and experience. Human beings are able to communicate their knowledge and experience of those who will live after them. Thus because we have language, we human beings are the only life species form which has not been limited to knowledge that can be learned from the trial and error experiences in a single lifetime. The result has been that we have built a vast storehouse of knowledge. With this knowledge we have manage to achieve our present state of superiority. Our systems of interactions with the world are engaged in selecting data from the world, organizing data, generalizing data. An abstraction, to put it simply, is a kind of summary of what the world is like, a generalization about its structure. Through the use of language, human beings have been able to bind time. Neil Postman
comments, "Korzybski meant by General Semantics: the study of the relationship between the world of words and the world of not-words, the study of the territory we call reality and how, through abstracting and symbolizing, we map the territory. Our verbal maps may undergo periodic evaluation to accommodate changes in reality. Alfred Korzybski helped to heighten our awareness of the role of the language in making us what we are and in preventing us from becoming what we ought to be are not yet." 8

Projection

Persons involved in the process of communication must remember that any statement made by communicator tells something about communicator otherwise misunderstandings are likely to have in the mind of the receiver. Irving J. Lee opines, "Something happens, something is seen or heard or remembered, which produces effects on the nervous system of a human being. Something happens inside-his-skin. His talk then takes account of and represents it. ... From long association we can tell (though not always accurately) a cry of grief from the shout of delight. A shriek of victory conveys something different from the harsh tone of indignation." 9

"Though we can distinguish in analysis between statements which point to objects, people, and happenings in the outside-of-the-skin-world and those which point to reactions inside-the-skin, the language habits of men in action do not make such clear distinctions. ......"
intention here of urging that talk be limited to statements which represent what can be found outside-the-skin. Such a prohibition would be impossible even if urged. We are insisting, for proper evaluation, that statements be recognized for what they do represent.\textsuperscript{10}

Things don't have meaning; our nervous systems or projection manufacture meanings from the raw data collected by our sense organs.

\textit{Examples}.—A person may say, "We had an excellent meeting with the foreign delegation." He is telling you something about his concepts and his beliefs and feelings, but he may well be telling very little about the meeting. Other people may have disliked it, or the speaker may not enjoy a similar meeting another time. A non verbal example could also be good exercise to elaborate the applicability of the concept of projection. If it is asked here,
Are they Ships or Pillars?

How many People are there?
In response, a number of answers could be there as everyone viewing the picture, understands it by their own perception and belief because their impressions are inside them and they project their own image. The different responses of the receivers of the above mentioned picture supports me to conclude that people see the same object, differently and evaluate differently. This conclusion brings an understanding in the parties involved in the process of business communication and makes the business activities smoother. Otherwise, misunderstandings would arise when one projects one’s feelings to others and one is projecting one’s feelings when one speaks and/or act as if the feelings inside one’s were the things in the outside world. Misunderstandings may sometimes result when people fail to consider that statements can also tell something about the speaker. For example:

- The parent who says, “Haresh must be obedient and trustworthy in school. I find him that way at home,” may be projecting his own standards of judgment.

- The child who says to a smaller child, “If you don’t give me that toy, I’ll call a policeman, and he will lock you up,” may be reacting against authoritarian treatment at home.

As the website www.mcole@ucsd.edu mentions, “The issues being raised by General Semantics go beyond the problem of erroneously assigning
"fixed" meanings to words. Rather, scholars working in the General Semantics tradition seem to be addressing the broader problem of how to understand the work of "words" in modern social, public, and cultural relations and subjective experiences.”

When a communicator says, ‘It’s a lovely morning,’ do you think that he/she is in a good mood, or that he/she is giving a weather report?” Our impressions are in us and are not always to be found in the life facts.

**Each WORD has a STORY**

Here are a few top Brands, Just one word, but dozens were involved in coining and dozens tested them in the market .....But each WORD has a STORY behind it.....see below a few are given from the Western World.

