

Chapter one: The Nature and Definition of Communication

1.1. Definition of Communication

The word communication originates from the word "communis", which means common. Communication, therefore, is an act by which a person shares knowledge, feelings, ideas and information, in ways such that each gains a common understanding of the meaning, intent and use of the message.

Sociologists, educationists and psychologists have defined communication according to the disciplines to which they belong. Some definitions are given below:

“It is a process by which two or more people exchange ideas, facts, feelings or impressions in ways that each gains a common understanding of the message. In essence, it is the act of getting a sender and a receiver tuned together for a particular message or series of message”.

Leagans

“It is a process by which information, decisions and directions pass through a social system, and the ways in which knowledge, opinions and attitudes are formed or modified”.

Loomis and Beegle

“Communication is the force by which an individual communicator transmits stimuli to modify the behaviour of other individuals”.

Howland

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

So far we have seen how we use communication. Now let's try and define communication. But defining communication is not very easy. It means many things to many people. Unlike definitions of a theory or some scientific term 'communication' has no definition accepted by all experts.

We know that when we convey something by words, we may call it a message.

If you are used to a mobile phone you would know the term 'SMS'. This SMS is the short form for 'Short Message Service'. Here the messages are short sentences or just a word or a phrase or a sentence like "I am in a meeting".

"Please call me at 4:00 P.M" or "congratulations" or "see you at home". These are all messages. They are short and when someone receives them they 'understand' it. For example, take the message "I am in a meeting". Please call me at 4:00 P.M". It does not need any explanation. The moment you read it, you can understand it. Suppose someone has passed an exam. Just send a

message “congratulations”. The person who gets it immediately follows it. So shall we use these two words, namely ‘message’ and ‘understand’, and define communication. Let’s try.

Communication can be defined in many ways. In simple terms communication is:

- Information transmitted
- A verbal or nonverbal message
- A process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior

Communication is the process of exchanging information. Information is conveyed as words, tone of voice, and body language. Studies have shown that words account for 75 percent of the information communicated. Vocal tone accounts for 55 percent and body language accounts for 38 percent. To be effective communicators, team members must be aware of these forms, how to use them effectively, and barriers to the communications process.

Communication is a slippery concept, and while we may casually use the word with some frequency, it is difficult to arrive at a precise definition that is agreeable to most of those who consider themselves communication scholars. Communication is so deeply rooted in human behaviors and the structures of society that it is difficult to think of social or behavioral events that are absent communication.

As most scholars in the field of communication agree, defining communication is not an easy task. However, many literatures indicate that communication is defined as the sharing of information, meanings, behaviors, etc.in different settings. Etymologically, Communication comes from the Latin word ‘communicare’, which means ‘to make common’ or ‘to share’. Others say the term communication came from a Latin word *communis* which means commonness (i.e., make things common).

The Mariam-Webster’s dictionary defines communication, as a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior. According to Gamble & Gamble(2013), **communication** is the deliberate or accidental transfer of meaning. It is the process that occurs whenever someone observes or experiences behavior and attributes meaning to that behavior. As the deliberate or accidental transfer of meaning long as what someone does or says (his or her symbolic behavior) is interpreted as a message—as long as the behavior of one person affects or influences the behavior of a n other—

communication is occurring. “Communication is talking to one another, it is television, it is spreading information, it is our hair style, it is literary criticism: the list is endless”(Fiske, 1990)

Working Definition

In the broadest sense, communication is the process of sharing ideas, information, and messages with others in a particular time and place. Communication includes writing and talking as well as nonverbal communication, such as facial expression, body language, or gesture; visual communication (the use of images and pictures), such as; painting, photography, video or film, and electronic communication, such as; telephone calls, electronic mail(e-mail), cable TV or satellite broadcasts).

Why Do We Communicate?

People communicate to satisfy the needs for belonging, to be heard and be appreciated. People communicate to keep in touch with and connect with others such as friends, family, colleagues and business partners. In short, people communicate to socialize. The human being is a social animal living and operating in a community peopled by other human beings with whom they are in constant touch. The human is able to socialize because of its ability to communicate. In addition, people communicate in order to get things done or make their intentions and feelings known. Above all, people communicate with specific purposes in mind.

There are four basic purposes of communication. Almost all of these purposes are better served through verbal communication than other options like email or print messages. Communication can be used to convey information. This can be done verbally or through text-based media to pass information such as time of meeting or policy statements from an organisation’s administration to its employees.

Communication can be used to ask for help, which verbally triggers empathy. Like other verbal communications, verbal requests mean a request can be stated clearly without any misunderstanding. It can also be used to influence listener or audience, as used by politicians; the most important aspect of which are the words used as these are the things that would influence audience. It can include non-verbal cues like dressing and appearance. It can also be useful for entertainment. This is manifest in the ability of comedians in the country who make their living from live shows where they can readily interact with their audience. This cannot be adequately done in text-based communication.

Can we live without communication?

Without communication there can be no human relations, indeed no human life. Communication theory cannot therefore be confined to examining only certain sectors of life in society (Luhmann, 1981). We all are communicators, knowingly or unknowingly we communicate; ranging from with ourselves to other friends or family a, groups, to mass audience. Therefore, we can't live without communication.

1.2 The Need for Effective Communication

The following actions have been observed in teams with effective communications skills.

- Acknowledge (“Roger”) communications.
- Provide information in accordance.
- Provide information when asked.
- Repeat, as necessary, to ensure communication is accurately received.
- Use standard terminology when communicating information.
- Request and provide clarification when needed.
- Ensure statements are direct and unambiguous.
- Inform the appropriate individuals when the mission or plans change.
- Communicate all information needed by those individuals or teams external to the team.
- Use nonverbal communication appropriately.
- Use proper order when communicating information.

The Importance of Effective Communication

People in organizations typically spend over 75% of their time in an interpersonal situation; thus it is no surprise to find that at the root of a large number of organizational problems is poor communications. Effective communication is an essential component of organizational success whether it is at the interpersonal, intergroup, intragroup, organizational, or external levels.

