

THUONGMAI UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ENGLISH



PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Hanoi, 2019

UNIT 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION



I. Definition of communication

There are many definitions of communication posed by different writers. According to Dwyer (2000: 4), “Communication is the transfer of meaning. Communication is any behavior, verbal or nonverbal, that is perceived by another. Knowledge, feelings or thoughts are encoded and sent from at least one person and received and decoded by at least one other. Meaning is given to this message as the receiver interprets the message. A connection is made between the people communicating. Communication lets us learn more about ourselves and the world around us, share experiences with others, persuade and influence others, and relax and enjoy ourselves.”

Verderber, R.F. , Verderber, K.S. & Berryman- Fink, C. (2008) define “Communication is the process of creating or sharing meaning in informal conversation , group interaction, or public speaking”. Another definition is set by Hybels, S & Weaver II, R.L. (1992). According to them, “Communication is any process in which people share information, ideas and feelings. That process involves not only the spoken and written word, but also body, personal mannerisms and style, the surroundings- anything that adds meaning to a message.”

From these definitions, it can be summarized that Communication is the process of sending and receiving information among people. It is a way of reaching others by transmitting ideas and thoughts, feeling and values.

II. The importance of communication

Ancient Greeks considered communication to be **important for the social cohesion and democracy**. Evidence to this are the creation of the ancient market, the establishment of theatres etc. where people used to meet, exchange information and goods and where they had the opportunity to send and receive knowledge and ideas. Several philosophers and prominent dramatic writers dealt with the communication as **a form of teaching**. Socrates, the philosopher, has been a warm supporter of verbal word and the founder of the “dialectic theory”. He was the first to realise the significance of communication for the youth’s and the citizen’s education. In one of his dialogues with Protagoras he noted the verbal word’s power by saying: “I heard (...) that you are capable of speaking on your own or even teaching other people by saying a lot of things about the same subject in order that the dialogue won’t ever finish and no one will ever say less than you do”.

Gorgias, the thinker, answering Socrates’ question, says the most important good is the art of persuasion giving the following arguments: “What I say is that the most important good is the ability to persuade everybody: the judges in the court, the members of the parliament, the citizens in a public meeting and anyone who takes part in a gathering”.

Several surveys have shown that communication is **the key to human relationships and the key to social groups**.

Communication and information play **an important role in the creation of preconditions for peace, dignity, justice, disarmament and solving of universal problems**, (Howard, 1995).

Everyone needs communication skills

People fulfill a variety of needs through communication, and communicating effectively can provide considerable pleasure. A stimulating conversation, participation in a group discussion

that leads to solving a problem, a persuasive speech that gains signatures on a petition: all these are instances of successful communication.

Even though we have been communicating since birth, we are not always effective. Sometimes communication does not work and we end up frustrated. We get lost from incomplete directions, insult a friend with what we intended as an innocent comment, or bore an audience with a speech. Effective communication is a problem for many of us; that is why a barrage of books, articles, and seminars tell us how to communicate.

Communication is vital in all areas of our lives. We use it for persuasion; to influence relationships; to inform; to share; to discover, and uncover information. We want a friend to stop studying and go to a party; we want our friends and family to like one another; we want someone to join our club or to vote for a participant candidate.

Perhaps our most important need is to maintain and improve relationships. Through communication we discover others' needs and share our own. Any kind of relationship requires open and accurate lines of communication. Only

when such lines exist will people feel free to voice important thoughts and feelings.

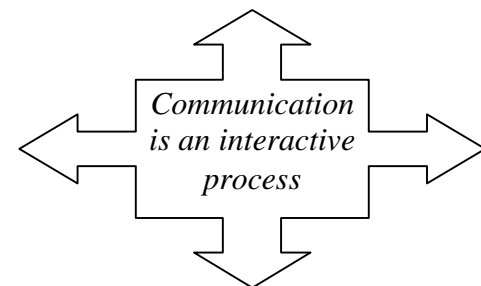
Communication, then, is vital to our lives. To live is to communicate. To communicate effectively is to enjoy life more fully.

III. Communication process

Communication has been deemed as a process. The term “process” refers to identifiable flow of information through interrelated stages of analysis directed toward the achievement of an object. In the case of social action, the concept of process is dynamic rather than static in which

"The world of business is a world of action. Products are designed, made, and sold. People are hired. Services are rendered. Policies are devised and implemented. Jobs are learned and performed. Yet there is no practical way in which any of these events can take place without communication."

---Communication expert
Harold Janis---



events and relationships are seen as dynamic, continuous and flexible. Dwyer (2000) states that the process of communication is dynamic and interactive. Someone sends, someone receives and in between there is a message. As information flows, people place meaning and structure on the variety of messages received from others.

