

COMMUNICATION: UNDERSTANDING THE FOUNDATION

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SUMMARY

Communication is a basis for anything to happen. There are various forms, styles, models, levels and types that are explained in this report and they explain that for communication to occur there has to be a sender/source, a means of sending, a receiver, understanding and listening. If any one of these factors is missing the communication can be considered as poor and could lead to a dire, confusing and uncomfortable environment or situation.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the basis for anything to happen, whether good or bad. Human beings have developed as far as we have due to communication, communication between one another, communication between us and the environment, communication between us and the animals surrounding us or even communication between our brains (medulla oblongata) and the parts that make up the human system. Although, as basic and fundamental as communication is, good productive communication is rare and poor communication could be as dangerous and as harmful as the world's missile and nuclear weapons.

COMMUNICATION

The word 'communication' seemingly related to the word 'common' originates from the Latin verb *communicare*, which means 'to share,' 'to make common' and which is then related to the Latin word for 'common' which is *communis*. Communication is the exchange of information and the expression of feeling that can result in understanding (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary 2021) and the word 'understanding' being the difference between good and bad communication. Understanding (also called intellection) as defined by (Setti, Ruffa, 2012) is a psychological process related to an abstract or physical object, such as a person, situation, or message, whereby one is able to think about it and use concepts to deal adequately with that object. This then further amplifies our definition of communication to communication is the exchange of information and the expression of feeling that can result in a psychological process related to an abstract or physical object whereby one is able to think about it and use concepts to deal adequately with said object.

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

There are various types of communication developed to convey information in different ways each being similar but vastly different at the same time. These various types of communication were developed to continue the flow of information/knowledge when a previous form was inadequate or unable to achieve the required result.

These types of communication include:

- **Verbal Communication**

Verbal communication as defined in (Skillsyouneed, 2021) is the use of words to share information with other people. It is one of the first forms of communication and is used to convey messages from one person to another orally

- **Nonverbal Communication**

Nonverbal communication has various definition all bearing the same concept, Nonverbal communication refers to gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, eye contact (or lack thereof), body language, posture, and other ways people can communicate without using language (Doyle, 2020). It is the most complex form of communication one in which humans are even yet to fully understand.

- **Written Communication**

Written communication which has been considered part of verbal communication is the oldest form of communication dating back to scribbles made in caves. It has been defined by (Inc, 2020) as any type of interaction that makes use of the written word. Written communication can be broken into two sections

- Formal : This is communication that is required to follow a specific structure or path, usually regarded as official communication
- Informal : This communication that may move freely not following any prescribed structure or path.

PYRAMID/LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

The pyramid of communication was created to be used to explain different scientific disciplines that study the subject. It begins with:

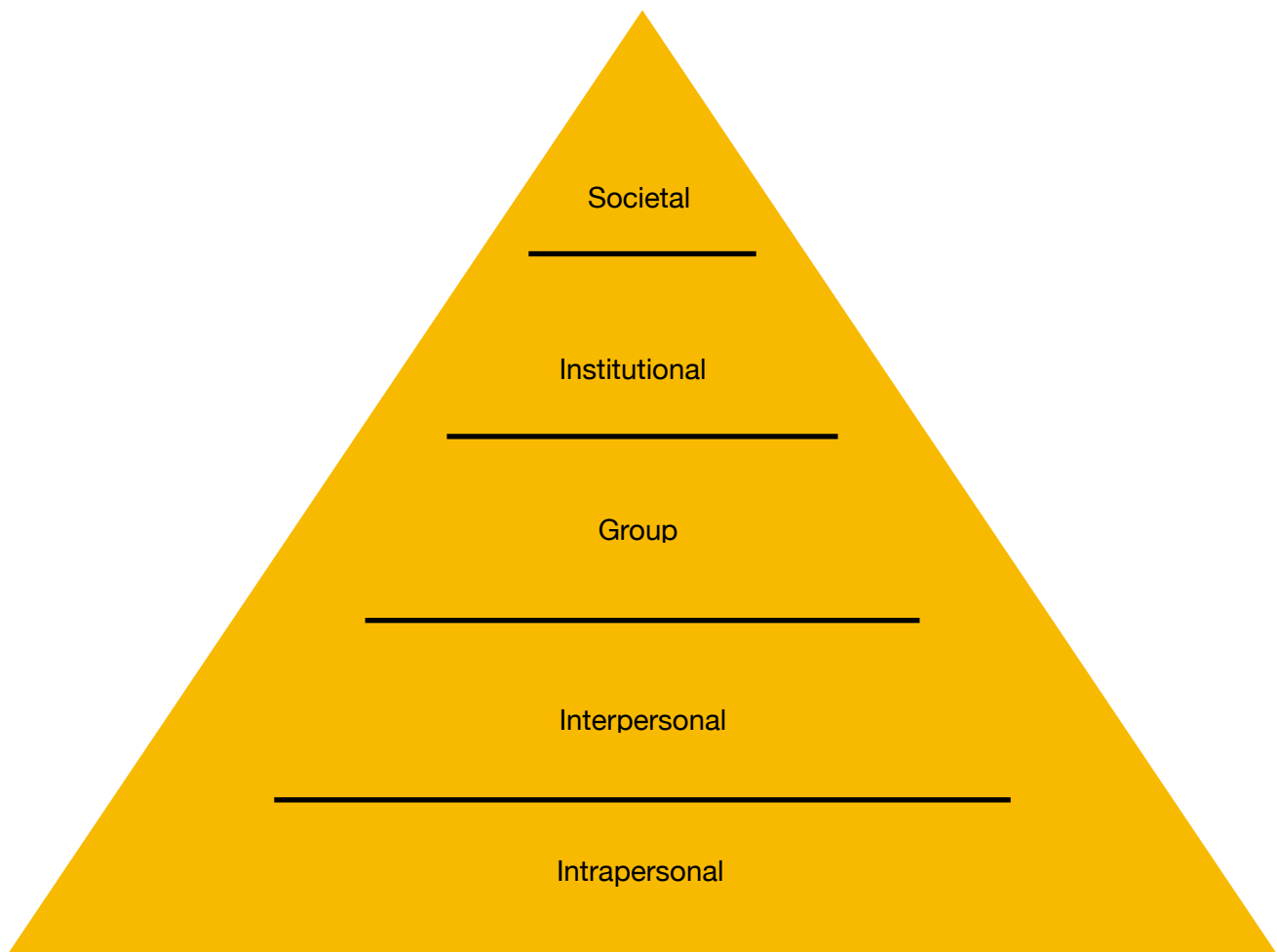
Societal Communication: This is communication aimed at the general public and is mostly studied by sociologists and others of the sort.