In this chapter we will cover the basic process of communication and then we will cover some of the most difficult communication issues managers’ face-providing constructive and effective feedback and performance appraisal.

Barriers to Effective Communication

- **Language:** The choice of words or language in which a sender encodes a message will influence the quality of communication.

Because language is a symbolic representation of a phenomenon, room for interpretation and distortion of the meaning exists. Note that the same words will be interpreted differently by each different person. Meaning has to be given to words and many factors affect how an individual will attribute meaning to particular words. It is important to note that no two people will attribute the exact same meaning to the same words.

- misreading of body language, tone and other non-verbal forms of communication
- noisy transmission (unreliable messages, inconsistency)
- receiver distortion: selective hearing, ignoring non-verbal cues
- assumptions—e.g., assuming others see situation same as you, has same feelings as you
- distrusted source, erroneous (not correct) translation, value judgment, state of mind of two people

Perceptual Biases: People attend to stimuli in the environment in very different ways. Stereotyping is one of the most common. This is when we assume that the other person has certain characteristics based on the group to which they belong without validating that they in fact have these characteristics.

- Interpersonal Relationships: How we perceive communication is affected by the past experience with the individual. Perception is also affected by the organizational relationship two people have. For example, communication from a superior may be perceived differently than that from a subordinate or peer
- Cultural Differences: Effective communication requires deciphering the basic values, motives, aspirations, and assumptions that operate across geographical lines. Given some dramatic differences across cultures in approaches to such areas as time, space, and privacy, the opportunities for miscommunication while we are in crosscultural situations are plentiful.

Seven Steps to Effective Messages

- ***Know your target audience*** – who are they, what do they need, how can you reach them?
- ***Set clear objectives*** – what do you expect from the message, how will you measure it, when will it happen?
- ***Work for approval*** – your audience should choose your message over the others that are also coming its way

- ***Be strategic*** – use words, images and sounds that are acceptable to your audience, because your main purpose is to make them listen.
- ***Work for acceptance*** – is your message credible, do people believe your message and the communicator, who and what will people believe?
- ***Work for recall*** – the message should remain with the audience, make it catchy, make it funny, repeat if necessary, use different types of media
- ***Review and re-plan*** – are you reaching the intended audience, are you achieving the objectives, do you need to change, do you need a new message?

1.3 Historical Development of Communication

Denis McQuail (“Towards a Sociology of Mass Communication, 1975) sees ‘human communication’ as the sending of meaningful messages from one person to another. These messages could be oral or written, visual or olfactory. He also includes laws, practices, customs, and ways of dressing, gestures, military parades and flags as methods of communication.

Human communication went through different stages of development that include the age of signs and signals, the age of speech and language, the age of writing, the age of printing, the mass communication age, and the age of information revolution.

1. The age of signs and signals

Prehistoric humans were physically unable to talk. Communication was limited and determined by instincts. It was the age of signs and signals- drum messages, smoke signals, music, dance, etc.

2. The age of speech and language

Man’s first achievement was speech and language. It gave him an eminent position over others. Growth of different languages gave birth to different expressions that denoted distinctions within communities.

3. The age of writing

About 5000 years ago, hieroglyphic writing was developed by the Mayans and the Chinese. They used pictures with a standardized meaning. The Sumerians developed a different form of writing that represented sounds by symbols. This allowed information to be stored and for traditions to be passed on in writing. Clay, stone and later papyrus was developed and used as portable media. Writing gave permanence to the spoken language.

4. The age of print

In the 1st century, AD, China invented paper. In the 8 century the Arab world began to manufacture paper. In the 15th century, the Gutenberg press was invented and printing began in Europe. As a consequence, information could be copied much faster and with far fewer mistakes than before. Availability of information was no longer restricted to the Roman church and to nobility, but open to a wider section of European societies. Books were followed by the development of pamphlets and the newspapers in the 17th century.

5. The mass communication age

In the 19th century, communication was determined by several media forms. Print media, especially newspapers, were supplemented by telegraph and telephone. The introduction of radio, film and television in the 20th century saw the emergence of the mass communication era.

6. The age of information revolution

At present, we are living amidst an information revolution. Integrated multimedia applications are now possible due to networks established from the development of digital communication technology. Hypertext structures form the basis for communication and navigation within the system.

1.4 Purposes of Communication

Most of us are surrounded by others, trying to understand them and hoping that they understand us: family, friends, coworkers, teachers, and strangers. There's a good reason why we speak, listen, read, and write so much. Communication satisfies most of our needs.

1. Physical Needs

Communication is so important that it is necessary for physical health. In fact, evidence suggests that an absence of satisfying communication can even jeopardize life itself. Medical researchers have identified a wide range of hazards that result from a lack of close relationships. For instance:

- People who lack strong relationships have two to three times that risk of early death, regardless of whether they smoke, drink alcoholic beverages, or exercise regularly.

- Divorced, separated, and widowed people are five to ten times more likely to need hospitalization for mental problems than their married counterparts etc.

Studies indicate that social isolation is a major risk factor contributing to coronary disease, comparable to physiological factors such as diet, cigarette smoking, obesity, and lack of physical activity. Research like this demonstrates the importance of having satisfying personal relationships. But, not everyone needs the same amount of contact, and the quality of communication is almost certainly as important as the quantity. The important point here is that personal communication is essential for our well-being.

2. Identity Needs

Communication does more than enable us to survive. It is the way-indeed, the only way- we learn who we are. Our sense of identity comes from the way we interact with other people. Are we smart or stupid, attractive or ugly, skillful or inept? The answers to these questions do not come from looking in the mirror. We decide who we are based on how others react to us.

We gain an idea of who we are from the ways others defines us. The messages we receive in early childhood are the strongest, but the influence of others continues throughout life.

