

## Subject Name & Code:

### ENGLISH FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION- BE02R00021

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#### PBL Assignment 7:

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##### Analyse a real world miscommunication case:

###### Q.1 Identify the exact cause of miscommunication.

The exact cause was **semantic ambiguity and lack of specificity** in the project manager's instruction. The phrase "by Friday" is imprecise, as it does not specify a concrete deadline time or time zone. In a professional context, "by [day]" can be interpreted as either *before the start of* the business day (e.g., 9:00 AM Friday) or *before the end of* the business day (e.g., 5:00 PM Friday). This ambiguity left the instruction open to individual interpretation based on personal habits, past experiences, or assumptions, directly leading to the split in the team's understanding and the subsequent failure to meet the unstated but critical morning deadline.

###### Q.2 Explain the impact on team performance.

The miscommunication had a direct and negative impact on team performance in several key areas:

1. **Project Delay & Missed Milestones:** The primary impact was the failure to have a complete report ready for the morning meeting. This delayed the review process, potentially pushing back subsequent project phases, client submissions, or decision-making points.
2. **Erosion of Trust and Morale:** Team members who submitted their parts expecting a Friday evening deadline may have felt unfairly blamed, while those who anticipated the morning deadline may feel frustrated with colleagues they perceive as not pulling their weight. This can create interpersonal friction and reduce mutual trust.
3. **Inefficiency and Rework:** The incomplete report likely required frantic, last-minute consolidation and editing by the project manager or a subset of the team, leading to rushed work, increased stress, and a higher probability of errors that would need correction later.
4. **Reputational Damage:** The confusion and delay likely reflected poorly on the team's professionalism during the morning meeting, potentially damaging their credibility with stakeholders, management, or clients.

###### Q.3 Suggest two corrective communication strategies.

1. **Implement the "5Ws" Rule for Critical Instructions:** For all task assignments, especially those with deadlines, the communication must explicitly state the **Who, What, When, Where, and Why/How**. In this case, the corrective instruction should be: **"Please submit your final draft sections to the shared folder by 9:00 AM IST this Friday, 15th November, so the consolidated report is ready for the 10:00 AM stakeholder meeting."** This eliminates ambiguity regarding the exact time, time zone, and the purpose of the deadline.
2. **Utilize a Standardized Project Communication Protocol:** Establish and enforce a team-wide standard for communicating deadlines. For example, all deadlines in emails and project management tools (like Asana or Jira) must include:

- **Date AND Time** (in a specified common time zone, e.g., IST).
- **The specific action required** (e.g., "submit to folder," "mark task as complete").
- **A mandatory "acknowledgment" step** where recipients must confirm understanding by a quick reply or by checking a box in the task manager. This protocol ensures clarity and provides a verification loop.

#### Q.4 What does this case teach about clarity in professional writing?

This case underscores a fundamental lesson: in professional writing, **precision is non-negotiable, and clarity must be proactive, not assumed.** It teaches that ambiguity in language, especially regarding critical parameters like time, directly translates to operational risk and failure. Professional writing must be engineered for a single, unambiguous interpretation by all recipients, regardless of their individual contexts or assumptions. This requires moving beyond informal language and actively anticipating potential points of misunderstanding. Specifically, it demonstrates that clarity is achieved not by using fewer words, but by using the *right* words—concrete, specific, and complete terms that leave no room for interpretation. Effective professional writing thus functions as a technical specification for action, where every instruction contains its own explicit conditions for fulfillment.