

Modern communication

Adina PAICU

“Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu-Jiu

ABSTRACT:

Our modern society is entirely based on communication. We cannot function properly without it, we cannot exist as society without it and the interpersonal relations are its main tools.

I chose this subject for my paper because it is important to underline the place of communication in our society and in the world.

My paper is structured into five parts that are presented independently but also connected.

The Introduction will present the basic concepts of the process of communication starting with definitions and explanations of the process of communications and continue with the presentation of the physical parts of our body that allow us to communicate.

The First Part of the Paper is the Verbal Communication.

Here will be presented different types of verbal communication and the relation between verbal communication and building of the interpersonal relations.

The Second Part of the Paper is Non-Verbal Communication.

Non-verbal communication is an important part of communication and can give as many information about us as the verbal one. Its means are more subtle than the ones of the verbal one but equally important.

The Third Part of the paper is Written Communication.

The importance of writing for us as individuals is a major one. This part of the paper will start with a basic presentation of the writing tools and will continue with a parallel between the classical means of writing and the modern ones. It will also stress the connection between writing and culture.

The Fourth Part of the Paper is the Visual Communication.

Different means of visual communication will be presented and their importance for our community.

The Fifth Part of the Paper is Interpersonal Communication.

Interpersonal communication is an important part of our society. If we study our society we observe that all its individuals are connected by a network of interpersonal relations, The relations between the individuals of a society are very complex one and at each hour of our lives barriers of communications are raised or lowered.

The Conclusion underlines once again the importance of all five fields of communication for our society and for us as individuals.

KEY WORDS:

Communication, Verbal Communication, Non-Verbal Communication, Written Communication, Visual Communication, Interpersonal Communication

INTRODUCTION

“Communication can be defined simply as the process by which individuals share information, ideas and attitudes. A key word in this definition is “share”. The word means to give or to receive a part of something, or to enjoy or assume something in common. Some people use the term send rather than share when they discuss the communication process. However, “sending” merely implies transmitting a message, while sharing implies that the source and the receiver are actively working together to a common understanding.

You will also note that we all call communication a process. This means that communication is ongoing and dynamic. It also means that it encompasses various components that interact with one another,

causing specific consequences. For example, what information, ideas and attitudes are shared, how much is shared, when is it shared and what tools are used to share it are all variables in the process.”¹

Tools of communication

“There are several basic components in the communication process. While these components can be presented in a variety of diagrams and models, our basic model includes the source, the message, the channel and the receiver.

Source. The source (sometimes called the sender, communicator or encoder) is the person who shares information, ideas or attitudes with another person. The writer of this textbook is sharing his ideas on the definitions of the term source with you. The message is being disseminating to you through the process of mass communication – in this case, book publishing.

In mass communication, the source is usually a professional communicator who shapes the message to be shared. He or she might be a newspaper or television reporter or an entertainer who must gather information or ideas and then share them with the audience.

Message. The message is whenever the source attempts to share with someone else. It originates with an idea, which then must be encoded into symbols that are used to express that idea.

Symbols are words or objects that the source uses to elicit meaning in the mind of the receiver of the message. Words and pictures are the most common symbols used in communication. Words attempt to describe an object or concept, while pictures actually show a representation of the object or idea. If you were to give some friends directions on how to find your home, you might use words to identify the directions they should follow and the various cross streets that they need to look for. Or, if you preferred, you could draw them a map.

The process of selecting symbols for an idea or object is a very important step in communication because poorly selected symbols will result in a confusing or misunderstood message. Care must be taken to choose symbols that will elicit responses in the mind of the message receiver that are similar to those intended by the source.

In selecting symbols for their message, communicators must keep in mind that each person has a different frame of reference and that, as a result, certain symbols may mean different things for different people. [...]

Although we primarily use words and pictures to send our messages, we also communicate in other ways. Facial expressions, gestures and body language can effectively send messages. [...]

