

[EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION]

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[Introduction]

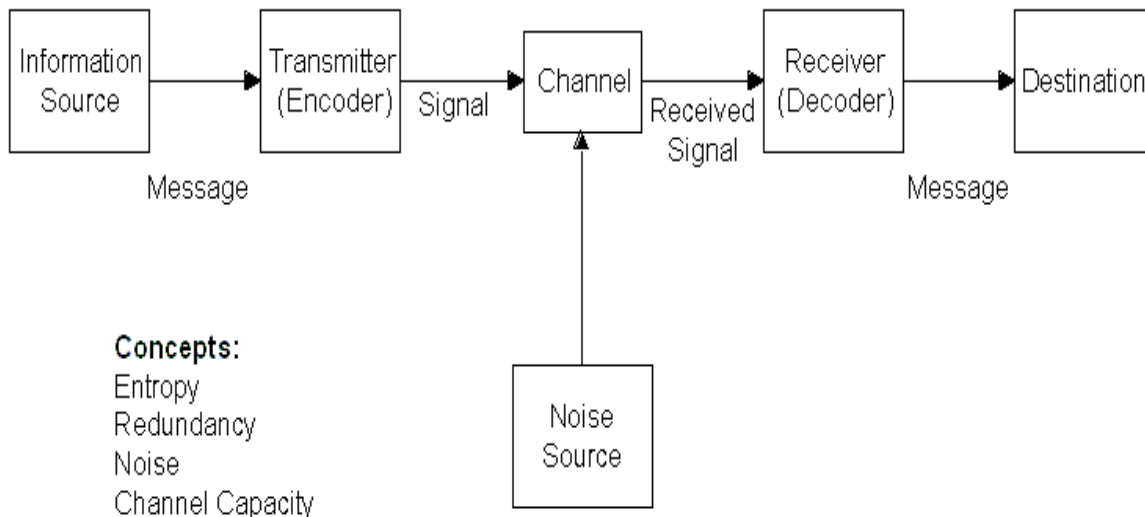
Effective communication skills are perhaps the most important life skill one can learn. Communication means transferring or receiving information or ideas from one person to another. Developing such a vital skill can help anyone in life, be it professionally, scholastically, or socially. Communication can be vocal, written, visual or non-verbal. This is a two-way action that includes a sender and a receiver. Often it involves multiple receivers.

Bad communication is very detrimental at the workplace. It can cause misunderstandings and can cause misinformation to spread, which will lead to stressed employees, suppressed innovation, reduce of creativity and profits. People generally believe that excellent communication is a natural skill everyone is born with, which is entirely inaccurate. They assume others know what they are thinking thus withholds information by mistake. Thus, it should be the priority for everyone to hone their communication skills. To do that it is important to know the various models of communication. Some of them includes The Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model, Schramm's model and Berlo's model of communication.

[Shannon-Weaver]

The Shannon Weaver model of communication is known as “the mother of all models.” It was created by Claude Elwood Shannon together with Warren Weaver. The model initially proposed in the article “A Mathematical Theory of Communication” in the Bell System Technical Journal in 1948. As Shannon had put it in his article “The fundamental problem of communication is that of reproducing a message sent from one point, either exactly or approximately, to another point (Shannon, 1948, p.379). It is also known as the information theory or the Shannon theory since Shannon is the main creator of the model. “The Shannon and Weaver model is a linear model of communication that provides a framework for analyzing how messages are sent and received” (Chris, 2022). This explains of how the messages can be mixed or misinterpreted while in the process of sending or receiving the messages. The model consists of five steps in blocks set in a linear fashion (from sender to receiver) with noise as the interference that jumbles up the signal. The five steps are Sender, Encode, Channel, Decoder and lastly Receiver.

The Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model, 1949



- **Sender:** The model begins with the sender, also known as the source of information, which can be an object or a person. The sender must choose what message to send through which channel and whom to send it.
- **Encoder:** It is also known as the transmitter. It can be a person or a machine that converts the ideas into signals which later can be sent to the receiver.
- **Channel:** The channel is the medium that is used to send signals from the sender to the receiver. It can be a television, smartphone, internet, soundwaves etc.
- **Decoder:** It is the exact opposite of an encoder, meaning a decoder is used to convert signals into ideas or written words for the receiver to understand the message properly. Depending on their uses a decoder can be the human brain, computers, smartphones etc.
- **Receiver:** This is the final destination of the message after it's been decoded by the decoder.
- **Noise:** The noise impedes the message or the signal. There are two types of noises, internal (while encoding or decoding) and external (other signals or voices that interrupts the message).

Over the years many critics claimed that the Shannon Weaver model is a misinterpretation of communication as it hardly gives importance to the feedback. This means that the information goes only one way and not both ways like normal communication is supposed to be.

My friend John works as a cashier in a fast-food restaurant surrounded by noisy machines all the time. Usually when it is rush hour there are many people coming to order their food on the till.

Since John works in the front counter, he oversees taking orders. He says that most of the time he has to get close to the customers to take their order because of all the background noises coming from the machines, music and people chatting and laughing with each other. So, it is a common occurrence that when the customers ask for a chicken burger, he hears cheeseburger or vice versa.

[Schramm]

Schramm's model of communication was first suggested in 1954 by the American author Wilbur Schramm. This model is mostly similar to Shannon-Weaver's model of communication with only one exception, the feedback. The author knew the importance of communicating both ways, thus he implemented the feedback loop to make the model more accurate. Otherwise, it will be like talking with someone without getting any response back. Schramm also believed that encoding and decoding a message was the most fundamental part in communication. If the sender doesn't encode properly or the receiver doesn't decode properly then the information sent will be unclear or interpreted. However, this model has its own vulnerabilities. It is possible that the recipient will not understand or misinterpret the message because of some variables such as their knowledge, cultural and religious backgrounds.

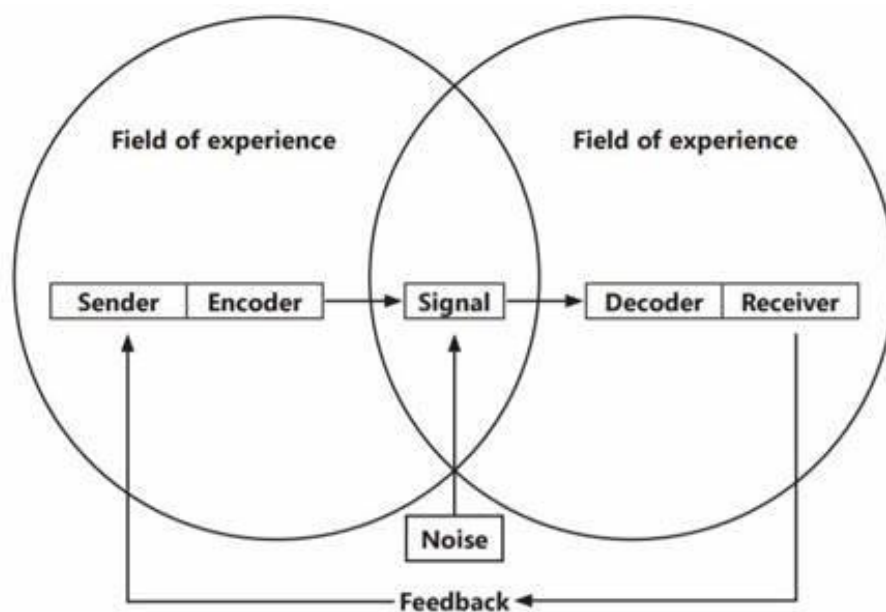


Fig 3. Schramm Model

[Berlo]