Institutional Communication: This is communication performed by political parties, organized religions and others alike. This form of communication is studied by sociologists, anthropologists and culturalists.

Group Communication: This is communication done by groups like family or fan clubs. It is similar to institutional but is experienced on a smaller scale. Similar to institutional communication is is studied by sociologists, anthropologists and culturalists.

Interpersonal Communication: This is communication between two or more people, it is studied by sociologists and psychologists.

Intrapersonal Communication: This is communication you have with yourself, communication like thinking and processing information fall under this category. This approach is studied by psychologists.



STYLES OF COMMUNICATION

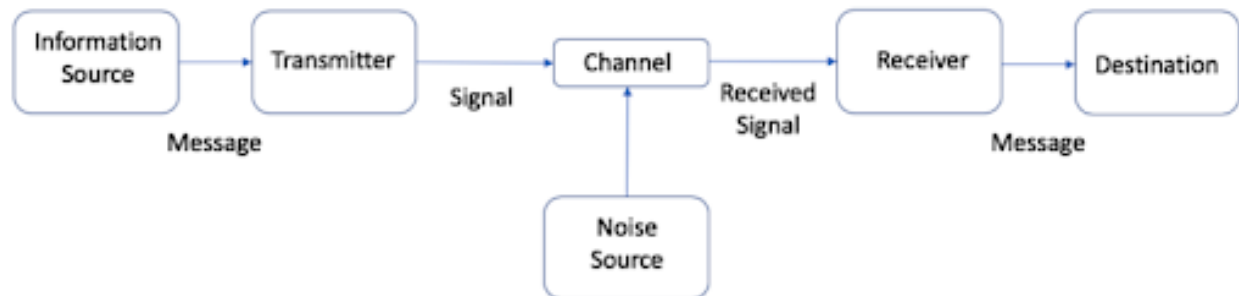
According to (Bourne, 1995) there are 5 style of communication and these five styles are:

- Assertive: This form of communication involves voicing honest opinions and thoughts in a respectful manner that considers other peoples opinions and feelings.
- Aggressive: This form of communication involves being controlling. It involves the use of intimidation to get what you want.
- Passive-aggressive: This form of communication combines both passive and aggressive communication. It seems passive on the surface but reveals silent resentment and annoyance.
- Manipulative: This form of communication involves doing or saying whatever you can to gain a personal advantage.
- Passive/Submissive: This form of communication involves avoiding confrontation and conflicts. It involves putting others needs and wants before yours.

MODELS OF COMMUNICATION

There are three major models of communication each with similar but varying concepts.

