

Module name: Effective Team Working and Communication

Student name: Corina Bistriceanu (2011101)

Tutor's name: Lloyd Beharry

Assignment No1

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1. Introduction

Since the 1960's, communication has suffered important transformations along with the development and introduction of new technology, generating a demand towards communication models enhancement. The classic models of communication used in teaching and their endurance in time is testament to their continuity, however further recent developments such as the online learning for instance, require an actualised version of communication models being introduced.

During the past few decades, face to face communication has been mostly replaced gradually by interaction via technological channels, and more recently it has been re-routed to the online.

The progress of the modern technology and supporting apps are making it easier than ever before to access conveniently online channels of communication and get access to a vast network of resources. The need of ensuring the accuracy of the information transmitted via alternatives means of communication channels creates the premises of developing further the classic models of communication towards successful realisation of the message transfer and the addressing of any dysfunctionality.

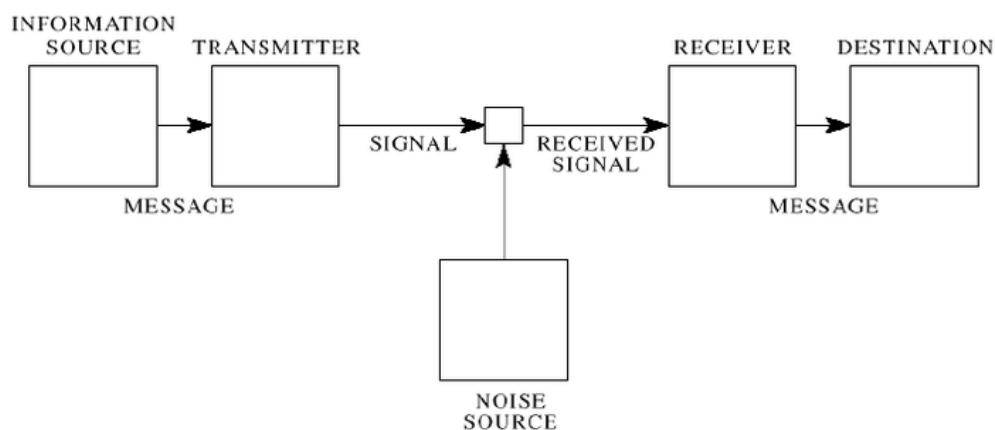
2. Shannon's model of communication process (1948-1949)

Academic study aims to construct knowledge and understanding of the basic communication processes happening in nature during human interaction using models of reference such as the Shannon's communication model, Berlo's and Schramm's. Shannon's model of communication process is no doubt the road opener of the modern field of communication and dubbed "the mother of all models." In fact, the Shannon model provides for the first time a mathematical analysis of the structural elements defining the communication as a process. Shannon's model is a linear model of communication consisting of 5 components: information source, transmitter, signal, receiver, and destination. The model is important as it not only highlights the elements forming part of the communication process, but it also points out the contributing factors to possible failures in the process itself, such as noise.

Case study:

Shannon model can be best explained looking at the case study of Pedro and Maria. In their communication background noise alters the message from Maria to Pedro. When Pedro receives a telephone call from Maria at work, due to noise from the building grounds, Pedro understands that Maria is at home and waiting for him in the kitchen. In her message in fact, Maria asks Pedro to buy a chicken and bring it home to be cooked. In this case study the receiver of the information

(Pedro) does not ask confirmation of the correct message from the transmitter (Maria), therefore Pedro acts on his (wrong) understanding of the message and act according to incorrect data. I can identify as experiencing the Shannon's model in many situations in my working experience as it very often happen to communicate a message over the radio and phone and get a completely different outcome to my request, due to the recipient of the message (hospitality supervisor) understanding the wrong number of a room to be serviced and triggering a complaint from the guest when accessing a different room in error, then the one formulated in my request. These situations, very often, led to a double complaint: one from the guest being disturbed unnecessarily and another one form the guest who's room has not been serviced.