Some scholars have argued that we are most attached to people who confirm our identity. This confirmation can come in different forms, depending on the self-image of the communicator. People with relatively high self-esteem seek out others who confirm their value and, as much as possible, avoid those who treat them poorly. Conversely, people who regard themselves as unworthy may look for relationships in which others treat them badly. This principle offers one explanation for why some people maintain damaging or unsuccessful relationships. If you review yourself as a loser, you may associate with others who will confirm that self-perception. Of course, relationships can change a communicator's identity as well as confirm it. Supportive relationships can transform feelings of inadequacy into self-respect, and damaging ones can lower self-esteem.

The role communication in shaping identity works in a second way. Besides other's messages shaping who we think we are, the messages we create often are attempts to get others to view us

the way we want to be seen. For example, the choices we make about how to dress and otherwise shape our appearance are always attempts to manage our identity.

3. Social Needs

Besides helping to define who we are, communication provides a vital link with others. Researchers and theorists have identified a range of social needs we satisfy by communicating: pleasure (e.g. “because it is fun” to have a good time); affection (e.g. to help others, to let others know I care); inclusion (e.g. because I need someone to talk to or be with, because it makes me less lonely) etc. As you look at this list of social needs for communicating, imagine how empty your life would be if these needs weren’t satisfied. Then, notice that it would be impossible to fulfill them without communicating with others.

4. Practical Needs

We should not overlook the everyday, important functions that communication serves. Communication is the tool that lets us tell the hair stylist to take just a little off the sides, direct the doctor to where it hurts. Beyond these obvious needs, a wealth of research demonstrates that communication is an important key to effectiveness in a variety of everyday settings. For example, a survey of over four hundred employers identified “communication skills” as the top characteristic that employers seek in job candidates. It was rated as more important than technical competence, work experience, or academic background. In another survey, over 90 percent of the personnel officials at five hundred US businesses stated that increased communication skills are needed for success in the twenty first century.

Communication is just as important outside of work. College roommates who are both willing and able to communicate effectively report higher satisfaction with one another than do those who lack these characteristics. Married couples who were identified as effective communicators reported happier relationships than did less skillful husbands and wives. In school, the grade point averages of college students were related positively to their communication competence.

1.5. Characteristics of Communication

We have seen that defining communication is not an easy task, owing to its inherent complexity. One way of alleviating such a problem is to try to describe the features of communication.

a) **Communication is the process**

Unlike objects, communication is not discrete, static, or solitary. It has no beginning and no end. As a process, communication exists in time and changes constantly. Considering communication as a process rather than a product means we have to do more than look simply at the outcome of a communication event. This shift from studying product to studying process has occurred in number of communication fields within the last 20 years. For example, the field of written composition has also undergone a recent paradigm shift. In the past communication scholars and composition teachers focused on the final written product; today, they recognize that writing is a complex process having many stages and varying from person to person. Composition teachers now consider various stages in writing process instead of looking only a final of a paper; such as, prewriting, revision, polishing as well as a final product. Because communication is a process and is ongoing, it is also occurs before and after the time when people actually talk to each other.

b) **Communication is symbolic**

When we say that communication is symbolic, we are referring to the nature of messages rather than to the process of communicating because if we see communication simply as a process then we never really get at the important issue of the exchange of meaning. Human evolution made it possible for us to develop into complex, interesting creatures by developing our ability to use symbols. Ideas and feelings can be shared only if they are represented by symbols. Symbols are things that stand for something else. All of our communication messages have represented by symbols: verbal and non-verbal. The most familiar and widely studied symbols are linguistic – written and spoken words. Every word in our language is a verbal symbol that stands for a particular thing or idea. We generally agree that when we use these words, we mean the same thing. For example, when we use the word ‘chair’, we all agree it refers to something we sit on. Symbols have freed us from the limitations of the here and now; they allow us to talk about things and ideas in the absence of any tangible objects. The **arbitrary nature** of symbols makes

them particularly powerful. Symbols do not have any actual connection to what they represent. In other words, there is no mystical connection between the word ‘horse’ and the animal. The connection between the word and things is strictly mentalistic; i.e., the connection is learned.

Verbal symbols can be even more complicated when they are abstract rather than concrete because abstract symbols stand for ideas rather than objects. When two people use abstraction (such as love, beauty, or justice) they often have different meanings for these words because they have had different experiences with the concept. For example, when John hears the phrase “a wonderful place to live,” he immediately thinks of living in the woods far away from any neighbors. To Erin, however, a wonderful place to live is an apartment on Hollywood in Los Angeles.

Nonverbal symbols are anything we communicate without using words, such as; facial expressions, gestures, postures, vocal tones, appearance, so on. As with verbal symbols, we all attach certain meanings to nonverbal symbols. For example:

- A yawn → we are bored or tired
- A furled brow → it indicates confusion
- Not looking someone in the eyes → we have something to hide.

Generally, it is important to use symbols in communication to imply meanings that the sender and receiver share with a common symbol system.

c) Communication is contextual

The shared or common symbol system is part of what we refer to when we say that communication occurs in a context. For example, all English speakers have a certain basic understanding of the world. Other languages provide different contexts. When we learn a language, we are learning to name and recognize all those things that our culture feels are worth attention. Sharing the same basic language – Amharic, Afan Oromo, English, Japanese, Hebrew – is one way that communication is contextual.

Sharing specialized languages associated with our jobs, hobbies, class and educational level is another type of context that makes communication possible. Generally, in order for

communication occurs, parties involved have to have a shared vision of what is appropriate in certain situations.

d) Communication is purposive

It is obvious that communication is done for a purpose. This characteristic is also known as adaptation. Any process exists to achieve some outcomes. In other words, processes are purposeful and functional. We have some motivation for communicating, even if we are not consciously aware of it. The purpose of communication is:

- To entertain
- To relate
- To help
- To persuade
- To play
- To discover

e) Communication is two-way

The existence of both a sender and the receiver in a communication activity presupposes that communication is two – way. Communication researchers have specific terms to describe the two-way nature of communication exchange. These are:

- **Interactive:** human interactions in which a source and a receiver exchange messages in a predictable fashion i.e., a specific message from the sender elicits a predictable response from the receiver. For example, someone says, “how are you?” the recipient responds “ I am fine.”
- **Transactional:** the impact of the first message shapes or affects the nature of the return messages. For example, when you have conversations with close friends, the very unpredictability of your topics and the fact that you adjust your next comment to what your friends say no matter what the reaction of this comment to what has gone before.

