KOM5111: COMMUNICATION THEORY (PJJ)

Introduction to Communication Theory
Unit 1 - 4

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Definition of Communication

What is meant by the term ‘Communication’?

“Communication is the process of transmitting; a giving, or giving and receiving of information, signals, or messages by talks, gestures, writing, etc.”

(Ruben, B. (1992) Communication and Human Behavior)
“communication is more effective if done by means of face-to-face as compared to transmitted via technology”

Defining communication and Social Process

• Communication is a **social process** in which individuals employ **symbols** to establish and interpret **meaning** in their **environment**

• Key terms in defining communication:
• Environment is the situation or context in which communication occurs
• Includes many elements: time, place, historical period, relationship, etc.
• Can be mediated
3 Main Approaches to Communication

1. Verbal Communication (Interpersonal)
2. Non Verbal Communication
3. Communication Via Media (Mediated Communication)

Facial expressions

Daddy, look what I made.
Keep on talking, I'm listening.
1. Human Communication
   • Intrapersonal communication
   • Interpersonal communication
   • Intercultural communication

2. Group Communication
   • Small group communication (2 – 10 people)
   • Large group communication (11-30 people)
   • Mass group communication (more than 30, less than 200 people)
   • Mass communication via media (millions of people)
TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

3. Organizational Communication
   • employers/management to workers/staff
   • from workers/staff to employers/management
   • among peers/subordinates
   • communication via technology (email, phones etc)

4. Animal Communication
   • by means of sounds
   • by means of gestures
   • by means of reward for reinforcement
5. Machine Communication
   • from humans to machines (e.g., computers, fax machines, photocopies, etc)
   • from machine to machine (robotics, CAD, CAM, industrial productions)

6. Mediated Communication
   • communication by means of media includes electronic media (radio, TV) and
   • print media (newspapers, magazines, books etc)
Theory
Definition of Theory

According to Littlejohn (2016) – ‘theory functions as a medium to explain and predict a phenomena’

(Littlejohn. et all, 2017)
“A set of concepts and relationships statements that helps to describe, explain, evaluate, predict and control communication events”

(Cragan & Shields, 1998)
1. Concepts

- abstraction referencing to a class of thing, a term used at the theoretical level
  (Salleh Hassan, 2008)

- “the process by which a general idea is derived or an abstraction is generalized is called conceptualization”
  (Salleh Hassan, 2008)
Variables

- A variable is a concept, object, or property to which a set of values based on predetermined criteria is assigned.

- Four forms of variables in Communication Research: Independent Variable, Dependent Variable, Moderating Variable and Mediating Variable
Dependent Variables (DV)
- Dependent variables which are assumed to depend on or be caused by another (called the independent variable.

For example, if you find that income is partly a function of amount of or level of formal education, income is being treated as a dependent variable

(Salleh Hassan, 2008)
Independent Variables (IV)

- Independent Variable is presumed to cause or determine a dependent variable.

For example, if we discover that religiosity is partly a function of gender – that is to say women are more religious than men, therefore gender is the independent variable (Salleh Hassan, 2008)
Functions of Communication Theory:

- Making predictions/assumptions about communication phenomenon
- Views/observations
- Opinions
- Limitations
- Applications
- Criticisms
SEVEN CONTEXTS of Communication

• Intrapersonal
• Interpersonal
• Small Group
• Organizational
• Public/Rhetorical
• Mass/Media
• Cultural
How one sees and talks about the world influences how and what one chooses to research.

Three major approaches to knowing:
- Positivist/empirical
- Interpretive
- Critical
Approaches to knowing: how do you see (and talk about) the world?

- **Objective truths** can be uncovered about human interactions
- Research processes can be partially value-neutral
- Natural scientific methods, with control over the variables
- Goal is to construct general laws governing human interactions
- “Theory-then-research”
Approaches to knowing: how do you see (and talk about) the world?

- **Truth is subjective** and co-created by the participants in the research process
- Complete objectivity is often impossible
- The study of interaction is believed to be value-relevant
- No concern for control or ability to generalize; focus is providing rich descriptions
- “Research-then-theory”
Approaches to knowing: how do you see (and talk about) the world?

- Those in power shape knowledge in ways that perpetuate the status quo
- Researchers seek to change the status quo to resolve power imbalances and give voice to the silenced
- These imbalances are often reproduced accidentally through social norms
Approaches to knowing: what questions do you ask about the world?

• Three major types of questions:
  – Ontological
  – Epistemological
  – Axiological
Approaches to knowing: what questions do you ask about the world?

- The study of **being/nonbeing**, or the nature of reality
- The three approaches’ views on ontology:
  - Empirical: General laws govern human interactions and free choice is limited
  - Interpretive: People have free choice and the researcher’s job is to co-create reality
  - Critical: There is choice and constraint in the power structures they wish to change
Approaches to knowing: what questions do you ask about the world?

- How we go about knowing and what counts as knowledge
- The three approaches’ views on epistemology:
  - Empirical: Strive for control over research process and rely on statistical tests
  - Interpretive: Rely on their own and their participants’ explanations/interpretations
  - Critical: Focus on power imbalances
Approaches to knowing: what questions do you ask about the world?