Channel. The channel is the way in which we send our message. In interpersonal communication we use the sense of sight, sound and touch to communicate messages. These are our channels. In mass communication, such technological devices as books, newspapers, magazines, movies, radio and television are our communication channels. Mass communication differs from interpersonal communication in that its messages must be moved over greater distances. This movement is achieved through the use of the technological devices. Radio and television messages are transmitted electronically, while newspaper and magazine messages are reproduced on high-speed presses and distributed through the mails and via carriers.

Receiver. The receiver (sometimes called destination, audience or decoder) in the communication process is the person with whom the message is intended to be shared. Without the receiver, there is no communication. To properly share your message, you must also be sure that the receiver is listening and understanding what it is you have to communicate. [...]

The receiver in mass communication is usually a large audience that is often referred to as the masses.

Feedback. If the receiver or audience in the communication process transmits back to the source an observable response to the message, you have an added component called feedback. Feedback provides the source with the opportunity to determine if the message was correctly understood and, if it wasn't, with an opportunity to modify it.

¹ Mass media/mass culture an introduction, Stan Le Roy Wilson, Ch. Culture and Communication: Basic Concepts, pag. 7-8, USA.

Feedback can take many forms. It can consist of words, gestures, facial expressions or any other observable act. Feedback is absent or at best very much delayed in mass communication. This makes mass communication much more difficult than face-to-face communication. [...]”¹

Categories of communication

“Communication is simply the act of transferring information from one place to another.

Although this is a simple definition, when we think about how we may communicate the subject becomes a lot more complex. There are various categories of communication and more than one may occur at any time.

The different categories of communication include:

Spoken or Verbal Communication: face-to-face, telephone, radio or television and other media.

Non-Verbal Communication: body language, gestures, how we dress or act - even our scent.

Written Communication: letters, e-mails, books, magazines, the Internet or via other media.

Visualizations: graphs and charts, maps, logos and other visualizations can communicate messages.”²

The First Part of the Paper is the Verbal Communication

“Verbal communication refers to the use of sounds and language to relay a message. It serves as a vehicle for expressing desires, ideas and concepts and is vital to the processes of learning and teaching. In combination with nonverbal forms of communication, verbal communication acts as the primary tool for expression between two or more people.

Types

Interpersonal communication and public speaking are the two basic types of verbal communication. Whereas public speaking involves one or more people delivering a message to a group, interpersonal communication generally refers to a two-way exchange that involves both talking and listening.

According to Robert M. Krauss, professor of psychology at Columbia University, signs and symbols are the major signals that make up verbal communication. Words act as symbols, and signs are secondary products of the underlying message and include things like tone of voice, blushing and facial expressions.

Purpose

Verbal communication has many purposes, but its main function is relaying a message to one or more recipients. It encompasses everything from simple one-syllable sounds to complex discussions and relies on both language and emotion to produce the desired effect. Verbal communication can be used to inform, inquire, argue and discuss topics of all kinds. It is vital to teaching and learning, as well as forming bonds and building relationships with other people. Although all species communicate, language itself is a purely human phenomenon that allows for more precision than the communication methods of other beings.

Challenges

A variety of challenges may arise when using verbal communication to express oneself. Misunderstandings can arise because of poor word choice, differing perspectives and faulty communication

¹ Mass media/mass culture an introduction, Stan Le Roy Wilson, Ch. Culture and Communication: Basic Concepts, pag. 7-8, USA.

² <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/what-is-communication.html>

techniques, and subjective opinions regarding acceptable language may result in breakdowns in communication.

Language barriers are a major cause of confusion when attempting to communicate verbally. According to the University of Louisville, differences in language influenced by geographic location, education and social status can create barriers even among those who speak the same language.

Prevention/Solution

Although difficulties with verbal communication can't be completely avoided, it is possible to increase your chances of communicating successfully. Consider the message you wish to communicate before speaking and communicate with respect for the recipient's point of view. Pay attention to what you say and how you say it. Speak clearly and enunciate your words and be conscious of nonverbal aspects such as eye contact, posture and facial expressions.

Considerations

Everyone has a unique style of communicating and perceiving messages. Although verbal communication is a primary means of expression, nonverbal actions such as body language can greatly affect the way a message is perceived.”¹

“Characteristics of Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication

Each day, you send and receive hundreds of messages through both nonverbal and verbal communication. Nonverbal communication consists of sending messages without speaking, and verbal communication, commonly referred to as oral communication, is any type of communication that uses words to send a message. Telling someone that it's nice to see them is a form of verbal communication, while a nonverbal form would be giving them a hug.