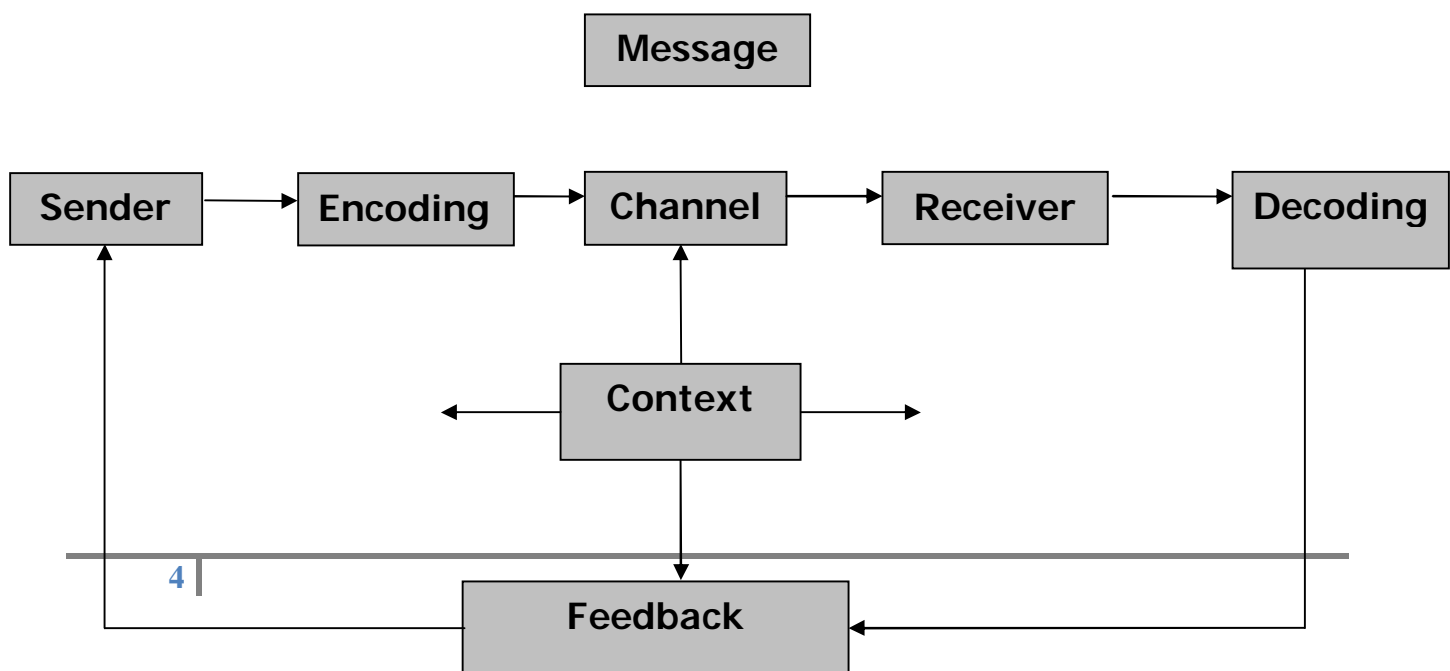
The communication process is a simple model that demonstrates all the factors that can affect communication. Communication is effective if the message that is received is the same one that is sent.

The communication process takes place in various situations for different reasons, with the potential for many interpretations. It has **seven main elements**.

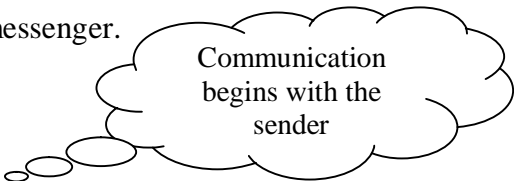
1. **Sender:** the person who has something to communicate
2. **Message:** what needs to be communicated
3. **Receiver:** the person who will receive the message
4. **Feedback:** the receiver's response to the attempt by the sender to send the message
5. **Channel/ Medium of transmission:** the means of communication
6. **Context or setting:** circumstances within which communication takes place
7. **Interference or noise:** stimuli that interferes with communication process

There are many models of the communication process. The figure presented is presentation of how communication works. It should be stressed that it cannot be a complete guide; it takes the most significant elements of the process and place these in a useful sequence.