By virtue of being two-way, all communication is interactive, but not necessarily transactional. Only communication situations which allow the participants a full range of possible responses are transactional.

Types of Communication

We can classify communication into three by looking the nature of message. These three primary types are:

- I. Expressive communication
- II. Accidental communication
- III. Rhetorical communication

I. ***Expressive communication*** involves a message that indicates a person's emotional state, feelings about something or someone, or well-being at a given time. For example, if a friend borrows a car and returns it with a large dent in door, you might voice words that cannot be written here. You might even use gestures that not match your words.

Intention or forethought may or may not be a component of expressive communication. For example, if you want to express "liking" for another person, you might intentionally, purposefully hug that person. On the other hand, expressive communication can be unintentional and spontaneous. It often occurs when people are caught by surprise. Some believes that expressive communication reveals people's true feelings about relationships with the other person.

II. ***Accidental communication*** involves a message that unintentionally stimulates something in the mind of other people, sometimes a meaning the sender does not want them to have. It occurs when individuals are not consciously and with forethought controlling their verbal and non-verbal behaviors. Hence, those who observe the behavior will attribute meaning to it when the sender had no intention of stimulating a meaning. It occurs more frequently than the sender would like. People should be more conscious and attentive to what they might be communicating/ accidentally to others.

III. ***Rhetorical communication*** is intentional, purposeful and goal-directed. It is concerned with stimulating a certain meaning in the mind of another, persuading or influencing another to do something.

1.6. Principles of Communication

There are seven important principles that govern how communication works and that have important implications for communication effectiveness.

- 1) Communication is a package of signals.

- 2) Communication is a process of adjustment.
- 3) Communication involves content and relationship dimensions.
- 4) Communication is ambiguous.
- 5) Communication sequences are punctuated.
- 6) Communication involves symmetrical and complementary transactions.
- 7) Communication is inevitable, irreversible and unrepeatable.

1. Communication is a package of signals

Communication behaviors whether they involve verbal messages, gestures or some combination of them usually occur in packages. Usually, verbal and non-verbal behaviors reinforce or support each other. All parts of a message system normally works together to communicate a particular meaning. For example, you don't express fear with words while the rest of your body is relaxed. Entire body of a person works together verbally and nonverbally to express thoughts and feelings. Contradictory messages may be the result of the desire to communicate two different emotions or feelings.

2. Communication is a process of adjustment

Communication can take place only to the extent that the communicators use the same system of signals. Principle of adjustment is an art of communication that communicators identify the other person's signals, learn how they are used and understand what they mean. If you want to understand what another person says or does, you have to learn that person's system of signals. The principle of adjustment is especially important in intercultural communication, largely because people from different cultures use different signals and sometimes also uses the same signals to signify quite different things.

Eg. Family → to their child

Teachers → to their student

3. Communication involves content and relationship dimensions

Communications, to certain extent at least, refer to the real world – something external to both. It also refers to the relationships between the two parties. Communication has both content and relationship dimensions.

Content message: refers to the expected behavioral responses.

Eg. A teacher may say to a student "see me after class"

The student sees the teacher after class

Relationship message: tells how the communication is to be dealt with; use of the simple command indicates the presence of status difference between two parties. Teacher can command student by saying “go in the class.” But if you imagine the student gives this command to the teacher, it would be awkward and out of place, because it violates the expected communications between teacher and student.

- Content dimension can be the same, but relationship aspect may vary.

For example:

“You had better see me after the class.”

“May I please see you after the class?”

- Content message can be different, but relationship dimension may be the same.

For example:

“May I go away this weekend?”

“May I use the car tonight?” (Both sentences can be shown us super-inferior relationship in which permission to certain things must be secured)

4. Communication is ambiguous

Ambiguous messages are messages with more than one potential meaning. It occurs because we use words that can be interpreted differently. A more interesting forms of ambiguity is grammatical ambiguity. For example:

They are flying planes.

- Those people are flying planes.
- Those planes for flying.

Some degree of ambiguity exists in all communication: all messages are ambiguous to some degree. When you express an idea, you never communicate your meaning exactly and totally rather you communicate your meaning with some reasonable accuracy – enough to give the other person a reasonably clear sense of what you mean.

Example:

Do you understand me? (Reduce uncertainty)

5. Communication sequences are punctuated

Communication events are continuous transactions. You divide up this continuous circular process into causes and effects or stimuli and responses. That is, you segment this continuous stream of communication into smaller pieces you label (named) some of these pieces causes or

stimuli and others effects or responses. The tendency to divide up the various communication transactions in sequences of stimuli and responses is referred to as punctuation of communication. People punctuate the continuous sequence of events into stimuli and responses for ease of understanding and remembering. If you understand what the other persons mean you are engaged in punctuation.

6. Communication involves symmetrical and complementary transaction.

Relationships can be described as either symmetrical or complementary.

a) Symmetrical Relationship

This form of communication transaction has occurred when two individuals mirror each other's behavior of the other. The behavior of one person is reflected in the behavior of the other. The relationship is one of the equalities with the emphasis on minimizing the differences between the two individuals.

Eg. A – Nags B – will be nagging

C – Jealousy D – will be jealous

b) Complementary Relationship

This form of communication transaction has occurred when the two individuals engage in different behaviors. The behavior of one serves as the stimulus for the complementary behavior of the other. In complementary relationships the difference between the parties are maximized.

Eg. A – Superior B - inferior

C – Active D – passive

7. Communication is inevitable, irreversible and unrepeatable

7.1 communication is inevitable

Communication messages are always being sent. Communication takes place even though an individual doesn't think he or she is communicating or doesn't want to communicate. You can't avoid communicating.