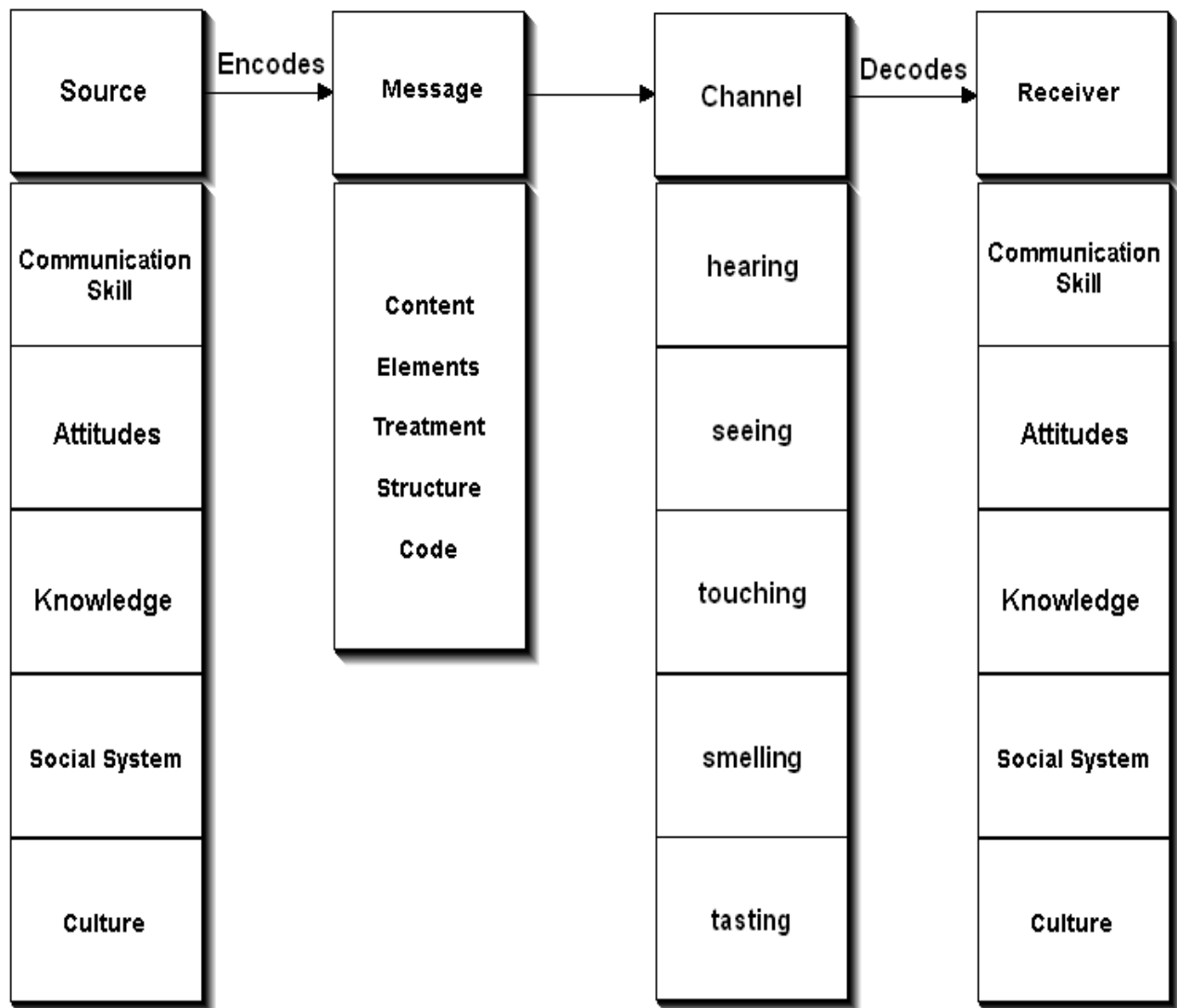
This model of communication was created by David Kenneth Berlo in 1960 after the Shannon Weaver's model. This explores how sending a message can be vulnerable to numerous external and internal factors. The model is comprised of four main components: Sender, Message, Channel and Receiver. It is also known as the SMCR model of communication.