Figure 1.1: Communication process



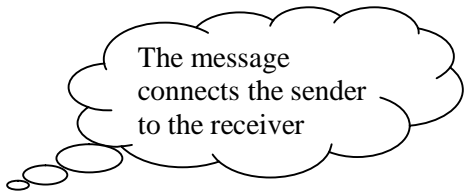
This process works as follows: The messenger has something to communicate, a message. This message has an intent. The messenger will encode his message with words, behaviour and body language that he senses will help him to best communicate this message according to his intent. The message will go through a channel, a means of communication such as e-mail, face to face or phone conversation, letter, presentation. The receiver will then decode the message using conventions, cultural or contextual background, and language skills. The message he receives might or might not meet the intent of the messenger.



Communication begins with the sender

THE SENDER

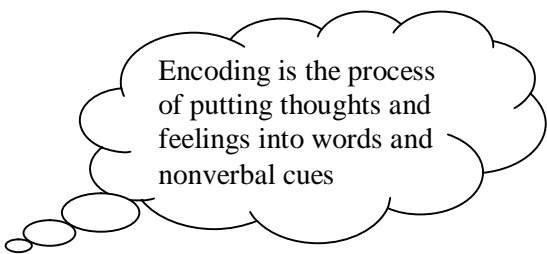
The sender is an individual, group, or organization who initiates the communication. This source is initially responsible for the success of the message. Senders react to situations from a unique vantage point, interpreting ideas and filtering experiences through their own perception (see Figure 1.2). Unique to individual senders, and integral to all the communication they engage in, is **a background of accumulated attitudes, experiences, skills, cultural conditioning and individual differences** that influence how they communicate.



The message connects the sender to the receiver

MESSAGE

Messages are the verbal utterances and nonverbal behaviours to which meaning is attributed during communication. Messages make a connection between senders and receivers.



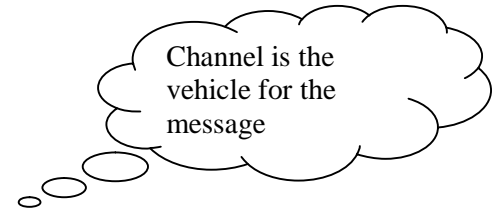
Encoding is the process of putting thoughts and feelings into words and nonverbal cues

ENCODING

The first step the sender faces with involves the **encoding process**. In order to convey meaning, the sender must begin encoding, which means translating information into a message in the form of **symbols** that represent ideas or concepts. This process translates the ideas or concepts into the coded message that will be communicated. The symbols can take on numerous forms such as languages, words, or gestures. These symbols are used to encode ideas into messages that others can understand.

When encoding a message, the sender has to begin by deciding what he/she wants to transmit. This decision by the sender is based on what he/she believes about the receiver's

knowledge and assumptions, along with what additional information he/she wants the receiver to have. It is important for the sender to use symbols that are familiar to the intended receiver. A good way for the sender to improve encoding his/her message is to mentally visualize the communication from the receiver's point of view.



CHANNELS

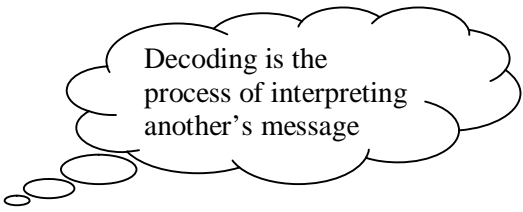
To begin transmitting the message, the sender uses some kind of **channel** (also called a **medium**). The channel is the means used to convey the message. Most channels are either oral or written, but currently visual channels are becoming more common as technology expands. Common channels include the telephone and a variety of written forms such as memos, letters, and reports. The effectiveness of the various channels fluctuates depending on the characteristics of the communication. For example, when immediate feedback is necessary, oral communication channels are more effective because any uncertainties can be cleared up on the spot. In a situation where the message must be delivered to more than a small group of people, written channels are often more effective. Although in many cases, both oral and written channels should be used because one supplements the other.

Other channels communicate nonverbal messages. For example, when Denise goes to apply for a job, she uses several nonverbal signals to send out a positive message: a firm handshake (touch), a light perfume (smell), nice clothes (sight), and a respectful voice (sound). In her case, the senses she is appealing to are the channels.

If a sender relays a message through an inappropriate channel, its message may not reach the right receivers. That is why senders need to keep in mind that selecting the appropriate channel will greatly assist in the effectiveness of the receiver's understanding. The sender's decision to utilize either an oral or a written channel for communicating a message is influenced by several factors. The sender should ask him or herself different questions, so that they can select the appropriate channel. Is the message urgent? Is immediate feedback needed? Is documentation or a permanent record required? Is the content complicated, controversial, or private? Is the message going to someone inside or outside the organization? What oral and written communication skills does the receiver possess? Once the sender has answered all of these questions, they will be able to choose an effective channel.