7.2 communication is irreversible

Communication is an irreversible process. The process can go in only one direction. For example, you can turn water to ice and ice to water. You can turn grapes to wine, but you can't turn wine to grapes. Once a message has been sent and received it can't be reversed again. Once you say something, once you press the send key on your e-mail, you can't uncommunicated it.

7.3 communication is unrepeatable

You can never recapture the exact same situation, frame of mind, or relationship dynamics that defined a previous communication act. Everyone and everything is constantly changing. For example, you can never repeat meeting that you had for the first time.

Language and other systems

Language is a code, a collection of symbols, letters, or words with arbitrary meanings that are arranged according to the rules of syntax and are used to communicate. It consists of words or symbols that represent things without being those things. Syntax is the way in which words are arranged to form phrases and sentences.

Language was a tremendous factor in the advance of early civilization. Language helped develop conceptual thinking and provided a means to manipulate ideas, transmit culture, and deal with. Some theories that emerged to explain how language developed are:

a) The Bow-Wow Theory

The theorists have stated that human beings have developed language by imitating the sounds of animals. For example, a cow might have been called a “moo – moo.” However, they can’t answer how inanimate objects had got their names. For example, TV, bed, etc.

b) The Pooh-Pooh Theory

The theorists have stated that words or language in general came from the sounds we make when we are experiencing various emotions. For example, when we were angry – a growl – or scared – a scream. However, it can’t explain how words such as “head” or “water”, with no emotional attachment, came to be.

c) The Grunt Theory

Language grew out of the sounds humans make during physical exertion, such as; “Aaargh” or “yow”. Words such as, dancing, pushing, talking, etc for example. However, it doesn’t explain words that have no physical connections, such as; think, beauty, etc.

d) The Play Theory

It was first driven by Charles Darwin. It states that humans thought language when it was fun to make sounds while they went about their lives. Overtime, some of these more or less random sounds got connected to certain objects or actions. It seems the most plausible of the bunch.

In general, it is known that our ancestors communicate using gestures and body movements (sign language), and eventually develop verbal communication - using spoken language. Why didn’t

humans continue to depend on nonverbal communication? It is also questioned by many scholars, but the following will be the main reasons.

- 1) Sign language is not very effective in the dark.
- 2) Language left both hands free to work with tools or handle weapons.

It is also recognized that language was a tremendous factor in the advance of civilization. For example:

- Hunting become more efficient since directions could be given to coordinate the hunt.
- More defined social power structure emerged – as the strong could issue commands to the weak.
- Instructions for making tools or utensils could be passed on others, and so on.

Do Animals Communicate?

Animals do communicate. They have different means of communication which lack the structural complexity of human language. They exchange signals and signs that help them find food, migrate or reproduce. They can express their own feelings or instincts; however, they cannot “speak” for others or describe them. Darwin showed that the ability of a species to exchange information or signals about its environment is an important factor in its biological survival. For examples:

- Honey bees dance in specific patterns that tell other members of the hive where to find a food.
- Insects regularly use pheromones, a special kind of hormone, to attract mates.
- Elephants emit very low-pitched sounds, below the level of human hearing, that call other members of the herd over many miles.
- Whales and dolphins make vocal clicks, squeals, or sing songs to exchange information about feeding and migration.

Other Communicative Systems

Language is not the only code which can be used in communication. There are two basic groups of signs which used to communicate:

A. Natural signs

They are characterized by a transparent link to the entity they stand for in the world. There are two types of natural signs:

i. Icons

They reflect the essential features of the individual they represent. They copy the entity they represent and are thus easy to interpret; for example, maps of buildings, photo of a person, or monument of a person.

ii.Indices (plural form of index)

More loosely related the thing they represent in the sense that the relationship is less evident, yet accessible to interpretation. For example, cloud may indicate that rain / snow is approaching. Smoke can be taken as a natural sign for fire.

B. Conventional signs

Contrast with the natural signs in that the relation they have with the entity in the real world is not transparent and it is a matter of convention. The meaning of conventional signs has to be learned i.e.; it is not immediately accessible to the user of the respective code.

E.g. White dove symbolizes peace

Red light at roads symbolizes “don’t walk”

Red Cross symbolizes charity, etc.

Difference between language and other communicative systems

1. Messages based on signs from any other system can always be translated into language.
2. Messages encoded in language are highly complex and express a variety of situations which have no parallel in other systems. Some are of these are:
 - Referring time: now, before now (past), after now (future)
 - Comparing things: like, seem, look
 - Expressing an attitude: want, need, love, hate
 - Describing how others feel: said, told, thought
 - Expressing a request for information: what, how, which
3. Signs systems are highly limited in their expressive power and are employed for a specific purpose.
4. In language words can be combined in numerous different ways to convey meaning but signs are not supposed to be combined.
5. Language has multiple functions where as sign systems are mono functional and limited in performing a specialized function.
6. The only function by language and some other communication systems is the phatic function – used for social purpose.

1.7. Elements of Communication

We have noted that communication is systematic and that systems have component parts. A typical communication situation has the following elements/ components:

1. People

People are involved in the human communication process in two roles. They serve as either:

i) Sender (source or addresser)

The source is the component that originates a message. Normally, in communication it is an individual person, although it could be a group or an organization. More specifically, the human brain may be thought of as the source of all messages we send.

- The one who initiates a message/ individual who give messages
- During communication the role of sender doesn't belong exclusively to one person rather the process of sending and receiving are constantly changed.

ii) Receiver (addressee)

As with the source, the receiver is usually an individual person. The receiver takes the communication signal or code from the channel, decodes the message, interprets it or gives it meaning, and responds.

- The individuals who take messages (who are intended the target of a message)
- Deborah Tannen explains that communication is a continuous stream in which everything is simultaneously a reaction and instigation, and instigation and reaction. This indicates that receiver can be sender at a time and vice versa.