Complementary Communication Techniques

Nonverbal and verbal communications tend to complement one another. If they don't, they can lead to disappointment, mistrust and confusion. For example, if you speak to your friend and tell her that you would love to see her more often and then never answer her calls, there will be frustration and confusion. Your actions should complement your words.

Verbal Communication Informs

An important characteristic of verbal communication is that it provides direction and information. According to the Robert M. Krauss in his 2002 article "The Psychology of Verbal Communication," you use this form of communicating to convey meaning. Whatever you say transforms based on your listener.

Nonverbal Communication Clarifies

According to the Teaching and Learning Special Interest Group, nonverbal communication used makes verbal communication more understandable and clarifies the words that have been spoken. This can be viewed with the use of images, facial or hand gestures or any additional objects that can be used to illustrate the message that you are trying to send. Nonverbal communication provides visual cues that aid the other person in understanding your message. For example, if you purchase an item from a store, you can tell when the cashier is ready for you to pay when she extends her hand.

Reflective of Personality

Both nonverbal and verbal communication reflect the self-perception, worldview and beliefs of an individual. The inner workings of an individual can be exposed by the delivery of his message and the words and actions he chooses to use. For example, if you make an attempt to shake someone's hand and he pulls it away, he may have an objection to physical touch.

Affirmation

Both nonverbal and verbal communications affirm the message of the speaker. If you are trying to show someone how to repair an appliance, you will use your words to verbally give instructions while

¹ <http://www.livestrong.com/article/150573-what-is-verbal-communication/>

nonverbally using your hands to demonstrate what you are telling him. Nonverbal and verbal communication reinforces the point of an entire conversation. This can be seen frequently in public speaking. The person speaking will often use a combination of nonverbal and verbal communication to get his or her point across to the audience.”¹

The Second Part of the Paper is the Non-Verbal Communication

“Interpersonal communication is much more than the explicit meaning of words, the information or message conveyed. It also includes implicit messages, whether intentional or not, which are expressed through non-verbal behaviors.

Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, the tone and pitch of the voice, gestures displayed through body language (kinesics) and the physical distance between the communicators (proxemics).

These non-verbal signals can give clues and additional information and meaning to spoken (verbal) communication.

Non-verbal communication helps people to:

Reinforce or modify what is said in words.

For example, people may nod their heads vigorously when saying "Yes" to emphasize that they agree with the other person, but a shrug of the shoulders and a sad expression when saying "I'm fine thanks," may imply that things are not really fine at all!

Convey information about their emotional state.

Define or reinforce the relationship between people.

Provide feedback to the other person.

Regulate the flow of communication

For example by signaling to others that they have finished speaking or wish to say something.

Learning the Language

Many popular books on non-verbal communication present the topic as if it were a language that can be learned, the implication being that if the meaning of every nod, eye movement, and gesture were known, the real feelings and intentions of a person would be understood.

This, of course, is absolutely true.

Unfortunately interpreting non-verbal communication is not that simple.

Non-verbal communication is not a language with a fixed meaning. It is influenced and driven by the context in which it occurs. This includes both the place and the people concerned, as well as the culture.

For example, a nod of the head between colleagues in a committee meeting may mean something very different from when the same action is used to acknowledge someone across a crowded room, and again when two people are having a social conversation.

Interpersonal communication is further complicated in that it is usually not possible to interpret a gesture or expression accurately on its own. Non-verbal communication consists of a complete package of expressions, hand and eye movements, postures, and gestures which should be interpreted along with speech (verbal communication).

The Cultural Context

¹ <http://www.livestrong.com/article/143158-characteristics-verbal-non-verbal-communication/>

The good news is that most of us learn to interpret non-verbal communication as we grow up and develop. It is a normal part of how we communicate with other people, and most of us both use it and interpret it quite unconsciously.

This can make it harder to interpret consciously. However, if you stop thinking about it, you will probably find that you have a very good idea of what someone meant.