DECODING

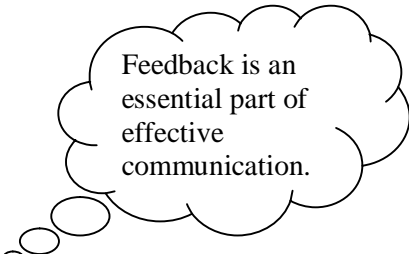
After the appropriate channel or channels are selected, the message enters the **decoding stage** of the communication process. Decoding is conducted by the receiver. Once the message is received and examined, the stimulus is sent to the brain for interpreting, in order to assign some type of meaning to it. It is this processing stage that constitutes decoding. The receiver begins to interpret the symbols sent by the sender, translating the message to their own set of experiences in order to make the symbols meaningful. Successful communication takes place when the receiver correctly interprets the sender's message.



Decoding is the process of interpreting another's message

THE RECEIVER

The **receiver** is the individual or individuals to whom the message is directed. The extent to which this person comprehends the message will depend on a number of factors, which include the following: how much the individual or individuals know about the topic, their receptivity to the message, and the relationship and trust that exists between sender and receiver. All interpretations by the receiver are influenced by their experiences, attitudes, knowledge, skills, perceptions, and culture. It is similar to the sender's relationship with encoding.



Feedback is an essential part of effective communication.

FEEDBACK

Feedback is the final link in the chain of the communication process. After receiving a message, the receiver responds in some way and signals that response to the sender. The signal may take the form of a spoken comment, a long sigh, a written message, a smile, or some other action. "Even a lack of response, is in a sense, a form of response" (Bovee & Thill, 1992). Without feedback, the sender cannot confirm that the receiver has interpreted the message correctly.

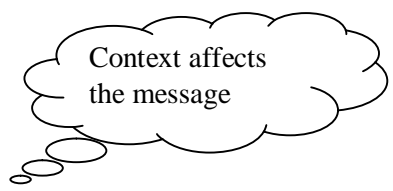
Feedback is a **key component** in the communication process because it allows the sender to evaluate the effectiveness of the message. Feedback ultimately provides an opportunity for the sender to take corrective action to clarify a misunderstood message. "Feedback plays an important role by indicating significant communication barriers: differences in background, different interpretations of words, and differing emotional reactions" (Bovee & Thill, 1992).

Feedback:

- gives the communication continuity
- indicates understanding or misunderstanding of the message
- stimulates further communication and discussion

Both sender and receiver need feedback. As you communicate, check with your receivers to establish that their understanding of the message is correct. Ask the receiver to rephrase what has been said and acknowledge your agreement or disagreement. It is important to the sender to determine how the message is being received and helps receivers understand how their behaviour affects others.

Feedback can help or hinder your communication and the climate you create. This will be discussed further in Unit 3. In the workplace, most people communicate face-to-face with their leaders, supervisors and colleagues, so the ability to provide appropriate feedback can assist the development of good working relationships and the productivity of the business.



Context affects the message

CONTEXT

Context consists of the situation, circumstances or setting within which communication takes place. The context affects the expectations of the sender and the receiver, the meaning they derive, and their subsequent behavior. Context plays an important part in how a message is encoded and decoded. The same message can have a completely different meaning depending on the situation since emotions and reactions to ideas and events vary in different situations. For example, communication at a conference, in the lunchroom, at a formal meeting or in the office is taking place in different settings. It may use different language, relationships and authority to achieve the different communication purpose in each situation.

Context includes the (1) physical, (2) social, (3) historical, (4) psychological, and (5) cultural circumstances that surround a communication episode.

Physical context

The physical context includes its location, the environmental conditions (temperature, lighting, and noise level), the distance between communicators, seating arrangements, and time of day. Each of these factors can affect the communication. For example, the meaning shared in a

conversation may be affected by whether it is held in a crowded company cafeteria, an elegant restaurant, over the telephone, or on the Internet.

Social context

The social context is the nature of relationship that may already exist between senders and receivers. Whether communication takes place among family members, friends, acquaintances, work associates, or strangers influences what and how messages are formed, shared and interpreted. For instance, most people change how they interact when talking with their parents or siblings as compared to how they interact when talking with their friends.

Historical context

The historical context is the background provided by previous communication episodes between the communicators. It influences understandings in the current encounter. For instance, suppose one morning Chad tells Shelby that he will get the draft of the report that they had left for their boss to read. As Shelby enters the office that afternoon, she sees Chad and says, “Did you get it?” Another person listening to the conversation would have no idea what the “it” is to which Shelby is referring. Yet Chad may well reply, “It’s on my desk.” Shelby and Chad would understand each other because of the contents of their earlier exchange.

