

Q4. What is a theory?

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORIES AND PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION

#### 3.1. History of communication theory

Communication has existed since the beginning of human beings, but it was not until the 20th century that people began to study its process. As communication technologies developed, so did the serious study of communication. When World War I ended, the interest in studying communication intensified. The social science study was fully recognized as a legitimate discipline after World War II.

Before becoming simply communication, or communication studies, the discipline was formed from three other major studies: psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Psychology is the study of human behavior, Sociology is the study of society and social process, and anthropology is the study of communication as a factor which develops, maintains, and changes culture. Communication studies focus on communication as central to the human experience, which involves understanding how people behave in creating, exchanging, and interpreting messages.

Communication Theory has one universal law posited by S. F. Scudder (1980). The Universal Communication Law states that, "All living entities, beings and creatures communicate." All of the living communicates through movements, sounds, reactions, physical changes, gestures, languages, breath, etc. Communication is a means of survival. Examples - the cry of a child (communication that it is hungry, hurt, cold, etc.); the browning of a leaf (communication that it is dehydrated, thirsty per se, dying); the cry of an animal (communicating that it is injured, hungry, angry, etc.). Everything living communicates in its quest for survival."

Theories tell us what we live in an organized way. <sup>or systematic</sup> and



### 3.2. Communication theory framework

It is helpful to examine communication and communication theory through one of the following viewpoints:

- **Mechanistic:** This view considers communication as a perfect transaction of a message from the sender to the receiver.
- **Psychological:** This view considers communication as the act of sending a message to a receiver, and the feelings and thoughts of the receiver upon interpreting the message.
- **Social constructionist (Symbolic Interactionist):** This view considers communication to be the product of the interactants sharing and creating meaning. The Constructionist View can also be defined as, how you say something determines what the message is. The Constructionist View assumes that "truth" and "ideas" are constructed or invented through the social process of communication. Robert T. Craig saw the Constructionist View or the constitutive view as it's called in his article, as "...an ongoing process that symbolically forms and re-forms our personal identities." (Craig) The other view of communication, the Transmission Model, sees communication as robotic and computer-like. The Transmission Model sees communication as a way of sending or receiving messages and the perfection of that. But, the Constructionist View sees communications as, "...in human life, info does not behave as simply as bits in an electronic stream. In human life, information flow is far more like an electric current running from one landmine to another" (Lanham, 7). The Constructionist View is a more realistic view of communication because it involves the interacting of human beings and the free sharing of thoughts and ideas. Daniel Chandler looks to prove that the Transmission Model is a lesser way of communicating by saying "The transmission model is not merely a gross over-simplification but a dangerously misleading representation of the nature of human communication" (Chandler, 2). Humans do not communicate simply as computers or robots so that's why it's essential to truly understand the



Ontology = Pάοησ C Pάοησ γγγ

Constructionist View of Communication well. We do not simply send facts and data to one another, but we take facts and data and they acquire meaning through the process of communication, or through interaction with others.

- **Systemic:** This view considers communication to be the new messages created via "through-put", or what happens as the message is being interpreted and re-interpreted as it travels through people.
- **Critical:** This view considers communication as a source of power and oppression of individuals and social groups.

Inspection of a particular theory on this level will provide a framework on the nature of communication as seen within the confines of that theory.

Theories can also be studied and organized according to the ontological, epistemological, and axiological framework imposed by the theorist.

Study the of know

logos - w reference to its limits and validity

Ontology essentially poses the question of what, exactly, ~~it is~~ the theorist is examining. One must consider the very nature of reality. The answer usually falls in one of three realms depending on whether the theorist sees the phenomena through the lens of a realist, nominalist, or social constructionist.

being or existence nature and relations of being

Realist perspective views the world objectively, believing that there is a world outside of our own experience and cognitions. Nominalists see the world subjectively, claiming that everything outside of one's cognitions is simply names and labels. Social constructionists straddle the fence between objective and subjective reality, claiming that reality is what we create together.