The bad news is that non-verbal communication can be very culture-specific.

Examples of culture-specific non-verbal communication

The popular stereotype of Italians, involving big gestures, lots of hand-waving, and plenty of loud and excited shouting, may be a stereotype, but it exists for a reason. In the Italian culture, excitement is shown a lot more obviously than in the UK, for example, and non-verbal communication tends to be a lot more obvious. This can make it much harder for Italians to interpret non-verbal communication in the UK or USA, where it is more subtle. However, even in Italy, there are geographical variations.

The thumbs-up gesture, which generally signals approval in English-speaking countries, is considered offensive in other countries, including apparently Greece, Italy and some parts of the Middle East.

Making a circle with your thumb and forefinger like this means OK in Western cultures. It is used in particular by divers in this way. In Japan, however, it is reputedly the sign for money, and in Arabic countries, it is a threat.

It's worth being careful how you use gestures and body language!

The Importance of Non-verbal Communication

When we communicate, non-verbal cues can be as important, or in some cases even more important, than what we say.

Non-verbal communication can have a great impact on the listener and the outcome of the communication.

People tend to have much less conscious control over their non-verbal messages than of what they're actually saying.

This is partly because non-verbal communication is much more emotional in nature, and therefore much more instinctive.

If there is a mismatch between the two, therefore, you should probably trust the non-verbal messages, rather than the words used.

A lack of non-verbal message may also be a signal of sorts, suggesting that the speaker is carefully controlling their body language, and may be trying to hide their true emotions.

Types of Non-Verbal Communication

The types of interpersonal communication that are not expressed verbally (with speech) are called non-verbal communications.

There are many different types of non-verbal communication.

They include:

Body Movements (Kinesics), for example, hand gestures or nodding or shaking the head;

Posture, or how you stand or sit, whether your arms are crossed, and so on;

Eye Contact, where the amount of eye contact often determines the level of trust and trustworthiness;

Para-language, or aspects of the voice apart from speech, such as pitch, tone, and speed of speaking;

Closeness or Personal Space (Proxemics), which determines the level of intimacy;

Facial Expressions, including smiling, frowning and even blinking; and

Physiological Changes, for example, sweating or blinking more when nervous.”¹

The Third Part of the paper is Written Communication.

“The communication which is performed through any written document is called **written communication**. When messages or information are exchanged or communicated in written form is called written communication. It is a word based communication system. Memos, letters, reports, notes, email etc. are used to transmit meaning in written communication. The important definitions of written communication are as follows:

According to **Bovee and others**, “*Written communication is the expression of ideas through words that are meant to be read.*”

According to **C.B. Mamoria**, “*A written communication process is always put into writing and generally used when the audience is at a distance or when a permanency of record is required.*”

According to **Ricky W. Griffin**, “*Written communication is the message that is encoded and transmitted in written form.*”

According to **R. Pal and J.S. Korlahli**, “*Everything that has to be written and transmitted in the written form falls in the area of written communication.*”

So, written communication is the process of communication in which messages or information is exchanged or communicated within sender and receiver through written form.

Characteristics of a good written communication

Characteristics of a good written communication are discussed below:

Easy language: Easy language should be used in written communication. The sentences of written communication must be understandable to the reader.

Structure: Definite structure must be followed in drafting any written document. Every written form has its own structure.

Accurate and precise: A well written document must be accurate and precise. Written communication insists on greater accuracy and precision.

Direct speech: Direct speech should be used in written communication. Indirect and passive sentences must be avoided.

Paragraph design: A good written communication bears a paragraph design. Paragraphing is also important to clear communication.

Error-less: A well written document must be free from error in both grammar and language.

You-attitude: There must be your attitude in written communication. The reader can be impressed for this.

Personal and organizational images: A good written communication bears the personal image of the writer. It also increases the organizational image as a whole.”²

The Fourth Part of the Paper is the Visual Communication

“Visual communication is communication through a visual aid and is described as the conveyance of ideas and information in forms that can be read or looked upon. Visual

¹ <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/nonverbal-communication.html>

² <https://thebusinesscommunication.com/what-is-written-communication/>

communication in part or whole relies on vision, and is primarily presented or expressed with two dimensional images, it includes: signs, typography, drawing, graphic design, illustration, Industrial Design, Advertising, Animation color and electronic resources. It also explores the idea that a visual message accompanying text has a greater power to inform, educate, or persuade a person or audience.