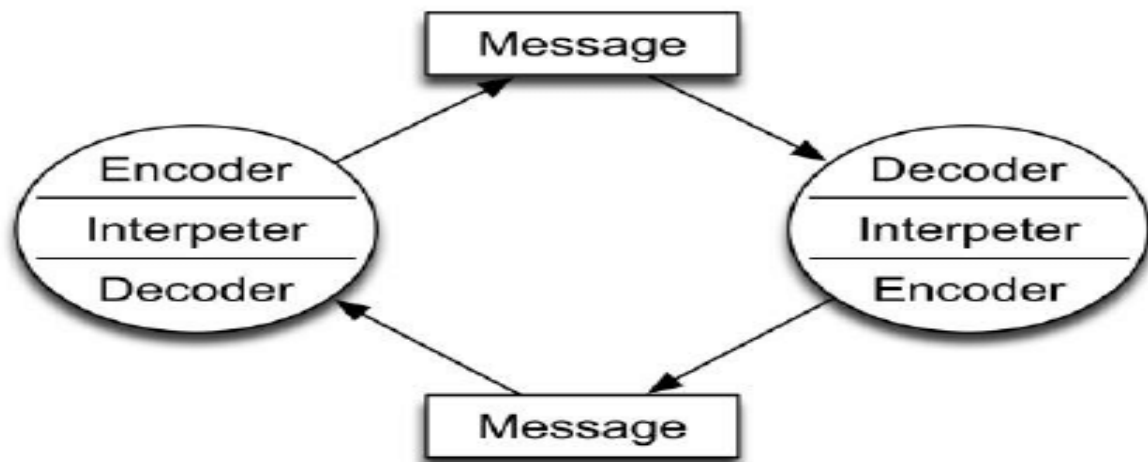
Shannon's model of communication (Figure 1)

(Source) https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Shannons-model-for-communication-channel-Shannon-1948_fig1_251956710/download

3. Schramm's model of communication (1954)

Schramm's model of communication roots back to the initial model developed by Shannon. However, Schramm adds an extra element to Shannon's initial communication model by introducing a much-needed method of validation: confirmation on message delivery. Schramm affirms the fact that the process of communication is complete only when confirmation is made that the message has been received in its intended form from source in its unaltered and

undistorted form. In that sense, in Schramm's model, confirmation on delivery of the message is essential, -as it offers answer to the formerly implied question: "Has the message been received unaltered from source?" And to demonstrate aspects of Schramm's theory, we can easily refer to Pedro's Maria's model once more. In their case study, the breakdown in communication could have been easily prevented by adding confirmation to the message on delivery.



Schramm's Model of Communication (Figure 3)

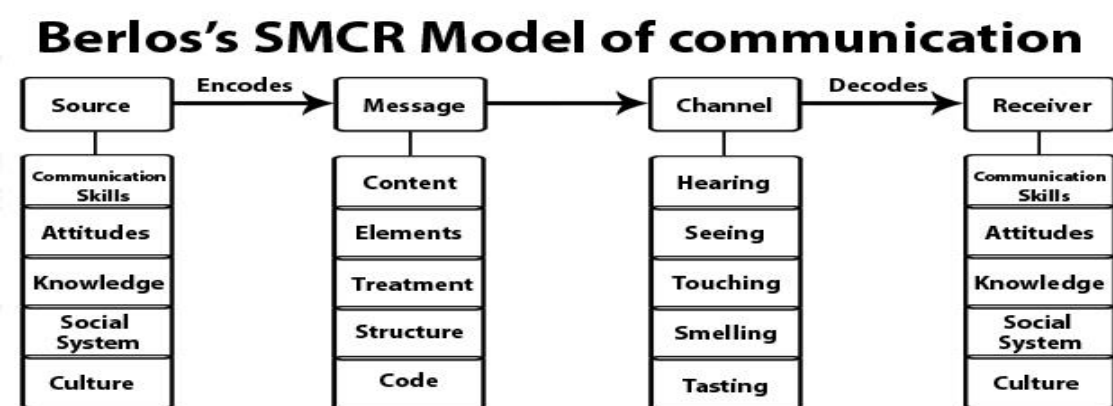
(Source Quora)

4. Berlo's Model of Communication (1964)

Berlo's model of communication is based on the SCMR model (Source, Message, Channel, and Receiver), and is in essence a linear model of communication. Berlo states that for the communication to be clear, both the transmitter and the recipient of a message need to share a common level of understanding and knowledge and possess the skills for successful communication such as eloquence of speech matched by the ability to listen. In Berlo's model, the communication skills, the culture, and the social system of both the transmitter and the recipient of the message act as favourable must-have premises for the accuracy of the information encapsulated in the message. Unlike his predecessors however, in his model, Berlo identifies previously not mentioned factors potentially affecting the successful delivery of a message- such as the human factor and human senses.

