UNIVERSITY OF KABIANGA

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE

COURSE TITLE: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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INSTRUCTOR: DR. ROY WAFULA

NO	NAME	REG NUMBER	PHONE NO.	SIGN
1	DENNIS NGENO	BCC/M/0003/2024		
2	ENOCK KIPKOECH RUTTOH	BCC/M/0004/2024		
3	CHEPKOECH MONICAH	BCC/M/0005/2024		
4	ARON KORIR	BCC/M/0006/2024		
5	FESTUS RONO	BCC/M/0007/2024		
6	TOBIAS KORIR	BCC/M/0008/2024		
7	BLESSINGS BETT	BCC/M/0009/2024		
8	OMAR	BCC/M/0010/2024		
9	JAYSON KIBET	BCC/M/0011/2024		
10	SHEILA CHEPTOO	BCC/M/0012/2024		
11	ONINDO DOMINIC	BCC/M/0013/2024		
12	NEWTON	BCC/M/0014/2024		

Communication is an essential aspect of our daily lives, influencing personal relationships, professional interactions, and societal functioning. Various models have been proposed to understand communication processes, and each has its strengths and weaknesses when it comes to real-world scenarios. Let's take a closer look at three important communication models: Shannon-Weaver, Berlo's SMCR, and Osgood and Schramm, focusing on how feedback, noise, and context affect communication.

1. Shannon-Weaver Model

The Shannon-Weaver model, developed in the 1940s by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, is one of the earliest and most straightforward communication models. It is often depicted as a linear process involving five key components: the sender, the message, the channel, the receiver, and noise.

Key Components:

- *Sender:* The originator of the communication.

- *Message*: The actual content being communicated.

- *Channel*: The medium through which the message is transmitted (e.g., spoken words, written text, digital media).

- *Receiver*: The person or group who receives and interprets the message.

- *Noise*: Any interference that disrupts the communication process, including physical noise (like background sounds), semantic noise (misunderstandings due to language differences), and psychological noise (prejudices or emotional barriers).

Impact:

Feedback: The model traditionally underemphasizes feedback, leading to a one-way communication perception. In practice, effective communication often relies on the ability to receive and incorporate feedback.Feedback allows the sender to know if the message was understood and can lead to adjustments in the message if necessary. Without feedback, the communication can become one-sided and ineffective.

Noise: It explicitly recognizes noise as a barrier, highlighting that external distractions can distort messages. In noisy environments (e.g., crowded workplaces), the likelihood of miscommunication increases.Noise plays a significant role in real-world communication. For instance, during a business meeting, if participants are distracted by phone notifications (physical noise) or if there are language barriers (semantic noise), the message can easily be misinterpreted.

Context: The model is context-agnostic, overlooking the influence of cultural, social, and situational factors. Real-world applications often require adjustments for context to enhance clarity.

2. Berlo's SMCR Model

Berlo's SMCR (Source-Message-Channel-Receiver) model builds on the basic framework established by Shannon-Weaver but offers more depth regarding the dynamics of communication. Berlo emphasizes four main components: the source, message, channel, and receiver.

Key Components:

- *Source (S*): The person or entity that sends the message. Factors like their communication skills, attitudes, knowledge, and social system influence the message they convey.

- *Message (M*): The content and structure of the message. The way information is organized and presented affects how it is received.

- *Channel (C*): The medium used for communication (e.g., face-to-face, email, social media).

- *Receiver (R):* The individual or group who receives the message. Their characteristics (e.g., their knowledge, attitudes, and social background) play a role in how they interpret the message.

Impact:

Feedback: Berlo introduces a more nuanced understanding of the receiver's role, but feedback is still implicit. Effective communication requires understanding how receivers interpret messages, which informs how sources adjust their delivery. It fosters understanding and ensures that messages are adapted based on the responses of the receiver.e an issue as context and external factors can affect comprehension and engagement..

Noise: Similar to Shannon-Weaver, noise is acknowledged, but Berlo focuses more on how source and receiver attributes (e.g., skills, attitudes) impact message encoding and decoding. In high-stress environments, these attributes can significantly affect understanding. Identifying and minimizing noise is essential for clearer communication.

Context: Berlo's model allows for a greater appreciation of the context by stressing the characteristics of the source and receiver. This recognition highlights the importance of tailoring messages to specific audiences.

3. Osgood and Schramm Model

The Osgood-Schramm model introduced a more interactive approach to communication. This model emphasizes the cyclical nature of communication, wherein sender and receiver roles can interchange, and feedback is integral to the process.

Key Components:

Encoding and Decoding: Both senders and receivers encode and decode messages, respectively, based on their backgrounds and experiences.

Field of Experience: This concept refers to the shared understanding between the sender and the receiver, influenced by their common experiences, interests, and cultural backgrounds.

Impact:

Feedback: This model places significant importance on feedback, portraying communication as an iterative process. This dynamic aspect reflects real-world scenarios more accurately, where conversations evolve through responses.Feedback allows for real-time adjustments in communication, helping to clarify misunderstandings and ensuring that the sender knows whether the message was received as intended. It creates a dynamic loop that enhances understanding.

Noise: Noise is acknowledged, but the focus on the continuous interaction allows for adjustments in real-time, helping to mitigate misunderstandings.Noise can distort the intended message, leading to miscommunication. The model emphasizes the need to recognize and minimize noise to improve clarity and effectiveness.

Context: Osgood and Schramm stress the shared experiences and contexts of communicators, which greatly affect the encoding and decoding processes. This aspect emphasizes the necessity of understanding cultural and contextual nuances in effective communication.The shared experiences and backgrounds of the sender and receiver shape their understanding of the message. The context affects how messages are encoded and decoded, making it crucial for effective communication.

Conclusion

In analyzing the Shannon-Weaver, Berlo's SMCR, and Osgood and Schramm models, it becomes clear that each model contributes valuable insights to understanding communication, yet also has limitations when applied to real-world scenarios.

The Shannon-Weaver model provides a fundamental framework but overlooks feedback and the context of communication.

Berlo's SMCR model expands on the elements involved and emphasizes the importance of the sender and receiver's skills, but still lacks a rigorous approach to feedback.

The Osgood-Schramm model offers a more dynamic and interactive perspective, introducing the essential role of feedback and shared experiences in communication.Understanding these models allows us to enhance communication effectiveness by acknowledging the complexity of human interactions, tailored strategies, and the need for ongoing feedback. In practice, successful communication requires consideration of multiple layers, including personality dynamics, cultural backgrounds, and various environmental factors, which can substantially reshape the messaging process.

References

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