• The role of values in theory and research

• The three approaches’ views on axiology:
  – Empirical: Avoid allowing values to influence the research process as much as possible
  – Interpretive: Recognize that values unavoidably influence the entire process
  – Critical: Values should be closely intertwined with scholarly work
The research process

- **Scientific method uses deductive logic**
  - Moving from the general (theory) to specific (observations) using hypothesis derived from theory

- **Operationalization**
  - Researcher specifies how concepts will be measured
  - Turns abstract concepts from the theory into concrete variables

- **Make observations/collect data**
  - Researcher codes or directly measures the occurrence of the concepts
BASIC COMMUNICATION
The Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model, 1949

Concepts:
- Entropy
- Redundancy
- Noise
- Channel Capacity
Shannon & Weaver Model of Communication

• Created in 1949 by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver.

• Also known as ‘mother of all models’ (Communication)

• Basis of this model – Study of telephone conversations

• Focus on – mechanics of messages transmitted

• Under ‘Bell Laboratory Lab’
Basic Communication Theories

• Wilbur Schram’s Theory (Mathematical Theory)
• David Berlo Theory (SMCR)
Wilbur Schramm
(Schramm Model)
• Mass Communications Founding Father.
• **Wilbur Schramm** is considered the father of Communication studies.
• His ground breaking work laid the foundation for our modern study in the field.
According to Schramm, communication is a process which requires:
1. The sender of the message to organize and arrange message (encode);
2. To send to the receiver of the message;
3. whom should be able to assign meaning (interpret) the received message;
4. before providing feedback (encode) to the sender of the message.
Schramm’s Theory is a form of a Transactional process of Human Communication, whereby message and feedback happens simultaneously.

- Linear (one-way communication)
- Interactive (two way communication)
- Transactional (two way communication)
Figure 1.1
The Linear View of Human Communication
Figure 1.2
The Interactional View
Figure 1.3
The Transactional View
In this view, a complex ball game is under way in which...
Terminologies of Schramm’s Theory

**Encoder:**
“the process of translating a message into code”

**Interpreter:**
“an act of assigning meaning to a code or symbol”
Decoder:

“the act of translating from code symbols into ordinary language”


Decoder can be done either manually or by means of technology (decoding machines)
According to Schramm, effective human communication occurs when:

The **message is understood (shared meaning)** between sender and receiver

**Message**

“a message is any symbol or collection of symbols which has meaning or utility”
Symbol
“a character or letter accepted as representing or signifying something, idea, relation, process etc”

“a symbol is *anything* which is *created* to refer to something else”
*Gilchrist, J.* (1990)
Encoder should focus on the frame of reference of the receiver

example: communicating about extreme cold weather
Providing Feedback

Feedback has to be immediate (preferably)

Feedback is most effective if done by means of face-to-face communication
DAVID BERLO’S THEORY
Berlo's Model has mainly, four components to describe the communication process. They are:

1) Sender, (S)
2) Message, (M)
3) Channel and (C)
4) Receiver. (R)

Each of the component is affected by many factors.
DAVID BERLO’S THEORY

Berlos’s SMCR Model of communication

Source: Communication Skills, Attitudes, Knowledge, Social System, Culture
Message: Content, Elements, Treatment, Structure, Code
Channel: Hearing, Seeing, Touching, Smelling, Tasting
Receiver: Communication Skills, Attitudes, Knowledge, Social System, Culture
DAVID BERLO’S THEORY: CRITICISMS

• There is no concept of feedback, so the effect is not considered.
• There is no concept of noise or any kind of barriers in communication process.
• It is a linear model of communication, there is no two way communication.
• Both of the people must be similar according to all the factors mentioned above.
Interpersonal Communication Theory
Interpersonal Theory

- **Interpersonal Communication** – exchange of information between two or more people.
- Conducted by means of media or face-to-face
- Understanding the complexity of human communication.
- Six categories:
  1. How humans adjust and adapt their **verbal** communication of inquiry;
  2. How human adjust and adapt their **non-verbal** communication during face-to-face communication;
  3. How **uncertainty** influences our behaviour and information-management strategies;
  4. Deceptive communication;
  5. Relational dialectics (struggle/tension in relationship); and
  6. Social interaction that mediated by technology.
Seven Types of Interpersonal Skills

The seven types of interpersonal skills that are needed to succeed in an organizational environment are:

1) Verbal communication.
2) Non-verbal communication.
3) Listening skills.
4) Negotiation.
5) Problem-solving.
6) Decision-making.
7) Assertiveness.
Interpersonal Communication Theory
(Human Communication)

- Uncertainty reduction
- Anxiety-uncertainty management
- Social exchange
- Social penetration
- Identity management
Uncertainty Reduction Theory
(URT)
(Initial Interaction Theory)
Founder - Uncertainty Reduction Theory

Developed by:
Charles Berger & Richard Calabrese (1975)
History

• Is a communication theory from the post-positivist tradition.

• Stems also from information theory, originated by Shannon and Weaver. (When people interact initially, uncertainties exist).

• **Interpersonal Theory.** Word Origin. noun Psychology.