Psychological context

The psychological context includes the moods and feelings each person brings to the encounter. For instance, suppose Corinne is under a lot of stress. While she is studying for an exam, a friend stops by and pleads with her to take a break and go to the gym with her. Corinne, who is normally good-natured, may explode with an angry tirade. Why? Because her stress level provides the psychological context within which she hears this message and it affects how she responds.

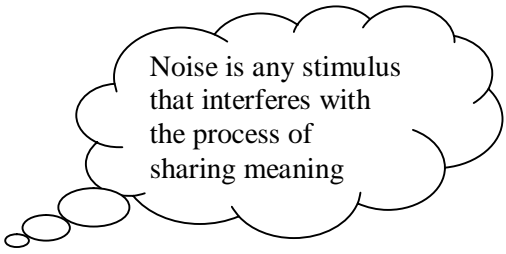
Cultural context

The cultural context includes the values, attitudes, beliefs, orientations, and underlying assumptions prevalent among people in a society. Culture penetrates into every aspect of our lives, affecting how we think, talk, and behave. Everyone is a part of one or more ethnic cultures,

though we may differ in how much we identify with our ethnic cultures. When two people from different cultures interact, misunderstanding may occur because of the cultural variation between them. For example, the role of students in Asian cultures may mean being very quiet, respectful and never challenging others' views, while the student role in US classrooms may mean being talkative, assertive, and debating the views of others.

INTERFERENCE OR NOISE

The message received is not necessarily the same as the message sent. Something other than the intended message is received because noise, or interference interrupts the intended message.



Noise is any stimulus that interferes with the process of sharing meaning

Noise is any stimulus that interferes with the process of sharing meaning. Noise can be physical (based on external sounds) or it can be psychological (based on internal distractions).

Physical noise includes the sights, sounds and other stimuli in the environment that draw people's attention away from intended meaning. For instance, while a friend is giving you directions on how to work the new MP3 player, your attention may be drawn away by the external noise of your favourite TV show, which is on in the next room. External noise does not have to be a sound, however. Perhaps while the person gives the directions, your attention is drawn momentarily to an attractive man or woman. Such visual distractions are also physical noise. Conversation might also falter at a picnic when you discover you are sitting on an anthill and ants are crawling all over your blanket.



Psychological noise includes internal distractions based on thoughts, feelings or emotional reactions to symbols and can fall into two categories: internal noise and semantic noise.

Internal noise refers to the thoughts and feelings that compete for attention and interfere with the communication process. A student does not hear a lecture because he is thinking about lunch; a wife cannot pay attention to her husband because she is thinking about a



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problem at the office. Sometimes internal noise occurs when someone does not want to hear what is being said: a child might look attentive when she is being scolded by a parent, but she is working hard on not listening.

Semantic noise refers to the distractions aroused by certain symbols that take our attention away from the main message. If a friend describes a 40-year-old secretary as “the girl in the office”, and you think “girl” is an odd and condescending term for a 40-year-old woman, you might not even hear the rest of what your friend has to say. Whenever we react emotionally to a word or a behavior, we are experiencing semantic noise.

Perception

Since perception has a significant influence on communication, it is useful to look closely at it. The way a message is perceived by the sender may be quite different from the way the receiver perceives the message.

Perception is the way people understand or give meaning to their environment. Perception and interpretation of the same message varies according to how each individual's perception is influenced by experience, attitudes and beliefs and a range of acquired skills or expectations. For example, one person may perceive the colour blue as cool, peaceful and comforting while another person may see blue as old-fashioned or formal. The particular or specific meaning is influenced by past experience. Even the context or setting of the communication affects perception. Blue may be calming and relaxing one day, too formal on another.

