

## MODELS OF COMMUNICATION

Models of communication refers to the conceptual model used to explain the human communication process. The first major model for communication came in 1949 by Claude Elwood Shannon and Warren Weaver for Bell Laboratories. Following the basic concept, communication is the process of sending and receiving messages or transferring information from one part (sender) to another (receiver).

**Shannon and Weaver.** The original model was designed to mirror the functioning of radio and telephone technologies. Their initial model consisted of three primary parts: sender, channel, and receiver. The sender was the part of a telephone a person spoke into, the channel was the telephone itself, and the receiver was the part of the phone where one could hear the other person. Shannon and Weaver also recognized that often there is static that interferes with one listening to a telephone conversation, which they deemed noise. The noise could also mean the absence of signal. In a simple model, often referred to as the transmission model or standard view of communication, information or content (e.g. a message in natural language) is sent in some form (as spoken language) from an emisor/ sender/ encoder to a destination/ receiver/ decoder. This common conception of communication views communication as a means of sending and receiving information. The strengths of this model are simplicity, generality, and quantifiability. Social scientists Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver structured this model based on the following elements: An information source, which produces a message. A transmitter, which encodes the message into signals. A channel, to which signals are adapted for transmission. A receiver, which 'decodes' (reconstructs) the message from the signal. A destination, where the message arrives. Shannon and Weaver argued that there were three levels of problems for communication within this theory. The technical problem: how accurately can the message be transmitted? The semantic problem: how precisely is the meaning 'conveyed'? The effectiveness problem: how effectively does the received meaning affect behavior? Daniel Chandler critiques the transmission model by stating: It assumes communicators are isolated individuals. No allowance for differing purposes. No allowance for differing interpretations. No allowance for unequal power relations. No allowance for situational contexts.

**David Berlo.** In 1960, David Berlo expanded on Shannon and Weaver's (1949) linear model of communication and created the SMCR Model of Communication. The Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver Model of communication separated the model into clear parts and has been expanded upon by other scholars.

**Schramm.** Communication is usually described along a few major dimensions: Message (what type of things are communicated), source / emisor / sender / encoder (by whom), form (in which form), channel (through which medium), destination / receiver / target / decoder (to whom), and Receiver. Wilbur Schramm (1954) also indicated that we should also examine the impact that a message has (both desired and undesired) on the target of the message. Between parties, communication includes acts that confer knowledge and experiences, give advice and commands, and ask questions. These acts may take many forms, in one of the various manners of communication. The form depends on the abilities of the group communicating. Together, communication content and form make messages that are sent towards a destination. The target can be oneself, another person or being, another entity (such as a corporation or group of beings). Communication can be seen as processes of information transmission governed by three levels of semiotic rules: Syntactic (formal properties of signs and symbols), Pragmatic (concerned with the relations between signs/ expressions and their users) and Semantic (study of relationships between signs and symbols and what they represent). Therefore, communication is social interaction where at least two interacting agents share a common set of signs and a common set of semiotic rules. This commonly held rule in some sense ignores autocommunication, including intrapersonal communication via diaries or self-talk, both secondary phenomena that followed the primary acquisition of communicative competences within social interactions.

**Barnlund.** In light of these weaknesses, Barnlund (2008) proposed a transactional model of communication. The basic premise of the transactional model of communication is that individuals are simultaneously engaging in the sending and receiving of messages. In a slightly more complex form a sender and a receiver are linked reciprocally. This second attitude of communication, referred to as the constitutive model or constructionist view, focuses on how an individual communicates as the determining factor of the way the message will be interpreted. Communication is viewed as a