Ontologist

epistemologist

axiologist

to be on both sides

Epistemology is an examination of how the theorist studies the chosen phenomena. In studying epistemology, particularly from a positivist perspective, objective knowledge is said to be the result of a systematic look at the causal relationships of phenomena. This knowledge is usually attained through use of the scientific method. Scholars often think that empirical evidence collected in an objective manner is most likely to reflect truth in the findings. Theories of this ilk

kind/type

axiology = the study of the nature, types, and criteria of values and of value judgements especially in ethics

4/15/11



Qualitative - Science  
Quantitative - Natural

Predict vs explain

are usually created to predict a phenomenon. Subjective theory holds that understanding is based on situated knowledge, typically found using interpretative methodology such as ethnography and also interviews. Subjective theories are typically developed to explain or understand phenomena in the social world.

Axiology is concerned with what values drive a theorist to develop a theory. Theorists must be mindful of potential biases so that they will not influence or skew their findings.

### 3.3. Defining communication theories

#### 3.3.1. Cognitive dissonance theory

Cognitive Dissonance Theory argues that the experience of dissonance (or incompatible beliefs and actions) is aversive and people are highly motivated to avoid it. In their efforts to avoid feelings of dissonance, people will avoid hearing views that oppose their own, change their beliefs to match their actions, and seek reassurance after making a difficult decision.

#### 3.3.2. Communication accommodation theory

This theoretical perspective examines the underlying motivations and consequences of what happens when two speakers shift their communication styles. Communication Accommodation theorists argue that during communication, people will try to accommodate or adjust their style of speaking to others. This is done in two ways: divergence and convergence. Groups with strong ethnic or racial pride often use divergence to highlight group identity. Convergence occurs when there is a strong need for social approval, frequently from powerless individuals.

E.g.



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### 3.3.3. Coordinated management of meaning

Theorists in Coordinated Management of Meaning believe that in conversation, people co-create meaning by attaining some coherence and coordination. Coherence occurs when stories are told, and coordination exists when stories are lived. CMM focuses on the relationship between an individual and his or her society. Through a hierarchical structure, individuals come to organize the meaning of literally hundreds of messages received throughout a day. E.g

### 3.4. Cultivation analysis

This theory argues that television (and other media) plays an extremely important role in how people view their world. According to Cultivation Analysis, in modern Culture most people get much of their information in a mediated fashion rather than through direct experience. Thus, mediated sources can shape people's sense of reality. This is especially the case with regard to violence, according to the theory. Cultivation Analysis posits that heavy television viewing cultivates a sense of the world that is more violent and scarier than is actually warranted. Children  
E.g

### 3.5. Cultural approach to organizations

The Cultural Approach contends that people are like animals who are suspended in webs that they created. Theorists in this tradition argue that an organization's culture is composed of shared symbols, each of which has a unique meaning. Organizational stories, rituals, and rites of passage are examples of what constitutes the culture of an organization. E.g

### 3.6. Cultural studies

Theorists in cultural studies maintain that the media represents ideologies of the dominant class in a society. Because media are controlled by corporations, the information presented to the public is necessarily influenced and framed with profit in mind. Cultural Studies theorists, therefore, are concerned with media



influenced and framed with profit in mind. Cultural Studies theorists; therefore, are concerned with media influence and how power plays a role in the interpretation of culture.

### 3.7. Dramatism

This theoretical position compares life to a drama. As in dramatic action, life requires an actor, a scene, an act, some means for the action to take place, and a purpose. A rhetorical critic can understand a speaker's motives by analyzing these elements. Further, Dramatism argues that purging guilt is the ultimate motive, and rhetors can be successful when they provide their audiences with a means for purging their guilt and a sense of identification with the rhetor.

### 3.8. Expectancy violations theory

Expectancy Violation Theory examines how nonverbal messages are structured. The theory advances that when communicative norms are violated, the violation may be perceived either favorably or unfavorably, depending on the perception that the receiver has of the violator. Violating another's expectations may be a strategy used over that of conforming to another's expectations.

### 3.9. Face-negotiation theory

Face-Negotiation Theory is concerned with how people in individualistic and collectivistic cultures negotiate face in conflict situations. The theory is based on face management, which describes how people from different cultures manage conflict negotiation in order to maintain face. Self-face and other-face concerns explain the conflict negotiation between people from various cultures.