The first of the three is the **Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model (1949)**



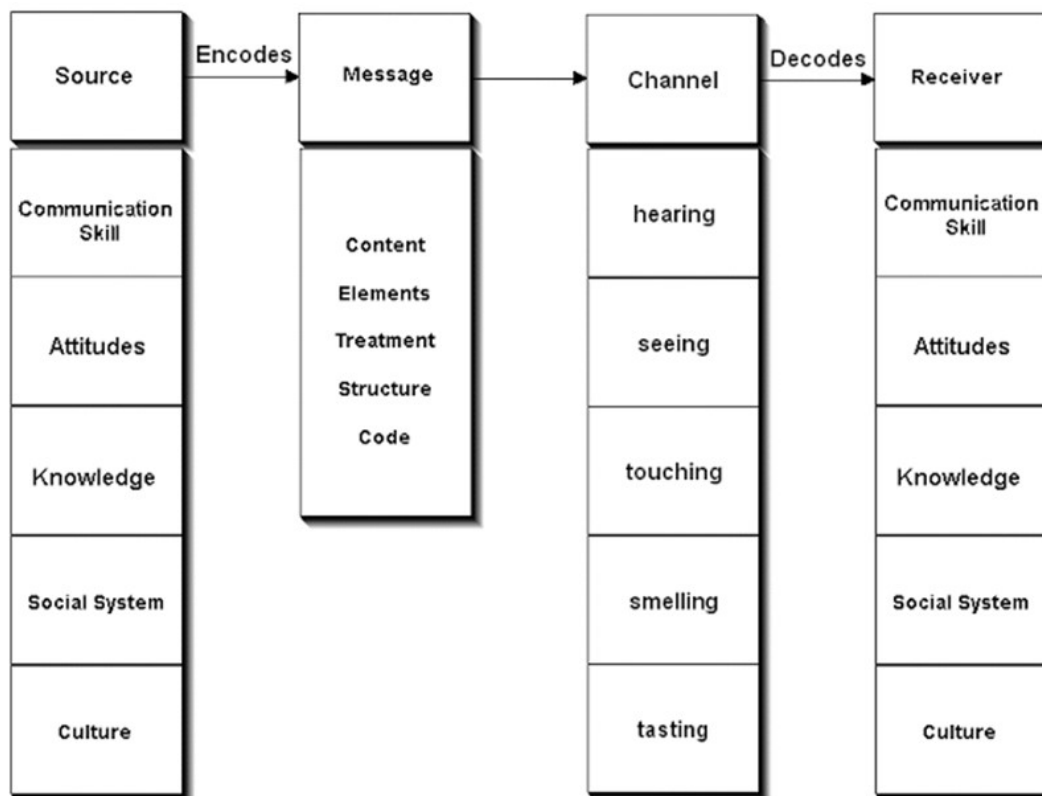
This model of communication was developed Claude Elwood Shannon in 1948 when he wrote an article “A Mathematical Theory of Communication,” his model then became known as the “mother of all models.”

The concept involves a;

- Sender (information source) - the person who makes the message, chooses the path and sends it.
- Encoder (Transmitter) - the person or machine who converts the message into signals or data.
- Channel - the path used to send the machine.
- Decoder (Receiver) - the person or machine who convert the message back from signals.
- Receiver (destination) - this is the person who gets the message.
- Noise - these are the disturbances that edit the sent message.

This model is universal and can be applied varying types of communication, like basic conversation between one person and another where one person is the sender, the brain being the transmitter, writing or shouting would be the channel, the other person's brain being the decoder, the other person being the receiver and distance between them or actual noise would be the noise. It is a very useful model and was used in the process of telecommunication.

The second of the three is **Berlo's Model of Communication**



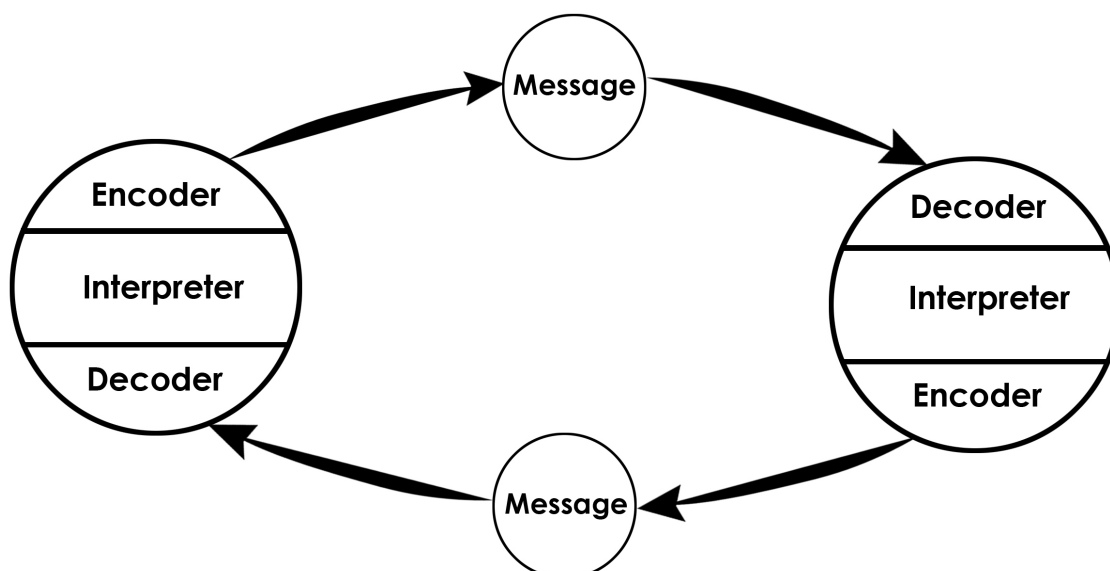
This model was developed in 1960 by David Berlo, it is also referred to as the Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver (SMCR) model of communication. The model was created as a refinement of the Shannon-Weaver model of communication to enable more efficient communication. The major difference between the two is the in-depth format the SMCR model has in respect to the summarized version of the Shannon-Weaver model. This model has four major components and their various factors;