- **S – Sender:** It is the source of information and the encoder. When communicating face to face it is important to take notice of how someone is talking. As to not seem overly rude they need to have good attitude, talk in a precise and friendly manner as to risk misunderstandings. Sometimes the sender and receiver also need to possess the same amount of knowledge about the subject they are discussing about as to not misinterpret the message. Often not knowing the culture or religious background of the recipient can impede in communicating efficiently. Language barriers also need to be taken in consideration.
- **M – Message:** The message is the content that is being sent from the sender to the receiver. It can be sent through many forms (Code) such as through texts, audios, videos etc. The message also needs to be structured correctly so that it is comprehensible with the right treatment like hand gestures, signs, and tones.
- **C – Channel:** The channel is the medium through which the message is sent. For example, it could be the internet, smartphone, radio, television, air (sound waves) etc. A human can gather information through all their five senses which are hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, and tasting. These are the channels.
- **R – Receiver:** The receiver is also the one who decodes the message and the last component of Berlo's model of communication. It is the end of the process when the receiver receives the message and decodes it correctly given that both the receiver and sender are in sync for the process to be affective.

However, there is a major problem with this model as it does not have a feedback system.

In the restaurant my friend John works, he often received customers who do not know English or any other languages that they might have in common. Usually in these cases John has to show the menu and to the customer and through gestures and signs find out which food they want and if they have any allergies. This situation could have been easily avoided if the self-ordering kiosks had more language options for foreigners or if there was someone present who spoke Urdu.

Berlo's Model of Communication



A Source encodes a message for a channel to a receiver who decodes the message:
S-M-C-R Model.

[Case studies]

[Maria and Pedro]

Maria and Pedro are a couple. One day Maria called Pedro while he was in a construction site and asked him to bring her chicken when he returns home. When Pedro returned home, he went to the kitchen to find his wife, but she wasn't there. When Pedro found Maria in the sitting room she asked him where the chicken is. Upon being confronted by Maria, Pedro realized that he mistakenly heard that Maria would see him in the kitchen when he returns home.

Shannon-Weaver's model of communication explains the confusion here. However, some people claim that Schramm's model of communication explains the confusion better since Pedro replied back to his wife. Pedro was in a construction site with lots of background noises around him so when Maria asked him to bring her chicken, Pedro heard that she wanted to see him in the kitchen. This situation could have been avoided if Pedro went to a quieter place to talk or confirmed what was requested of him before replying "okay".

[The Professor and the Village People]

An English professor used to live near a small village in his large house. The villagers were uneducated. One night the professor fell asleep and dropped his smoking pipe on the carpet which started a fire. The Professor ran into the village yelling "The edifice is being consumed by a great conflagration", but no one bat an eye and continued with their work. The next morning the professor asked the villagers why no one helped him, and the villagers responded that if he said his house was on fire they would have helped him.

Berlo's model of communication can explain the miscommunication between the Professor and the villagers. If the professor used the common tongue instead of using such a high vocabulary when asking for help, the villagers would have understood him and helped him. The sender, in this case the professor, should have been wary that the villagers do not have enough knowledge to understand him.

[Technology in Communication]

In the last 150 years communication technology advanced astronomically fast. Switching from radios and antenna phones to communicate to televisions and smartphones was a rapid process. However, there are many disadvantages as there are advantage in using this kind of technology.

Due to smartphones and computers, it became extremely easy to communicate with loved ones or attend meetings from anywhere by using the internet such as texting, audio calling or video calling. Now it is faster and more efficient to listen and watch news in real time from the comfort of our home. It is also very ecological and more efficient rather than using mails.

Communication technology is fairly new and with each generation it is getting more advanced. That is why many people from the older generation has a tough time grasping and learning to use smart devises. It is also not always dependable as we need either the internet or signal to send texts or make calls, which is not readily available everywhere in the world. Also, hackers can compromise important data and confidential calls. This technology does not require face to face contact thus using it makes people become less social in real life. This method also made easier to cyberbully someone because they do not need to face the victim.

I think that overall, we should appreciate communication technology more as it has globalized the world and changed it for the better in such a short amount of time. The advantages we get by using it is vastly more than the disadvantages.

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