conduit; a passage in which information travels from one individual to another and this information becomes separate from the communication itself. A particular instance of communication is called a speech act. The sender's personal filters and the receiver's personal filters may vary depending upon different regional traditions, cultures, or gender; which may alter the intended meaning of message contents. In the presence of "communication noise" on the transmission channel (air, in this case), reception and decoding of content may be faulty, and thus the speech act may not achieve the desired effect. One problem with this encode-transmit-receive-decode model is that the processes of encoding and decoding imply that the sender and receiver each possess something that functions as a codebook, and that these two code books are, at the very least, similar if not identical. Although something like code books is implied by the model, they are nowhere represented in the model, which creates many conceptual difficulties. Theories of coregulation describe communication as a creative and dynamic continuous process, rather than a discrete exchange of information. Canadian media scholar Harold Innis had the theory that people use different types of media to communicate and which one they choose to use will offer different possibilities for the shape and durability of society (Wark, McKenzie 1997). His famous example of this is using ancient Egypt and looking at the ways they built themselves out of media with very different properties stone and papyrus. Papyrus is what he called 'Space Binding'. it made possible the transmission of written orders across space, empires and enables the waging of distant military campaigns and colonial administration. The other is stone and 'Time Binding', through the construction of temples and the pyramids can sustain their authority generation to generation, through this media they can change and shape communication in their society (Wark, McKenzie 1997).

**Psychology of communication.** Bernard Luskin, UCLA, 1970, advanced computer assisted instruction and began to connect media and psychology into what is now the field of media psychology. In 1998, the American Association of Psychology, Media Psychology Division 46 Task Force report on psychology and new technologies combined media and communication as pictures, graphics and sound increasingly dominate modern communication.

**Constructionist Model.** There is an additional working definition of communication to consider that authors like Richard A. Lanham

(2003) and as far back as Erving Goffman (1959) have highlighted. This is a progression from Lasswell's attempt to define human communication through to this century and revolutionized into the constructionist model. Constructionists believe that the process of communication is in itself the only messages that exist. The packaging can not be separated from the social and historical context from which it arose, therefore the substance to look at in communication theory is style for Richard Lanham and the performance of self for Erving Goffman. Lanham chose to view communication as the rival to the over encompassing use of CBS model (which pursued to further the transmission model). CBS model argues that clarity, brevity, and sincerity are the only purpose to prose discourse, therefore communication. Lanham wrote, "If words matter too, if the whole range of human motive is seen as animating prose discourse, then rhetoric analysis leads us to the essential questions about prose style" (Lanham 10). This is saying that rhetoric and style are fundamentally important; they are not errors to what we actually intend to transmit. The process which we construct and deconstruct meaning deserves analysis. Erving Goffman sees the performance of self as the most important frame to understand communication. Goffman wrote, "What does seem to be required of the individual is that he learn enough pieces of expression to be able to 'fill in' and manage, more or less, any part that he is likely to be given" (Goffman 73) Goffman is highlighting the significance of expression. The truth in both cases is the articulation of the message and the package as one. The construction of the message from social and historical context is the seed as is the pre-existing message is for the transmission model. Therefore any look into communication theory should include the possibilities drafted by such great scholars as Richard A. Lanham and Erving Goffman that style and performance is the whole process. Communication stands so deeply rooted in human behaviors and the structures of society that scholars have difficulty thinking of it while excluding social or behavioral events. Because communication theory remains a relatively young field of inquiry and integrates itself with other disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, and sociology, one probably cannot yet expect a consensus conceptualization of communication across disciplines. Communication Model Terms as provided by Rothwell (11-15): Noise; interference with effective transmission and reception of a message. Sender; the initiator and encoder of a message. Receiver; the one that receives the message (the listener) and the decoder of a message. Decode; translates the

senders spoken idea/message into something the receiver understands by using their knowledge of language from personal experience. Encode; puts the idea into spoken language while putting their own meaning into the word/message. Channel; the medium through which the message travels such as through oral communication (radio, television, phone, in person) or written communication (letters, email, text messages) Feedback; the receivers verbal and nonverbal responses to a message such as a nod for understanding (nonverbal), a raised eyebrow for being confused (nonverbal), or asking a question to clarify the message (verbal). Message; the verbal and nonverbal components of language that is sent to the receiver by the sender which conveys an idea.

**Linear Model.** It is a one way model to communicate with others. It consists of the sender encoding a message and channeling it to the receiver in the presence of noise. Draw backs – the linear model assumes that there is a clear cut beginning and end to communication. It also displays no feedback from the receiver. For example; a letter, email, text message, lecture.