2. Message

In the simplest sense, a message may be thought of as an idea, concept, emotion, desire, or feeling that a source desires to share with another human being. It is the verbal and nonverbal behavior used to evoke meaning in another person. It is the content of the interaction. It includes words and phrases, as well as facial expressions, bodily movements, gestures, touch, tone of voice and others. It intends to convey information and meaning.

3. Channel

It is a means by which a message moves from the source to the receiver of the message. Message moves from one place to another, from one person to another, by traveling through a medium, or channel. E.g. Air waves, sound waves, glass fibers, cables, etc are communication channels. We

human beings are multi-channel communicators. For example, we hear the sounds of priests. We see how someone looks. We taste the flavor of food.

4. Code

It is a systematic arrangement of symbols used to create meanings in the mind of another person or persons. Words, phrases and sentences become “symbols” that are used to evoke images, thoughts and ideas in the mind of others. There are two types of codes used in communication.

i) Verbal codes

They consist of symbols and their grammatical arrangement. All languages are codes. For example, if someone says “stop” as you approach to a street the word stop has become a symbol that you are likely to interpret as a warning danger.

ii) Nonverbal codes

They consist of all symbols that are not words, including body movements, your use of space and time, your clothing, etc. It also includes oral codes as well such as duration of speech, rate of speech and sounds like em and ah.

5. Noise

It is anything that interfere with the delivery of the message and that reduces the clarity of a message. It is anything that distorts the message and which prevents the receiver from receiving the message freely. It can be anything that interferes with receiving, interpreting, or providing feedback about a message. Noise may occur anywhere along the communication line, and there are different types of noise. These are:

i) Semantic

Semantic noise occurs when different people have different meanings for different words or phrases. It also refers uncertainty about what the other person’s words are supposed to mean.

ii) Mechanical

It occurs when there is a problem with a machine that is being used to assist communication. For example: A pen running out of ink, or a mobile phone which encounters network connection problem.

iii) Environmental

It refers to the source of noise that are external to communication process but nonetheless interfere with it. It means unfavorable communication environment (a hot, poorly ventilated room, dim lighting, or poor seating arrangement); extraneous distractions (background noises,

the shuffling of chairs, people passing outside a door or window). It might be out of the communicator's control.

iv) Physical

It occurs due to physical objects. Illegible hand writing and 'garbage' or dust on the screen of computers, for example.

v) Psychological

It refers mental or memorial interference during communication. E.g. day dreams about a loved one, or thinking of past pains

vi) Physiological

It occurs when there are physiological disabilities and abnormalities.

E.g. Visual impairment, hearing impairment, or mental disorder

NB. As noise in communication increase, **message fidelity** goes down. **Message fidelity** means proper, clear and free transmission of message from one place to other, from one person to other.

6. Feedback and feed-forward messages

Feed-forward messages are information you provide sending your primary messages. It reveals something about the message to come. It includes preface or table of contents in a book, opening paragraph of a chapter, movie previews, magazine covers and introductions to public speaking.

Feedback message is the receiver's verbal and nonverbal response to the source's message. It is a message sent back to the speaker reacting what is said. It tells the speaker what effects he/she is having on the listener(s). Even no response or silence is a feedback.

7. Context

All communication takes place in a context that has at least four dimensions:

a) Physical context

It's the tangible or concrete environment in which communication takes place, E.g. Room, park, etc. The context exerts some influence on the content of your messages (**what you say**) as well as on the form (**how you say**).

b) Social-psychological context

It includes the status relationships among the participants and the roles or responsibilities of people.

- Friendliness or unfriendliness
- Formality or informality

c) Temporal (time) context

It includes the time of day as well as the time in history in which the communication takes place.

- Homosexual – recognized recently but not in the past
- Slave trade – condemning today but it existed in the past

d) Cultural context

Beliefs, values and ways of behaving that are shared by a group of people and passed down from one generation to the next. It affects every interaction and influence what you say and how you say it.

8. Encoding and decoding**Encoding:**

- It is the act of producing messages, or acting of putting an idea or a thought into code, e.g., speaking, writing, showing something, etc.

Decoding:

- It is the act of receiving messages, or assigning meaning to the sender idea or thought. It is translating sound waves or words one's received into a code, e.g., listening, reading, visiting, etc.

9. Ethics

Communication has a question of ethics of right and wrong. It might be temporarily effective to exaggerate or even lie in order to sell a product or get elected; it would not be ethical to do so. Ethical responsibilities need to be considered as integral to any communication act. The decisions you make concerning communication must be guided by what you consider right as well as by what you consider effective.

10. Effects

Communication always has some effect(s) on one or more persons involved in the communication act. For every communication act, there is some consequence E.g.

- Gaining knowledge and learning how to analyze, evaluate and synthesis something have **intellectual effects**.
- Acquiring or changing attitudes, beliefs, emotions or feeling have **affective effectives**.
- Learning new body movements, painting pictures, or throwing a ball are **psychomotor effectives**.

1.8. Means of communication (Reading Assignment)

1) Early Methods

Early societies developed systems for sending and receiving simple messages or signals that could be over a short distance, e.g., drumbeats, fire, smoking, or lantern beacons. Most of the authors mention some form of fire signals. Other forms of signaling narrated include the use of flags and pennants, trumpets, horns and drums, burnished shields, carrier pigeons, runners and pony riders, smoke signals and lights. Messages were attached to the legs of carrier that were released to fly home until World War II. The megaphone was one of the earliest devices for transmitting intelligible speech over a distance.

2) Paper and Writings

- The first lightweight medium was papyrus that used by Egyptians.
- Second A.D Chinese wrote on silk fabric instead of wood, and developed early form of paper made from reeds grasses and silk fabric.
- Second B.C Europeans wrote thin layers of tanned and scraped animal skins called parchment or vellum. It is not as light as papyrus but very durable.
- 18th century block printing had already been developed by Buddhist monks in China.
- 1450, the German printer Johannes Gutenberg perfected movable metal type that was key invention in the development of printing. At this time books were started to print in the local or vernacular languages. As more books became available, more people learned to read.