Excluding two dimensional images, there are other ways to express information visually - gestures and body language, animation (digital or analogue), and film. Visual communication by e-mail, a textual medium, is commonly expressed with emoticons, and embedded digital images.

The term 'visual presentation is used to refer to the actual presentation of information through a visible medium such as text or images. Recent research in the field has focused on web design and graphically-oriented usability. Graphic designers also use methods of visual communication in their professional practice. Visual communication on the World Wide Web is perhaps the most important form of communication that takes place while users are surfing the Internet. When experiencing the web, one uses the eyes as the primary sense, and therefore the visual presentation of a website is very important for users to understand the message or of the communication taking place.

Visual communication takes place through pictures, graphs and charts, as well as through signs, signals and symbols. It may be used either independently or as an adjunct to the other methods of communication.

Visual aids media: simple to advanced

Chalkboard or whiteboard

Chalkboards and whiteboards are very useful visual aids, particularly when more advanced types of media are unavailable. The use of chalkboards or whiteboards is convenient, but they are not a perfect visual aid. Often, using this medium as an aid can create confusion or boredom.

Poster board

A poster is a very simple and easy visual aid. Posters can display charts, graphs, pictures, or illustrations

Handouts

Handouts can also display charts, graphs, pictures, or illustrations. An important aspect of the use of a handout is that a person can keep a handout with them long after the presentation is over. This can help the person better remember what was discussed.

Video excerpts

A video can be a great visual aid and attention grabber, however, a video is not a replacement for an actual speech.

Projection equipment

There are several types of projectors. These include slide projectors, PowerPoint presentations, overhead projectors, and computer projectors. Slide projectors are the oldest form of projector, and are no longer used. PowerPoint presentations are very popular and are used often. Computer projectors are the most technologically advanced projectors. When using a computer projector, pictures and slides are easily taken right from a computer either online or from a saved file and are blown up and shown on a large screen.

Computer-assisted presentations

PowerPoint presentations can be an extremely useful visual aid, especially for longer presentations. For five- to ten-minute presentations, it is probably not worth the time or effort to put together a PowerPoint.”¹

The Fifth Part of the Paper is Interpersonal Communication

“Interpersonal skills are the life skills we use every day when we communicate and interact with other people, both individually and in groups.

People who have worked on developing strong interpersonal skills are usually more successful in both their professional and personal lives.

Employers often seek to hire staff with 'strong interpersonal skills' - they want people who will work well in a team and be able to communicate effectively with colleagues, customers and clients.

Interpersonal skills are not just important in the workplace, our personal and social lives can also benefit from better interpersonal skills. People with good interpersonal skills are usually perceived as optimistic, calm, confident and charismatic - qualities that are often endearing or appealing to others.

Interpersonal Skills Include:

Communication Skills, which in turn include:

Verbal Communication – What we say and how we say it.

Non-Verbal Communication – What we communicate without words, body language is an example.

Listening Skills – How we interpret both the verbal and non-verbal messages sent by others.

Team-Working – Working with others in groups and teams, both formal and informal.

Negotiation, Persuasion and Influencing Skills – Working with others to find a mutually agreeable (Win/Win) outcome.

Conflict Resolution and Mediation – Working with others to resolve interpersonal conflict and disagreements in a positive way.

Problem Solving and Decision-Making – Working with others to identify, define and solve problems, which includes making decisions about the best course of action.”²

CONCLUSIONS

“**Modern communication allows people to interact directly with people from all over the world, creating a more global society.** Web cameras allow people to have face-to-face conversations with people no matter their location, which removes many boundaries in social and business life. Forum boards bring people of common interest together to share ideas and viewpoints.”³

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_communication

² <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/interpersonal-skills.html>

³ <https://www.reference.com/business-finance/advantages-modern-communication-b3080624d2e8f61#>