**Amazon.com**

![Amazon.com Logo](image-url)
This logo doesn’t seem to hide much at first sight, but it gives you a little insight in the philosophy behind the brand. First of all, the yellow swoosh looks like a smile: Amazon.com want to have the best customer satisfaction. The swoosh also connects the letters ‘a’ and ‘z’, meaning that this store has everything from ‘a’ to ‘z’.

Fedex

This is probably one of the best known logos with a hidden meaning. If you look closely, you’ll see an arrow that’s formed by the letters E and x. This arrow symbolizes speed and precision, two major selling points of this company.
Continental is a manufacturer of tyres. One could actually see this in their logo, because the first two letters create a 3-dimensional tyre.

Toblerone is a chocolate-company from Bern, Switzerland. Bern is sometimes called ‘The City Of Bears’. They have incorporated this idea in the Toblerone logo, because if you look closely, one will see the silhouette of a bear.
BaskinRobins

The old logo of Baskin Robbins had the number 31 with an arc above it. The new logo took this idea to the next level. The pink parts of the BR still form the number 31, a reference to the 31 flavours.

SonyVaio

Sony Vaio is a well known brand of laptops. While observing the logo one would be in a position to trace out that the name Vaio logo also had a hidden meaning. The first two letters represent the basic analogue signal. The last two letters look like a 1 and 0, representing the digital signal.
Carrefour

Carrefour is one of the biggest European retailers, and it’s also French for “crossroads”. The logo symbolizes this word via two opposite arrows. They also added the first letter of the name, because if you look closely you’ll see the letter C in the negative space between the two arrows.

Unilever

Unilever is one of the biggest producers of food, beverages, cleaning agents
and personal care products. They produce a huge amount of different products and they wanted to reflect this in their logo. Each part of the logo has a meaning. For example: the heart represents love, care and health - feeling good, a bird is a symbol of freedom. Relief from daily chores – getting more out of life.

Formula

At first, this logo might not make much sense. But if you look closely, you’ll see the number 1 in the negative space between the F and the red stripes. I also love how this logo communicates a feeling of speed.
Sun Microsystems

The Sun logo is one of the most famous ambigrams in the world. You can read the brand name in every direction; both horizontally and vertically. This logo was designed by professor Vaughan Pratt of the Stanford University.

NBC

The NBC (National Broadcasting Company) is one of the biggest American
television networks. I think most of you have already seen the peacock in this logo. The peacock has 6 different tail feathers, referring to the six divisions at the time that this logo was created. The peacock’s head is flipped to the right to suggest it was looking forward, not back.”  

Ahmedabad Mirror, cover page, 8th September, 2010, column titled, UNVEILED RTI LOGO

The logo of Right to Information, created by a professor of the National Institute of Design, Tarun Deep Girdher, is going to be launched in October, 2010. The design brief given to Girdher was that the logo should represent the crux of the Act: transparency, accessibility, information and transaction.
Explaining the thought behind the logo, the designer said, "The bright blue stands for transparency and purity (free from malpractice). It depicts a sheet of paper with information on it, and the authority figure behind it — providing the information. This represents the two stakeholders in the process of sharing information under the Act. I have kept the shape and structure of the logo simple so that it is easy to remember, recall and replicate with minimal distortion. "The lines of information on the sheet of paper have been designed to look transparent, showing through the form of the 'i' behind. The solid form of 'i' is a very simplistic portrayal of the human form. It's also the 'i' for information." Multiordinality of terms makes the communication interesting. While communicating with anyone on matters related with business, the communicator can keep in mind the multiordinality of terms in mind.