3) Postal services

- Courier – type services: messengers carried memorized or written messages from one person to another and returned with the replay.
- 1789 in USA modern postal service was established for the first time.

4) Telegraphy

The first truly electronic medium was the telegraphy which sent and received electronic signals over long distance through wires. It was developed in 1837 and became more sophisticated, especially after competitors were introduced.

5) Telephone

Alexander Graham Bell developed it in 1876. He titled and contained the design that could transmit the human voice over wires. It transmitted sound vibrations and even human speech.

6) Radio

Earliest system for sending electrical signals through the air via electromagnetic waves was called wireless later radio. James Clerk Maxwell was developed radio technology in 1864. But Guglielmo Marconi invented a true wireless radio in 1895. It enabled message sent and received a signal at distance of close to 3km.

7) Television

Inventors (Frans Worth, Zworykin) developed transmitting sounds and pictures together. First decade of 20th (1910), basic ideas of television technology were understood. In 1950, many improvements have been made in television technology – introduction of color television.

Types of communication

Communication can be classified into different categories based on different bases. The bases of classification may resin on either:

a. Nature of message or

b. Their channel of transmissions/ signals

a) According to their nature of the message, communication can be classified into three.

These are:

1. Expressive communication
2. Accidental communication
3. Rhetorical communication

Unit Two

2.1. Types of Communication

There are four types of communication called intrapersonal, interpersonal, machine- assisted interpersonal and mass communication.

2.1.1 Intrapersonal communication

Intrapersonal communication is self communication. Communication is a continuous process that has different facts in it. In the absence of one the other parts cannot function. If there is no receiver, there is no communication. The English phrase it takes two to tango expresses this idea quite well. Even if there is one person, there are two persona within him that as he communicates an idea he as well receives the idea and acts towards the idea. A man reading- as he reads he listens too. He is a source as he reads and a receiver as he listens. So, an individual can communicate with him/her self without contacting with other person.

2.1.2 Interpersonal communication

One person (or group) is interacting with another person (or group) without the aiding of a mechanical device. The source and the receiver in this form of communication are within each other's physical presence. Talking to your roommate, participating in a class discussion, and conversing with your professor after class are all examples of interpersonal communication. the source in this communication setting can be one or more individuals, as can the receiver. Encoding is usually a one step process as the source transmits thoughts into speech and/or gestures. A variety of channels are available to use. The receiver can see, hear and perhaps even smell and touch the source. Messages are relatively difficult for the receiver to terminate and are produced at a little expense. In addition, interpersonal messages can be private or public. Messages can also be pinpointed to their specific targets. Decoding is also a one step process performed by those receivers who can perceive the message. Feedback is immediate and makes use of visual and auditory channels. Noise can be either semantic or environmental.

2.1.3 Machine-Assisted Interpersonal Communication

Machine assisted interpersonal communication (or technology-assisted communication) combines characteristics of both the interpersonal and mass communication. In this setting, one or more people are communicating by means of a mechanical device (or devices) with one or more receivers. One of the important characteristics of machine assisted interpersonal communication is that it allows the source and the receiver to be separated by both time and space. The machine can give message permanence by storing it on paper, magnetic disc, or some other material. The telephone allows two people to converse even though they are hundreds, even thousands of miles apart.

2.1.4 Mass communication

Mass communication refers to the process by which a complex organization with the aid of one or more machines produces and transmits public messages that are directed at large, heterogeneous and scattered audiences.

Mass communication implies communicating with the large number of people. It is disseminating identical copies at the same time to the large scattered and heterogeneous people. In other words, mass communication is a mass distribution of identical copies of the same message to people or persons unknown to the sender and unknown to each other in any sense of interaction. Mass communication is the end product of more than one person. It comprises the institutions and technique in which specialized group employ technological devices (Press, Radio, TV, and Films etc) disseminate symbolic content to large, heterogeneous and widely dispersed audience.

Think how a newspaper is put together. Reporters gather news; writers draft editorials; a cartoonist may draw an editorial cartoon, the advertising department lays out ads; editors layout all of these things together on a sample page; technicians transfer this page to a master; the finished copies are given to the delivery staff; and of course, behind all of these, there is a publisher who has the money to pay for a building, presses, staff, paper, ink and so on.

Mass communication sources have little detailed information about their particular audience. They may have collective data, but these will be expressed as gross audience characteristics. Encoding in mass communication is always a multistage process.

Mass communication channels are characterized by the imposition of at least one, usually, more than one machine translate the message from one channel to another. Example, TV makes use of complicated devices that transform light energy into electrical energy and back again. Radio does the same with sound energy.

Unlike in interpersonal communication, in which many channels are available. Mass communication is usually restricted to one or two. Message in mass communication is public. Mass communication usually involves multiple decoding before the message is received.

Example, the tape deck decodes patterns of magnetic particles into sound waves for our hearing mechanism. The TV receiver decodes both light and sound transmission.

The audience of mass communication is large, may be in millions, heterogeneous that is, made up of dissimilar groups who may differ in age, intelligence, political beliefs, ethnic backgrounds and so on. The audience in mass communication is spread out over a wide geographical area, source and receiver are not in each other's immediate physical presence. The audience members are also anonymous to one another.

The receiver is self defined, that is, the receiver chooses what film to see, what paper to read, and what program to watch. Consequently, the various mass communication sources spend a great deal of time and effort to get your attention so that you will include yourself in the audience.

Feedback in mass communication is more difficult and delayed.

The message flow is typically one way from source to receiver.

Noise in the mass communication setting can be semantic, environmental or mechanical.

Nature of mass communication (communication characteristics that typify mass communication)
Traditional defining features:

- a. Mass communication is produced by complex and formal organization.

- b. Mass communication organizations have multiple gatekeepers.
- c. Mass communication organizations need a great deal of money to operate.
- d. Mass communication organizations exist to make a profit.
- e. Mass communication organizations are highly competitive.