### 3.10. Groupthink

The groupthink phenomenon occurs when highly cohesive groups fail to consider alternatives that may effectively resolve group dilemmas. Groupthink theorists contend that group members frequently think similarly and are reluctant to share unpopular or dissimilar ideas with others. When this occurs,

*Showing doubt not willing*

*purging = violent or sudden removal of people from an area, country, orgn etc.*

*guilt = a bad feeling caused by knowing or thinking that you have done sth bad or wrong*

*Theories overlap one another!*

*< Birds of the same feather >*



groups prematurely make decisions, some of which can have lasting consequences.

### 3.11. Muted group theory

E.g.!

Muted Group Theory maintains that language serves men better than women (and perhaps European Americans better than African Americans or other groups). This is the case because the variety of experiences of European American men are named clearly in language, whereas the experiences of other groups (such as women) are not. Due to this problem with language, women appear less articulate than men in public settings. As women have similar experiences, this situation should change.

clearly expressed and easily understood

### 3.12. The narrative paradigm

This theory argues that humans are storytelling animals. The Narrative Paradigm proposes a narrative logic to replace the traditional logic of argument. Narrative logic, or the logic of good reasons, suggests that people judge the credibility of speakers by whether their stories hang together clearly (coherence and whether their stories ring true (fidelity)). The Narrative Paradigm allows for a democratic judgment of speakers because no one has to be trained in oratory and persuasion to make judgments based on coherence and fidelity. E.g.

### 3.13. Organizational information theory

This Theory argues that the main activity of organizations is the process of making sense of equivocal information. Organizational members accomplish this sense-making process through enactment, selection, and retention of information. Organizations are successful to the extent that they are able to reduce equivocality through these means.

enactment = enforcing law  
retention = holding / keeping sth

### 3.14. Relational dialectics theory

Relational Dialectics suggests that relational life is always in process. People in relationships continually feel the pull-push of conflicting desires. Basically,

fidelity = faithful, loyalty

equivocal = having two or more possible meanings

= not easily understood or explained



people wish to have autonomy and connection, openness and protective-ness, and novelty and predictability. As people communicate in relationships, they attempt to reconcile these conflicting desires, but they never eliminate their needs for both of the opposing pairs. *E.g.*

### 3.15. The rhetoric

Rhetorical theory is based on the available means of persuasion. That is, a speaker who is interested in persuading his or her audience should consider three rhetorical proofs: <sup>logos</sup> logical, <sup>pathos</sup> emotional, and <sup>ethos</sup> ethical. Audiences are key to effective persuasion as well. Rhetorical syllogism, requiring audiences to supply missing pieces of a speech, are also used in persuasion.

*Man is mortal.  
Mr X is a man.  
Therefore, Mr X is mortal.*

*a formal argument in logic that is formed by two statements and a conclusion which must be true if the two statements are true.*

### 3.16. Social exchange theory

This theoretical position argues that the major force in interpersonal relationships is the satisfaction of both people's self-interest. Theorists in Social Exchange posit that self-interest is not necessarily a bad thing and that it can actually enhance relationships. The Social Exchange approach views interpersonal exchange posit that self-interest is not necessarily a bad thing and that it can actually enhance relationships. The Social Exchange approach views interpersonal exchanges as analogous to economic exchanges where people are satisfied when they receive a fair return on their expenditures.

*Satisfaction of both peoples' self-interest*

### 3.17. Social penetration theory

This theory maintains that interpersonal relationships evolve in some gradual and predictable fashion. Penetration theorists believe that self-disclosure is the primary way that superficial relationships progress to intimate relationships. Although self-disclosure can lead to more intimate relationships, it can also leave one or more persons vulnerable. *E.g.*



*winding or circling around a central point*

### 3.18. Spiral of silence theory

Theorists associated with Spiral of Silence Theory argue that due to their enormous power, the mass media have a lasting effect on public opinion. The theory maintains that mass media work simultaneously with Majority public opinion to silence minority beliefs on cultural issues. A fear of isolation prompts those with minority views to examine the beliefs of others. Individuals who fear being socially isolated are prone to conform to what they perceive to be a majority view.

### 3.19. Standpoint theory

*a position from which something is viewed or considered.*

This theory posits that people are situated in specific social standpoints—they occupy different places in the social hierarchy. Because of this, individuals view the social situation from particular vantage points. By necessity, each vantage point provides only a partial understanding of the social whole. Yet, those who occupy the lower rungs of the hierarchy tend to understand the social whole. Yet, those who occupy the lower rungs of the hierarchy tend to understand the social situation more fully than those at the top. Sometimes, Standpoint Theory is referred to as Feminist Standpoint Theory because of its application to how women's and men's standpoint differ.