- **Sender (Source):** This is the person who makes the message, chooses the path and sends it
 - Communication Skills: If the sender has good communication skills the message will be communicated better than if not
 - Attitude: The attitude of the sender changes the meaning and effect of the message
 - Knowledge: Familiarity with the subject of message makes communication more efficient
 - Social Systems: Social factors like values, laws as well as place and situation affect the senders way of communicating.
 - Culture: Cultural differences makes messages different

- **Message:** This is the substance being communicated. It might be in audio, voice, text, etc.
 - Content: This is what the message contains
 - Element: This is the nonverbal this attached to the content, e.g gestures, signs, etc.
 - Treatment: This is the way the message is conveyed to the receiver.
 - Structure: This is the structure or arrangement of the message, it affects its effectiveness.
 - Code: This is the form the message is sent, e.g language, text, video, etc.
- **Channel:** This is the medium used to send the message. In mass communication it may be telephones or internets. But, in general communication the fives senses of the human is the channel.
 - Hearing: Message received through hearing.
 - Seeing: Message received through sight. We can also get non verbal messages by sight.
 - Touching: Many nonverbal communication is achieved through touch
 - Smelling: We gather info by smell
 - Tasting: Taste provides information to be sent as
- **Receiver:** This is the person who gets the message sent. This models believes that the thinking pattern and factors of the receiver must be in sync with that of the sender for effective communication.

Despite the inclusiveness of Berlo's Model, certain reservations have been made regarding its lack of room for noise, its sender-receiver situation, its complexity and most importantly its lack of the thinking, understanding and analyzing sense (the sixth sense).

The third of the three is **Schramm's Model of Communication** (1954)



Wilber Schramm proposed his model of communication in 1954. He proposed that encoding and decoding were the two most important factors for effective communication then based his model on that statement. He also states that communication is incomplete unless the sender receive a response from the receiver implying that communication is a two way process between both parties. Similar to the Berlo Model, he also believed that an individual's knowledge, experience and cultural background plays an important role in communication. But, contrary to the Berlo model he includes that a person's thinking or reasoning affects communication introducing the concepts of **Denotative meaning** as a message with the same meaning for everyone and Connotative meaning as messages affected by emotional factors.

LISTENING

For two or more people or two or more objects, or two or more animals, or two or more parts, or two or more entities to communicate and understand efficiently, one must be "speaking" in what ever form and another/the other must be "listening". No matter how good or loud or efficient the "speaker" if no entity is listening, the communication has failed.

THE COST OF POOR COMMUNICATION

Almost everyday poor communication affects our daily lives, in some cases we know in other cases we do not know. Whether it is caused by poorly worded emails, careless reading or listening, horrible environment or anything else of the sort its effects are always stressful and dire and could breed a grouper mistrust and uncertainty. Using guidelines from a case study I began my own experiment and I heard a story from a family friend's son. He was tasked with writing a report that would cost him 40% of his final grade. But was given almost no guidelines and the teacher did not seem to care. He then went ahead to write the report the best he could only to be given a poor grade causing him to have to repeat the course the following year and suffer a major set back in his life plan. Good communication could have prevented this incident but poor communication between the teacher and student caused a bad situation.

CONCLUSION

Communication is easy but difficult to completely understand. But, mankind would not have progressed this far if not for all the various forms of communication. After reviewing the information we know that for effective communication there has to be a sender, a means of sending, a receiver, understanding and listening.

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APPENDIX

Case Study

In small groups, examine each “case” and determine the following:

1. Define the **situation**: Who is communicating to whom about what, how, and why? What was the goal of the communication in each case?
2. Identify the **communication error** (poor task or audience analysis? Use of inappropriate language or style? Poor organization or formatting of information? Other?)
3. Explain what **costs/losses** were incurred by this problem.
4. Identify **possible solutions** or strategies that would have prevented the problem, and what benefits would be derived from implementing solutions or preventing the problem.