2.2 Nature of Mass Communication

1. Formal Organization

Publishing a newspaper or operating a TV station requires control of money, management of personnel, and coordination of activities and application of authority.

To accomplish all these tasks, a well defined organizational structure characterized by specialization, division of labor and focused areas of responsibility is necessary. Consequently, this means that mass communication will be the product of bureaucracy. Decision about what gets included in newspaper or TV program will be the result of committee or group decisions. That is, several individuals are included at different levels in ascending order.

2. Gatekeepers

Another important factor that characterizes the mass communication is the presence of multiple gatekeepers. A gatekeeper is any person (or group) who has control over what material eventually reaches the public.

3. Operating expense

It costs a large sum of money to start mass communication organization to keep it running. Companies that have strong financial resources are likeliest to survive high operating expenses and are better able to compete in the market place.

4. Competing for profit

Mass communication organizations exist to make a profit. Although there are some exceptional (the public broadcasting system) for example, most newspapers, magazines, recording companies and TV and radio stations strive to produce a profit for their owners and stockholders. If they do not make money, they go out of business. The consumer is the ultimate source of this profit.

When you buy an album or a movie ticket, part of the price includes the profit. Newspapers, TV, magazines and radio earn most of their profit by selling their audiences to advertisers. The cost of advertizing in turn, is passed on to by the manufacturers to the consumers

5. Competition

Since the audience is the source of profit, mass communication organizations compete with one another as they attempt to attract an audience. The major TV networks compete with one another to get high ratings. Millions of dollars are spent to each year in promoting the new fall season. Radio stations compete with other stations that have similar formats.

Record companies spend large sums promoting their records, hoping to outsell their competitors. Daily newspapers compete with weeklies and radio and TV. Motion picture companies gamble millions on films to compete successfully.

2.3 Mass Communication Media

In the broadcast sense of the word, a medium is the channel through which a message travels from the source to the receiver. Thus in our discussion, we have pointed to sound and light waves as media of communication. When we talk about mass communication, we also need channels to carry the message.

Mass media use these channels to carry the message. Our definition of the mass media will include not only the mechanical devices that transmit and sometimes store the message (TV cameras, radio microphones, printing presses) but also the institutions that use these machines to transmit messages. When we talk about the mass media of television, radio, newspapers, magazines, sound recording, and film, we will be referring to the people, the policies, the organizations, and the technology that go into producing mass communication. A medium vehicle is a single component of the mass media, such as a newspaper, radio station, TV network, magazines and so forth.

The major mass media are radio, TV, film, book, publishing, sound recording, newspaper magazines, and computers. Of course, eight are not the only mass media that exist. For example, billboards, comic books, posters, and direct mails some other kinds of mass media.

2.4 The Role (Function) of Mass Communication

1. Surveillance

Surveillance refers to what we popularly call the news and information role of the media. The media have taken the place of sentinels and lookouts. The surveillance function can be divided further into two main types. Warning or be aware surveillance occurs when the media inform us about threats from hurricane, erupting volcano, depressed economic conditions, increasing inflation or military attack. These warnings can be immediate threats (a television station interrupts programming to broadcast a tornado warning) or they can be about long-term or chronic threats (a newspaper series about air pollution or unemployment). This is however much information that is not particularly threatening to society that people might like to know about.

Instrumental surveillance- has to do with the transmission of information that is useful and helpful in everyday life. News about what films are playing at the local theatres, stock market prices, new products, fashion ideas, recipes and so on are examples of instrumental surveillance.

2. Interpretation

Closely allied with the surveillance functions is the interpretation function. The mass media do not supply just facts and data. They also provide information on the ultimate meaning and significance of those events. Not everything that happens in the world on any day can be included in the newspaper or in a TV or radio newscast. Media organizations select those events that are to be given time or space and decide how much prominence they are to be given. Stories that ultimately make it into the paper or the newscast have been judged by the various gatekeepers involved to be more important than those that did not make it. Another example of this function can be found on the editorial pages of a newspaper. Interpretation, comments and opinion are provided for the readers so that he/she gains an added perspective on the news stories carried on other pages. A newspaper might endorse one candidate for the public office over another; thereby indicating that at least in the paper's opinion, the available information indicates that this is more qualified than the other. Articles that analyze the causes of an event or that discuss the implication of government policy are also examples of interpretation function.

3. Linkage

The mass media are able to join together different elements of society that are not directly connected. For instance, mass advertising attempts to link the needs of buyers with the product

of sellers. Legislators in the Addis Ababa may try to keep in touch with constituents' feelings by reading their hometown papers. Voters in turn- learn about the doings of their elected officials through newspapers, TV, and radio. Televisions that attempt to raise fund money for the treatments of certain diseases are another example of this linkage function. The needs of those suffering from the diseases are matched with the desires of others who wish to see the problem eliminated.

Another type of linkage occurs when geographically separated groups that share a common interest are linked by the media.

4. Transmission of Values

The transmission of values is a subtle but nonetheless important function of mass media. It has also been called socialization function. Socialization refers to the ways in which an individual comes to adapt the behavior and values of a group. The mass media present portrayals of our society, and by watching, listening to and reading. We learn how people are supposed to act and what value, are important of all the media; it is probably television that has the greatest potential for socialization (western society).

5. Entertainment

Another obvious media function is that of entertainment. Motion pictures and sound recording are devoted primary to entertainment. Even though most of newspapers focus on events on the day, comics, puzzles, games, advice, gossip, humor, and general entertainment features usually account for around 12 % of the content (If we consider sports news as entertainment that would add another 14 % to this figure.).

Television is primarily devoted to entertainment, without three quarters of a typical broadcast day falling into this category. The entertainment content of radio varies widely according to station format. Some stations may program 100 % news, while others may schedule less than 5%. In like manners, some magazines may have little entertainment content while others are almost entirely devoted to it. Even though magazines that are primarily concerned with news. Time and Newsweek, for example, usually mix in some entertaining features with their usual reporting.