Case Study

In this particular case-study, the professor is addressing the villagers in what can be easily accounted as uncommon language. The professor is trying to raise the awareness of the villagers to the fire that broke up threatening to consume his house. The villagers do not understand the terms and notions described by the professor in his speech, and as a result they do not act to offer help and the professor loses his house to fire as a result. On questioning, the villagers respond that the reason why they did not act on the message is entirely due to not understanding its content. The situation described above is far from being unique, I often too experienced discussing with a colleague and asking a question where- due to language barrier predominantly and use of Health&Safety specific terms, I experienced a lack of understanding from my colleague or I received an answer completely unrelated to my question.



Berlo's Model of Communication (Figure 4)

Source : (<https://www.communicationtheory.org/berlos-smcr-model-of-communication/>)

5. What is communication?

Communication is a basic exchange of information, ideas, signals, or messages taking place between a minimum of 2 individuals or a group of people. Communication is an interactive process and one of the most utilised modalities in keeping connected with others within the society. Individuals can express their visions, goals, ideas and often the most basic needs through using communication as a channel to reach each other's understanding and exchange information as part of their everyday living processes. Communication is also an active tool in teaching and

learning and the early development of speech, listening and understanding of the individual-with the scope of processing and exchanging information, thoughts, ideas, concepts, and emotions.

6. Types of communication

Communication divides into four main sub-categories:

- *Verbal*
- *Non-verbal*
- *Written communication*
- *Listening*
- *Visual communication*

Each sub-category is relevant to one other and contributes to define the communication process a whole, with non-verbal communication accounting for 70% of the overall communication process in general.

Verbal communication

Verbal communication involves a direct exchange of messages using words to achieve oral communication. It is also one of the most utilised and accessible methods of communication, enabling subjects to immediately share and assimilate new information and ideas simply through speaking and listening. Verbal communication effectiveness depends on a series of aspects such as the tone used by the speaker, the clarity of speech, the volume and speed, as well as the body language and posture of the speaker. Verbal communication is only successful when the audience listens effectively to the speaker and tries to understand the message conveyed. As an example, someone who speaks very softly and rare is bound to not get the desired attention from an audience. Likewise, the audience will feel bored and will not be paying attention to the speaker and the content of his message. As remarked by Quintanilla, K.M. and Whal, in *Business and professional communication: keys for workplace excellence* (2014), Harrison and Crouch suggest that verbal communication is only the tip of the iceberg and that “nonverbal communication precedes and perhaps structures all subsequent communication”.

Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication is a type of communication that does not require the use of spoken or written words to convey meaning. The non-verbal communication process relies on the correct interpretation of a display of elements such as individual's body posture, attitude, gestures, eye contact and facial expression during the actual communication processes. These elements form part of the correct decoding of a message against information shared-where the transmitter of the message sends opposing clues and meanings contradictory to the information shared in their communication. Non-verbal communication provides information about the speaker and how they feel about a certain person or situation. The most commonly met expression of non-verbal communication is someone crossing their arms, denoting their insecurity and defensiveness. Others include frowning at an audience, using gestures in seeking reassuring or raising eyebrows. Non-verbal communication offers essentially valuable information beyond the spoken content of a message.

Written communication

Written communication involves a type of interaction making use of written words. This type of communication has the advantage of the information transmitted being recorded, creating therefore the possibility of such information to being reviewed immediately but also at a later stage. Written communication comes in the form and shape of notes and ad-notations, emails, letters, postcards, contracts, press release and similar other written records. Written communication can be formal or informal:

- Formal written communication includes writing a report, a cover letter or a CV, an email, an essay, or a letter. Academic language is the correct type of language to be used in formal communication, where the content must be short, clear, and written in a positive tone. The content must be well-structured, expressing ideas concise, avoiding the use of jargon and free of any spelling mistakes. Correct grammar and punctuation are also very important.
- Informal written communication includes personal letters and essays, and it is not bound to using formal/academic language.