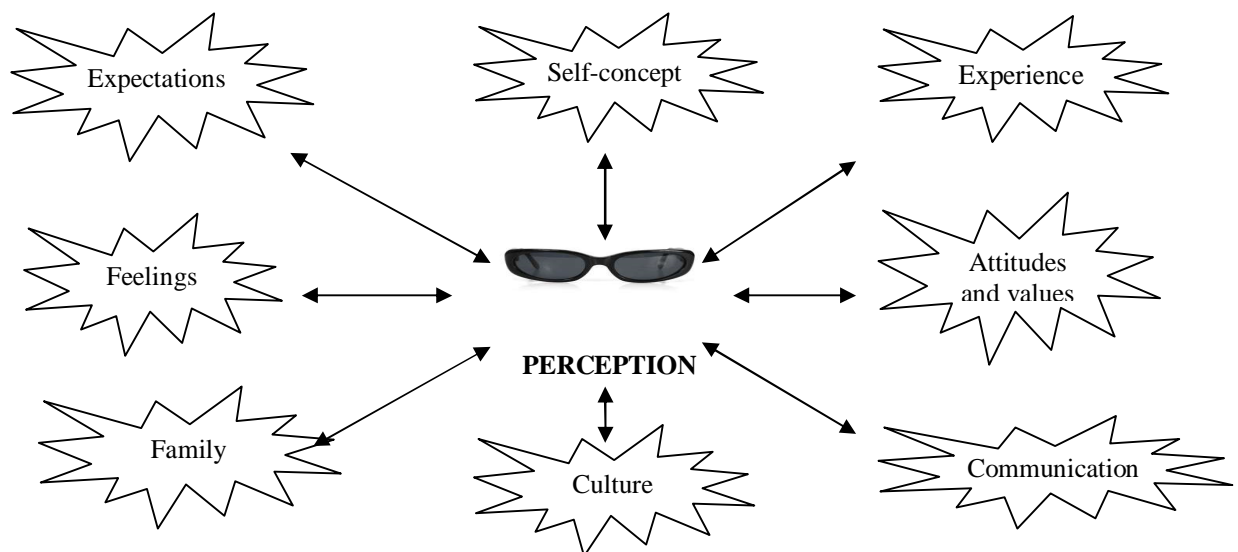


Figure 1.2: PERCEPTION

Perception can be compared with a pair of spectacles (as illustrated in figure 1.2), through which we process all the signals received from others. The glasses place a particular focus on what we see, hear and understand, and influence the way we react to the message. The particular colour and focus of a message are affected by the pair of glasses worn. The glasses may distort the picture.

☞ **Quick check:** Look at the following pictures and tell others what you can see from them.



A



B



C

Perception checking

Perception checking is a communication skill that can help us increase the likelihood that we will share meaning with others. It can help us increase the accuracy of our self perceptions, our perceptions of others' behavior and our perceptions of the nonverbal parts of the messages that we receive. A perception check is a message that reflects our understanding of the meaning of another person's nonverbal behavior. It is a process of describing what you have seen and heard and asking for feedback from the other person. Perception checking calls for us to (1) watch the behavior of the other person, (2) ask ourselves "What does that behavior mean to me?" and (3) describe the behavior and put your interpretation into words to verify your perception.

The following examples illustrate the use of perception checking. In each of the example, the final sentence is a perception check. Notice that the perception-checking statements do not express approval or disapproval of what is being received – they are purely descriptive statements of the perceptions.

Example 1:

Valerie walks into the room with a completely blank expression. She does not speak to Ann or even acknowledge that Ann is in the room. Valerie sits down on the edge of the bed and stares into space. Ann says, “Valerie, did something happen? You look like you’re in a state of shock. Am I right? Is there something I can do?”

Example 2:

While Marsha is telling Jenny about the difficulty of her midterm exam in chemistry class, she notices Jenny smiling. She says to Jenny, “You’re smiling. I’m not sure how to interpret it. What’s up?” Jenny may respond that she’s smiling because the story reminded her of something funny or because she had the same chemistry teacher last year and he purposely gave an extremely difficult midterm to motivate students, but the he graded them on a really favourable curve.

Example 3:

Cesar, speaking in short., precise sentences with a sharp tone of voice, gives Bill his day’s assignment. Bill says, “From the sound of your voice, Cesar, I get the impression that you’re upset with me. Are you?”

IV. Communication functions

Communication serves several important functions for us. When we know its various purposes, we are equipped to better understand the goals of the communication situation.

1. We communicate to meet our social needs. Just as we need food, water and shelter, so we, as social animals, need contact with other people, too. Two people may converse happily for hours, gossiping and chatting about inconsequential matters that neither remembers afterwards. When they part, they may have exchanged little real information and they may never meet again, but

their communication has functioned to meet the important need simply to talk with another human being. Similarly, we greet others as we pass by to meet social obligations.

2. We communicate to develop and maintain our sense of self. Through our interactions, we learn who we are, what we are good at, and how people react to how we behave.

3. We communicate to develop relationships. Not only do we get to know others through our communication with them but, more importantly, we develop relationships with them – relationships that grow and deepen or stagnate and wither away.

4. We communicate to exchange information. Some information we get through observation, some through reading, some through media, and a great deal through direct communication with others either face-to-face or online. Whether we are trying to decide how warmly to dress or whom to vote for in the next presidential election, all of us have countless exchanges that involve sending and receiving information. We discuss communication as information exchange.