**Interactive Model.** It is two linear models stacked on top of each other. The sender channels a message to the receiver and the receiver then becomes the sender and channels a message to the original sender. This model has added feedback, indicates that communication is not a one way but a two way process. It also has "field of experience" which includes our cultural background, ethnicity geographic location, extend of travel, and general personal experiences accumulated over the course of your lifetime. Draw backs – there is feedback but it is not simultaneous. For example – instant messaging. The sender sends an IM to the receiver, then the original sender has to wait for the IM from the original receiver to react. Or a question/answer session where you just ask a question then you get an answer.

**Transactional Model.** It assumes that people are connected through communication; they engage in transaction. Firstly, it recognizes that each of us is a sender-receiver, not merely a sender or a receiver. Secondly, it recognizes that communication affects all parties involved. So communication is fluid/simultaneous. This is how most conversation are like. The transactional model also contains ellipses that symbolize the communication environment (how you interpret the data that you are given). Where the ellipses meet is the most effect communication area because both

communicators share the same meaning of the message. For example – talking/listening to friends. While your friend is talking you are constantly giving them feedback on what you think through your facial expression verbal feedback without necessarily stopping your friend from talking.

**Communication cycle.** The first major model for communication came in 1949 by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver for Bell Laboratories. The original model was designed to mirror the functioning of radio and telephone technologies. Their initial model consisted of three primary parts: sender, channel, and receiver. The sender was the part of a telephone a person spoke into, the channel was the telephone itself, and the receiver was the part of the phone where one could hear the other person. Shannon and Weaver also recognized that often there is static that interferes with one listening to a telephone conversation, which they deemed noise. In a simple model, often referred to as the transmission model or standard view of communication, information or content (e.g. a message in natural language) is sent in some form (as spoken language) from an emisor/ sender/ encoder to a destination/ receiver/ decoder. This common conception of communication simply views communication as a means of sending and receiving information. The strengths of this model are simplicity, generality, and quantifiability. Social scientists Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver structured this model based on the following elements: An information source, which produces a message. A transmitter, which encodes the message into signals. A channel, to which signals are adapted for transmission. A receiver, which 'decodes' (reconstructs) the message from the signal. A destination, where the message arrives. Shannon and Weaver argued that there were three levels of problems for communication within this theory. The technical problem: how accurately can the message be transmitted? The semantic problem: how precisely is the meaning 'conveyed'? The effectiveness problem: how effectively does the received meaning affect behavior? Daniel Chandler critiques the transmission model by stating: It assumes communicators are isolated individuals. No allowance for differing purposes. No allowance for differing interpretations. No allowance for unequal power relations. No allowance for situational contexts.

**Communication noise.** In any communication model, noise is interference with the decoding of messages sent over a channel by an encoder. There are many examples of noise: Environmental Noise:

Noise that physically disrupts communication, such as standing next to loud speakers at a party, or the noise from a construction site next to a classroom making it difficult to hear the professor.

1. **Physiological-Impairment Noise:** Physical maladies that prevent effective communication, such as actual deafness or blindness preventing messages from being received as they were intended.

2. **Semantic Noise:** Different interpretations of the meanings of certain words. For example, the word "weed" can be interpreted as an undesirable plant in a yard, or as a euphemism for marijuana.

3. **Syntactical Noise:** Mistakes in grammar can disrupt communication, such as abrupt changes in verb tense during a sentence.

4. **Organizational Noise:** Poorly structured communication can prevent the receiver from accurate interpretation. For example, unclear and badly stated directions can make the receiver even more lost.

5. **Cultural Noise:** Stereotypical assumptions can cause misunderstandings, such as unintentionally offending a non-Christian person by wishing them a "Merry Christmas".

6. **Psychological Noise:** Certain attitudes can also make communication difficult. For instance, great anger or sadness may cause someone to lose focus on the present moment. Disorders such as Autism may also severely hamper effective communication.