Use of the Index (Seeing Differences):

Many similarities in the people and objects have been noticed with which we are familiar. However, if our language implies that there is identity or sameness between two people or between two objects, it fails to correspond to the world about us. In this world 'complete sameness' between any two of anything has not yet been demonstrated, for in some respects objects and happenings differ from each other. And the closer to nature we are able to get, the more apparent does this structural fact become. A number of
statements of the experts of the field can be cited here to have an idea of the impact of the above mentioned feature of General Semantics in business communication. Irving J. Lee remarks, “When the fact of difference has been understood, we should be ready for another — that each item of our acquaintance, each object and happening will appear unique, differing in some details from every other one.” 13 Alfred Korzybski opines, “... Everything we can see, touch, that is to say, all lower orders abstractions represent absolute individuals, different from everything.” 14 Johnson Wendell also remarks, “As we have said before, a fact occurs but once. This is a way of stating that no two things are exactly alike and no one thing remains exactly the same. It is a way of expressing the process character of reality. Thus, the structure of reality shows a practically infinite degree of differentiation.” 15

The word house, for example, is a variable term. It can be used to refer to my house, or to your house, or to any one of all the possible buildings one might want to talk about. And house₁ is not house₂. Other common forms of the index device are to be seen in the social security numbers, automobile license numbers, the elaborate system of numbers used in cataloguing books in public libraries, the numerals worn on the backs of football players — anyone can recall a great number of other examples. “It is astonishing that we have applied this ingenious device to almost everything except our
language. In general semantics we apply it to that, too. If we can say house₁, house₂, etc., we can say man₁, man₂, etc., or love₁, love₂, etc. We can use indexes with any word whatever."

When people fail to recognize the fact of difference, Misevaluations are found such as the following:

1. A visit to the dentist is avoided, even for a checkup.

2. There is the assumption that an only child is spoiled.

3. There is a refusal to try new services or products because of a former disappointment.

4. People are disliked who have the same name as or a resemblance to someone with whom there is an unpleasant association.

5. There is prejudice against a particular product or a company because of a few experiences with others of the same group.

There is a useful device for showing that individual is aware of differences; it is called the Index. Indexes are used every day to note differences — numbered seats in the assembly hall, room numbers, telephone numbers, house numbers, etc. Readers use the indexes in the back of their books to find certain selections that they want; perhaps an individual can use an index to find the differences in people or things. It should help individuals to
remember that person$_1$ is not person$_2$ or person$_3$. People know that Rahul$_1$ is different from Rahul$_2$ or product$_1$ is not product$_2$ or product$_3$, but some people ignore the differences and speak merely of persons or products. One can see here how the use of the index would help to prevent prejudice.

In the process of communication, if the communicator uses the index for one person with the name of Rahul. There are a lot of men with the name of Rahul, and sometimes one forgets to say which Rahul one is talking about. Which Rahul does an individual mean? If one is talking about Rahul, does it make a difference in one’s thinking if one indexes?

Rahul$_1$
A politician

Rahul$_2$
An Indian Cricketer

Rahul$_3$
An actor in a reality show on TV

Rahul$_4$
An Actor in Bollywood movies
Does using the index help you to see differences in people? One should speak and act as if there were differences as well as similarities in people, objects, and events.

**Use of Etc (Non-allness):**

It is impossible for an individual to observe an object from all sides at once because various aspects must be observed in turn. Even if an individual could observe an object from all sides at once, acquaintance would still be partial because microscopic and submicroscopic details, chemical changes, and an object's relations to everything else would extend the range of observation indefinitely. If this is so, then the language should correspond to that fact and lead the individual to the knowledge that one cannot say "all" about anything. One observes some details and omits others.