5. We communicate to influence others. It is doubtful that a day goes by in which you do not engage in behavior such as trying to convince your friends to go to a particular restaurant or to see a certain movie, to persuade your supervisor to alter your schedule, or to convince an instructor to change your course grade.

V. Characteristics of communication

1. Communication has purpose

When people communicate with each other, they have a purpose for doing so. The purpose of a given transaction may be either serious or trivial. One way to evaluate the success of the communication is to ask whether it achieved its purpose. When Beth calls Leah to ask whether she would like to join her for lunch to discuss a project they are working on, her purpose may be to resolve a misunderstanding they have had. Speakers may not always be aware of their purpose. For instance, when Jamal passes Tony on the street and says lightly, “Tony, what’s happening?”, Jamal probably does not consciously think, “Tony’s an acquaintance and I want

him to understand that I see him and consider him worth recognizing.” In this case, to social obligation to recognize Tony is met spontaneously with the first acceptable expression that comes to Jamal’s mind. Regardless of whether Jamal consciously thinks about the purpose, it still motivates his behavior. In this case, Jamal will have achieved his goal if Tony responds with an equally casual greeting.

2. Communication is continuous

Because communication is nonverbal as well as verbal, we are always sending behavioral messages from which others draw inferences or meaning. Even silence or absence is communication behavior if another person infers meaning from it. Why? It is because your nonverbal behavior represents reactions to your environment and to the people around you. If you are cold, you shiver; if you are hot or nervous, you perspire; if you are bored, happy, or confused, your face or body language probably will show it. As skilled communicators, we need to be aware of the explicit and implicit messages we are constantly sending to others.

3. Communication messages vary in conscious thought

As discussed earlier, sharing meaning with another person involves presenting verbal and nonverbal messages. Our messages may (1) occur spontaneously, (2) be based on a “script” we have learned or rehearsed, (3) be carefully constructed based on our understanding of the unique situation in which we find ourselves.

Many of our messages are spontaneous expressions, spoke without much conscious thought. For example, when we burn our finger, you may blurt out “Ouch.” When something goes right, you may break into a broad smile.

At other times, our messages are scripted, phrasings that we have learned from our past encounters and judge to be appropriate to the present situation. Many of these scripts are learned in childhood. For example, when you want the sugar bowl but cannot reach it, you may say, “Please pass the sugar,” followed by “Thank you” when someone complies. This conversational sequence comes from your “table manners script”, which may have been drilled into you at home. Scripts enable us to use messages that are appropriate to the situation and are likely to increase the effectiveness of our communication. One goal of this text is to acquaint you with

general scripts (or skills) that can be adapted for use in your communication encounters across a variety of relationships, situations, and cultures.

Finally, our messages may be carefully constructed to meet the unique requirements of a particular situation. Constructed messages are those that we put together with careful thought when we recognize that our known scripts are inadequate for the situation.

4. Communication is relational

Saying that communication is relational means that in any communication setting, in addition to sharing content meaning, our messages also reflect two important aspects of our relationships: immediacy and control (dominance/ submissiveness).

Immediacy is the degree of liking or attractiveness in a relationship. For instance, when Jose passes by Hal on campus, he may say, “Hal, good to see you” (a verbal expression of friendliness); the nonverbal behavior that accompanies the words may show Hal whether Jose is genuinely happy to see him or is only expressing recognition. For instance, if Jose smiles, has a sincere sound to his voice, looks Hal in the eye, and perhaps pats him on the back or shakes hands firmly, then Hal will recognize these signs of friendliness. If, however, Jose speaks quickly with no vocal inflection and with a deadpan facial expression, Hal will perceive the comment as solely meeting social expectation.

Control is the degree to which one participant is perceived to be more dominant or powerful. Thus, when Tom says to Sue, “I know you’re concerned about the budget, but I’ll see to it that we have money to cover everything,” his words and the sound of his voice may be saying that he is “in charge” of finances – that he is in control. How Sue responds to Tom determines whether, on this issue, she submits to his perception of control. If Sue says, “Thank, I know you have a better handle on finances than I do,” then she accepts that on this issue, she is willing to submit to Tom at this time. A few days later, if Tom says to Sue, “I think we need to cut back on credit card expenses for a couple of months,” and Sue responds, “No way! I need a new suit for work, the car needs new tires, and you promised we could replace the couch,” then the nature of the relationship will require further discussion.

5. Communication is guided by culture

Culture may be defined as systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people. It includes a system of shared beliefs, values, symbols, and behaviours. How messages are formed and interpreted depends on the cultural background of the participants. We need to look carefully at ourselves and our communication behavior; as we interact with others whose cultural background differ from our own, we may unintentionally communicate in ways that are culturally inappropriate or insensitive and thereby undermine our relationships.