• The **theory** that personality development and behaviour disorders are related to and determined by relationships between persons.

• Develop to **socio-psychological** perspective.

• Looking at the social relation issues.
What is URT all about

• When strangers meet, their primary focus is reducing their level of uncertainty
• Uncertainty is uncomfortable
• Individuals make predictions in order to explain the outcomes of an interaction
What is URT all about

- A primary goal of persons in initial interactions is to increase their ability to predict and explain one another's behavioral choices.
- Prediction is the ability to forecast one's own and others' choices.
- Explanation is the ability to interpret the meaning of behavioral choices.
- Uncertainty exists whenever the number of possible alternatives is high, and their likelihood relative equal.
Types of Uncertainty

1) Cognitive uncertainty
   • Associated with beliefs and attitudes

2) Behavioral uncertainty
   • To the extent to which behavior is predictable in a given situation
   • Norms of the society

3) Affected by self-disclosure
3 strategies to reduce uncertainty:

1) **Passive strategies:** observing the person,

2) **Active strategies:** asking others about the person or looking up info; and

3) **Interactive strategies:** asking questions, self-disclosure.
Uncertainty Reduction Theory

When Tom’s boss introduces Summer to everyone, he mentions that she had just moved to the Los Angeles area from Michigan. Tom later uses this information to initiate a conversation with Summer at a co-worker’s engagement party. He approaches her and asks, “You just moved here, right?” He then goes on to ask her what brought her to LA. Tom is asking these questions to reduce his uncertainty about Summer.
Uncertainty Reduction Theory

Entry phase in a relation
- Information (demographic)
- Communication guided by rules and norms

Personal phase in a relation
- Information (attitudes, values and beliefs)
- Communication more freely and less rules

Exit phase in a relation
- Information (less to none)
- Communication (planning future interaction plans, mostly avoiding communication)
Variables

• Types of uncertainty
  – Behavioral
  – Cognitive
  – Affected by self-disclosure
Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT)

Diagram:
- Other
- Self
- Relationship
- Uncertainty
- Cognitive
- Behavioral

→ Uncertainty Reduction
Example of Research Framework URT

Diagram:
- Similarity
- Interactive uncertainty strategy
  - H1a
- Active uncertainty strategy
  - H1b
- Passive uncertainty strategy
  - H1c

Low level of uncertainty
- H3
- H4

Social attraction
- H2
- H5

Perceived valence of the obtained information
7 Assumptions of URT

1. People experience uncertainty in interpersonal settings,
2. Uncertainty is an aversive state, generating cognitive stress.
3. When strangers meet, their primary concern is to reduce their uncertainty and increase predictability.
4. Interpersonal communication is a developmental process that occurs in stages,
5. Interpersonal communication is the primary means of uncertainty reduction.
6. The quantity and nature of information that people share changes through time.
7. It is possible to predict people's behavior in a lawlike fashion.
Criticism

• The scope of the axioms and theorems – if disproved will destroy the axiological base upon.

• Uncertainty measurement is problematic – especially on the self-perception.

• Beyond initial interaction – long term relationship impact negatively.

• Motivation to reduce uncertainty – is not the driving force of interaction.
Application of Theory

- Face-to-face interaction in organization
- Close relationship
- Dating
- On-line relationship.
Group Communication Theory
Introduction

• Group communication is under Interpersonal Communication

• Group communication may involve three or more individuals.
  – Small group communication (3 – 10 people)
  – Large group communication (11-30 people)
  – Mass group communication (more than 30, less than 200 people)
  – Mass communication via media (millions of people)
• Group Communication – is the exchange of information and symbols to achieve meaning among group members over a period of time.
• Main function of Group Communication – related to group decision making.
• Helps to understand how groups function in influencing individual and society.
3 Characteristics:

1. Size
2. Interaction and
3. Goals
Why people join Group

1. Group Synergy
   • Group often capable of producing higher quality work and better decisions than individual.

2. Support and Commitment
   • Group – more willing to take on a large project than individual
   • Increase ability to perform work, group can provide encouragement and support to its member while working on big project.

3. Interpersonal Needs
   • Inclusion, Control and affection
   • Need to be accepted by others
Characteristics of Group

- Groups are a primary context for interaction within the business community.
- Groups may have heroes and enemies, sages alongside new members.
- Groups overlap, and may share common goals, but may also engage in conflict.
- Groups can be supportive or coercive, and can exert powerful influences over individuals.
Group Communication Theory

- Small Group Communication
- Groupthink theory
- Interaction process
- Muted Group Theory
- Social Identity Theory
- The Johari Window Model
Small Group Communication

• Several different models
• More towards linear Models of Group Development
  i. Tubb’s Theory
  ii. Fisher’s Model, &
  iii. Tuckman’s Model
Small Group Communication – Tubb’s Theory

1. Orientation
   • Group member get to know each other

2. Conflict
   • A necessary part of a group’s development. Allows the group to evaluate ideas and helps them to avoid conformity and groupthink.

3. Consensus
   • Conflicts ends in the consensus stage, group compromise, select ideas & agreement

4. Closure
   • Final result announced & group members reaffirm their support of the decision.
Thank You