"What an individual experiences depends upon which specialized structures in his nervous system are stimulated. Note the paper on which this is written. In what ways can an observer have relationships with it? He can see it, touch it, smell it, taste it, lift it, tear it, etc. Each sort of response provides one avenue of acquaintance, because the receptors (the eyes, nostrils, skin, etc.) are so differentiated that each is sensitive only to particular stimuli. And since none is 'all-engaging,' it follows that our acquaintance with the paper through any one nervous means will be *specific and partial.*"\(^{17}\)
“If the reader will try to give a ‘complete’ description or a ‘perfect’ definition of any actual physical object, so as to include ‘all’ particulars, he will be convinced that this task is humanly impossible. These would have to describe, not only the numerous rough, macroscopic characteristics, but also the microscopic details, the chemical composition and changes, sub-microscopic characteristics and the endlessly changing relationship of this objective something ...” 18

“Consciousness of abstracting as a habitual reaction will lead directly to attitudes of non-allness ... the new attitudes may be coached into practice by the memory of a simple device which summarizes the fact that details are invariably left out in speaking. A hint of it is found in a statement by William James that the word “and” trails along after every sentence Something always escapes ...’ Habitual use of the ETC. silently or orally should dissolve the ‘allness-growths’ by producing consciousness of factors left out. Which suggests a ‘new’ slogan: Remember the ETC.”19

When people think that they have said “all” about something, that there is no more to be said, we are likely to have the following:

- Discussions end in the business meeting with no agreement reached because of the attitude, “That is all there is to be said on the subject.
- Learning is blocked by an attitude of, “I know all about it.”
- Research in business activities is blocked because of the attitude,
"It’s all been tried before.

- Rumor and gossip result because people accept a statement as “all” the story.
- False impressions result when people accept one cause as the explanation of a complex matter.

‘Either – or’ Attitude:

We have an infinite number of values in our world, but in our speech we tend to speak in one or two values. If we talk as if things are either black or white and tend to ignore the shades between, we are likely to have an unrealistic picture of our universe. Johnson Wendell remarks, “We talk, not always but often, and particularly in decisive matters, as though there were only two alternatives, so that anything must be classified as either A or B (the so-called law of the excluded middle). We pride ourselves on being willing to consider both sides of a question, as though a third, or even a tenth or a fifty-fourth, were inconceivable. Not infrequently, of course, we do recognize a third possibility: high, low, and medium; good, bad, and so-so. In such a case, our language assumes a three-valued structure. This makes possible a middle-of-the-road policy, the so-called golden mean. The view that moderation in all things is a virtue expresses the conviction that an either-or form of language is not conducive to wisdom.”

People speak as if there were only one or two ways of looking at persons
and things. Could this prevent our looking for more ways of thinking about people or events? For Example,

- People are called good or bad, rich or poor, smart or dumb, kind or mean, dirty or clean.

- Products are titled as successful or failure, costly or cheap, useful or useless.

Michael Cole observes, "This two-valued orientation is obviously not similar structurally to the world of objects, happenings, people, feelings, etc. Our talk, when we see only two values instead of many, thus gives a false, inadequate, misleading evaluation of the world. It is possible to extend the orientations from two to the recognition that perhaps there are three, four, five, and so on, but the number of possibilities remains dissimilar to the actual facts of experience." 21

So many times it happens that while communicating one omits many details when one talks. It is to be remembered that the universe is very complex but only a small vocabulary to describe it. If it is said that explain the Reliance Industry, India. Someone will talk about Late Dhirubhai Ambani, others about financial status of the company, others about the products manufactured by the industry and discussion may go with the remark by someone about the dispute between two brothers, and so on. Eventually we will find out that there is no limit to the discussion that each new topic opens up an entire field for talk. Do we know all about any product or
company...probably one can’t say “all” about anything. There is always an ETC. — there is always more to be said. This does not mean that if we can’t know all about something, we shouldn’t act or come to decisions. But we act on the best knowledge we have, but we must be aware that there is always more to be learned or more to be added to what we have. We have to know when to stop talking and to begin acting.

Michael Cole, Professor of Communication elaborates, “General Semantics - as part of a period of flourishing new thought in the human sciences - proposes like its intellectual kin to order the study of human experience within a paradigm of communication by reflecting on the nature of language.”