We must also be sensitive to how differences among people based on sex, age, class, physical characteristics, and sexual orientation affect communication. Failure to take those differences into account when we interact can also lead us to behave insensitively.

According to Samovar, Porter, & Ma Daniel (2007) “three cultural elements have the potential to affect situations in which people from different backgrounds come together: (1) perception, (2) verbal processes, and (3) nonverbal processes.

6. Communication has ethical implications

In any encounter, we choose whether or not we will communicate ethically. Ethics is a set of moral principles that may be held by a society, a group, or an individual. Although what is considered ethical is a matter of personal judgment, various groups still expect members to uphold certain standards. These standards influence the personal decisions we make. When we choose to violate the standards that are expected, we are viewed to be unethical. Here are five ethical standards that influence our communication and guide our behavior.

1. **Truthfulness and honesty** mean refraining from lying, cheating, stealing, or deception. “An honest person is widely regarded as a moral person, and honesty is a central concept to ethics as the foundation for moral life” (Terkel & Duval, 1999, p.122). Although most people accept truthfulness and honesty as a standard, they still confess to lying on occasion. We are most likely to lie when we are caught in a moral dilemma, a choice involving an unsatisfactory alternative. An example of moral dilemma would be a boss asking us if our coworker arrived to work late today and knowing that telling the truth would get the coworker fired.
2. **Integrity** means maintaining a consistency of belief and action (keeping promises).

Terkel and Duval (1999) say, “ A person who has integrity is someone who has strong

moral principles and will successfully resist the temptation to compromise those principles” (p.135). Integrity, then, is the opposite of hypocrisy. A person who had promised to help a friend study for the upcoming exam would live up to this promise even when another friend offered a free ticket to a sold-out concert for the same night.

3. **Fairness** means achieving the right balance of interests without regard to one’s own feelings and without showing favour to any side in a conflict. Fairness implies impartiality or lack of bias. To be fair to someone is to listen with an open mind, to gather all the relevant facts, consider only circumstances relevant to the decision at hand, and not let prejudice or irrelevancies affect how you treat others. For example, if two of her children are fighting, a mom is exercising fairness if she listen openly as the children explain “their side” before she decides what to do.
4. **Respect** means showing regard or consideration for others and their ideas, even if we do not agree with them. Respect is not based on someone’s affluence, job status, or ethnic background. In a classroom, students show respect for others by attentively listening to another student’s speech with a main point that violates their political or religious position.
5. **Responsibility** means being accountable for one’s actions and what one says. Responsible communicators recognize the power of words. Messages can hurt and messages can soothe. Information is accurate or it may be faulty. A responsible communicator would not spread a false rumor about another friend.

In our daily lives, we often face ethical dilemmas and must sort out what is more or less right or wrong. In making these decisions, we usually reveal our ethical standards.

7. Communication is learned

Just as you learned to walk, so did you learn to communicate. But talking is a complex undertaking. You may not yet have learned all of the skills you will need to develop healthy relationships. Because communication is learned, you can improve your ability.



VI. Levels of communication

According to Berko (2007), human communication occurs on the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and public levels.

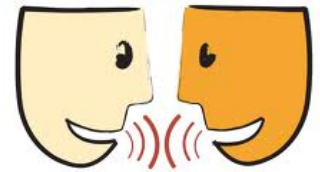
Effective Communication

- The message should be understood.
- The message should achieve its intended effect.
- The message should be ethical.

Intrapersonal communication is communication that occurs within us. It involves thoughts, feelings, and the way we look at ourselves. Because intrapersonal communication is centered in the self, you are the only sender-receiver. The message is made up of your thoughts and feelings. The channel is your brain, which processes what you are thinking and feeling. There is feedback in the sense that as you talk to yourself, you discard certain ideas and replace them with others. Intrapersonal communication encompasses such activities as thought processing, personal decision making, listening, and determining self-concept.



Interpersonal communication refers to communication that takes place between two or more persons who establish a communicative relationship. Forms of interpersonal communication include face-to-face or mediated conversations, interviews, and small-group discussions.



Public communication is characterized by a speaker's sending a message to an audience. It may be direct, such as a face-to-face message delivered by a speaker to an audience, or indirect, such as a message relayed over radio or television.



EXERCISES

1. Case study 1

Michael works as a sales representative in the New South Wales showroom and warehouse of the Wood Panel Division of a large Australian company, Woodstone. Senior buyers for a large kitchen joinery firm based in Queensland and Victoria visit the New South Wales showroom and show a keen interest in the new products. Michael is able to make further contact with this client firm by letter, telephone or personal visit.