Listening

Listening is an active part of the communication process as part of the exchange of information. It is also classed as the ability of receiving and correctly interpreting the meaning of a message.

Listening is also classed as soft skill that allows others to understand the message conveyed to their attention. Good listening skills can potentially help in the workplace as it builds trust, awareness, and the ability to successfully complete tasks. Good eye contact, the avoidance of interruptions, the acknowledging of the message and repetition of the instructions received as to double check understanding, are ways to demonstrate that someone is paying attention and listens. As an example, the process of communication in the teaching for instance is not a one-way avenue; it requires the shared effort of the tutor as well as the active engagement of the student in ensuring that effective teaching takes place.

- Empathic listening

Empathic listening is an important skill set in building strong relationships with others. It demonstrates the ability to listen by acknowledging how the other person feels without minimising their concerns or worries. Empathic listening is an ability that helps particularly during uncomfortable conversations, and it denotes being attentive, responsive, and supportive against offering advice or giving criticism. According to Peter Morgan in *The Business Students Guide to Study and Employability*, (2019) “Listening well is not a passive process. Instead, it requires paying active attention to information and an ability to interpret non-verbal and verbal messages well, and a willingness to then check that information in order to ensure an accurate understanding.”

Case study

Although at a first glance listening seems easy, I found myself many times drifting away from the conversation, completely un-intentional and as I was preoccupied with different aspects being from my personal or professional life. It is unpleasant to find yourself not listening to someone and having to ask them again to repeat, it actually demonstrates them that you do not care about what they are sharing, and it can often become embarrassing.

Visual communication

Visual communication involves the graphic representation of a concept, idea, or information to create meaning. Visual communication is often achieved through the display of symbols, images and content shared through channels such as media, literature, and drawings. One example of visual communication preserved through the centuries, is the graphic representations engraved on archaeological artefacts and sites acting as a message through time from our ancestors to the modern man. Most commonly, nowadays visual communication is depicted through media,

magazines, and advertising, organization charts and display information as well as training videos and posters.

7. Communication skills

Good communication skills enable individuals to attain success in their personal and professional life by developing personal and interpersonal skills that help them enjoy better relationships with others. Building strong communication skills is essential. Effective communication is a process that can build better relationships, de-escalate conflict in time of a crisis and build new understanding and common ground towards achieving a teams' goal. Effective communication is important in all aspects of life, with verbal communication, listening and writing playing a major role in learning and development and building of personal and interpersonal skills. According to Robbins T. (2019) "To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others."

- Personal skills
 - Good verbal, non-verbal, writing and listening skills.
- Inter-personal skills
 - Active listening, assertiveness, teamwork, teamwork, conflict resolution, decision-making

8. Conclusion

Communication is at the core of the society functioning and progressing at its right potential throughout challenges and during harmonious times. Good communication is a vital part of connecting individuals, ideas and ideals and strengthens the individual by creating a solid social net to rely on and be an active part of. The recent Covid19 crisis challenges highlight that in an evolving intercultural context, mass communication through online resources and technology creates a need of updating and unifying the classic academic models of communications and the universality of language used in the online teaching. Often, in the online model, the messages from source can easily escape the general understanding of an audience in its intended form. The message therefore becomes dysfunctional and is influenced by factors such as language barrier, general understanding and knowledge of an audience, socio-economic and educational factors, as well as poor or failing internet connections and noise. The personal meaning and interpretation in relation to a message versus its intended form can also act as a dysfunctional element as well, particularly when the audience fails to verify the accuracy of the information transmitted and

does not have an understanding of the topic being discussed. Therefore, it seems that with all that technology has to offer in the modern age, the human factor and the in-person interactions are not to be minimised or excluded as they clearly are the ground-base for a successful communication process and cannot be replaced or replicated despite the recent technological advancements.

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