To convey exactly the meaning of each object and even with words would require that one uses new and different words for each object and event. Once used, the words would have to be discarded, for they could never again apply because the precise event or object they cover would never again occur or exist obviously, such a system of symbols work. In the second place, for language to be effective, some form of the symbols must be agreed upon by the participants in communication. In the effort to devise a manageable, workable language, human beings had to fine some means of simplifying the reality they perceived and the reality to which language must refer is too complex and involved for human beings to have done otherwise. Thus it was that they classified the elements of
the real world on the basis of similarities. In doing this, they ignored the big bulk of the differences present.

This observation does not mean that such words should be avoided. The definitely have a place in our communication. Generally, they refer to the more sophisticated concepts, ideas and relationships which intelligent people have developed. The advancement of knowledge could not proceed without them. The point is however, that one should be aware of the communication risks one runs when one uses them. The communicator should be aware that not all people will agree on the meanings of the words.

Although the use of higher level words is justified, good communicators will move down to the lower level words as often as it is necessary to achieve understanding. The apparent reason for this shift to the lower level is the objective of purposeful communication to form as precise a meaning as possible in the mind of another. And this can be done best by using words which make precise references in the mind. These are the words which are at the bottom of the scale those which relate directly to the reality perceived by human beings. These are the words which bring about images of things and events we human beings have experienced. They are for more precise than those words which have as their
references relationships and intangible structures which exist only in the mind.

Perhaps the most difficult communication principle for the uninformed student to accept is that words in themselves do not have meaning. Words do not naturally convey the meaning of a given object or event. A rose just as appropriately could have been called a cow, or an oak, or a dado. All that really matters is that the symbol or the real life object or event it represents be associated in the mind.

If words actually had meaning, our communication problems would be greatly simplified. There would be no word barriers between people. If the communicator was to say 'run' or 'take' or any other word, all people would understand the communicator whether he/she was Swedes, Indian, Chinese or French. This is the way it would have to be if meaning were in the word. But it is not. The Swedes, Indians, Chinese all have their own words. The words are used to represent one and only one meaning or threat they have one convict meaning is a popular misconception. Meanings are determined by the filter of the mind. Thus, since all filters differ, there cannot be precise uniformity in meaning. Of course, there can be and is some general agreement as to the meanings represented by words. In no way have we to intend to see that words represent completely different meanings in each mind. The differences
we refer to are minute for the most part. "Because minds differ, people continually use words in new way sometimes they invent new words. Sometimes they borrow words from another language. Others read or have these usages and they follows. In time the new words and usages become accepted and they find their way into the dictionaries. So it is that language is continually changing. Words begin, they chance, they end the result is a living language." 

The communicator should become more aware of what he/she and others are doing when they use words and other symbols to communicate. George Doris opines,

"Our 'word associations' and our tendency to 'identify words with things' are integral with these processes of perceiving, thinking, judging, etc." 

Words are one of the important symbols through them; we are in a position to convey our impression of reality but the world of events and things, and the world of words about events and things are totally different is to be kept in mind while communicating any idea to anyone at any time.

The issues being raised by General Semantics go beyond the problem of inaccurately assigning "fixed" meanings to words. Rather, scholars
working in the *General Semantics* tradition seem to be addressing the broader problem of how to understand the work of "words" in modern social, public, and cultural relations and subjective experiences. *General Semantics* is concerned with the relation of communication to human conflict, to the necessity of sustaining relations with others, of maintaining social structures and public institutions, and of fostering a critical relationship with the world. We also note that, just as there are presuppositions to the "meanings" we attribute to words, so are there "expectations" about the behavior of others with respect to the order of things in the world. The website www.mcole@ucsd.edu comments, "*General Semantics* is concerned with the relation of communication to human conflict, to the necessity of sustaining relations with others, of maintaining social structures and public institutions, and of fostering a critical relationship with the world. We also note that, just as there are presuppositions to the "meanings" we attribute to words, so are there "expectations" about the behavior of others with respect to the order of things in the world."\(^25\)

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