### 3.20. Structuration theory

Theorists supporting the structurational perspective argue that groups and organizations create structures, which can be interpreted as an organization's rules and resources. These structures, in turn, create social systems in an organization. Structuration theorists posit that groups and organizations achieve a life of their own because of the way their members utilize their structures. Power structures guide the decision making taking place in groups and organizations.



### 3.21. Symbolic interaction theory

This theory suggests that people are motivated to act based on the meanings they assign to people, things, and events. Further, meaning is created in the language that people use both with others and in private thought. Language allows people to develop a sense of self and to interact with others in community.

### 3.22. Uncertainty reduction theory

Uncertainty Reduction Theory suggests that when strangers meet, their primary focus is on reducing their levels of uncertainty in the situation. Their levels of uncertainty are located in both behavioral and cognitive realms. That is, they may be unsure of how to behave (or how the other person will behave), and they may also be unsure what they think of the other and what the other person thinks of them. Further, people's uncertainty is both individual level and relational level. People are highly motivated to use communication to reduce their uncertainty according to this theory.

### 3.23. Uses and gratifications theory

*again on page 53*

Uses and Gratifications theorists explain why people choose and use certain media forms. The theory emphasizes a limited effect position; that is, the media have a limit<sup>ed</sup> effect on their audiences because audiences are able to exercise control over their media. Uses and Gratifications Theory attempts to answer the following: What do people do with the media?

Communication theory is enormously rich in the range of ideas that fall within its nominal scope, and new theoretical work on communication has recently been flourishing. Nevertheless, despite the ancient roots and growing profusion of theories about communication, communication theory as an identifiable field of study does not yet exist. Rather than addressing a field of theory, we appear to be operating primarily in separate domains. Books and articles on communication theory seldom mention other works on communication theory



## Communication theory is not a coherent field.

except within narrow (inter)disciplinary specialties and schools of thought. Except within these little groups, communication theorists apparently neither agree nor disagree about much of anything. There is no canon of general theory to which they all refer. There are no common goals that unite them, no contentious issues that divide them. For the most part, they simply ignore each other. College courses in communication theory are increasingly offered at all levels, and numerous textbooks are being published. However, a closer look at their contents only further demonstrates that, although there exist many theories of communication-indeed, way too many different theories to teach effectively in any one course-there is no consensus on communication theory as a field. Anderson (1996) analyzed the contents of seven communication theory textbooks and identified 249 distinct "theories," 195 of which appeared in only one of the seven books. That is, just 22% of the theories appeared in more than one of the seven books, and only 18 of the 249 theories (7%) were included in more than three books. If communication theory were really a field, it seems likely that more than half of the introductory textbooks would agree on something more than 7% of the field's essential contents. The conclusion that communication theory is not yet a coherent field of study seems inescapable.

Some believe communication theory is a coherent field of meta-discursive practice, a field of discourse about discourse with implications for the practice of communication. The various traditions of communication theory each offer distinct ways of conceptualizing and discussing communication problems and practices. These ways derive from and appeal to certain commonplace beliefs about communication while problematizing other beliefs. It is in the dialogue among these traditions that communication theory can fully engage with the ongoing practical discourse (or meta-discourse) about communication in society (Craig, 1989; Craig & Tracy, 1995). Based on this the following points are developed.



1. Communication theory has not yet emerged as a coherent field of study because communication theorists have not yet found a way beyond the disabling disciplinary practices that separate them.

2. The potential of communication theory as a field can best be realized, however, not in a unified theory of communication but in a dialogical- dialectical disciplinary matrix, a commonly understood (though always contestable) set of assumptions that would enable productive argumentation across the diverse traditions of communication theory.

3. A disciplinary matrix can be developed using a constitutive meta-model of communication that opens up a conceptual space in which diverse first-order models can interact, and a conception of communication theory as theoretical meta-discourse productively engaged with the practical meta-discourse of everyday life.

4. Based on these principles, a tentative reconstruction of the multidisciplinary traditions of communication theory can appear as seven alternative vocabularies for theorizing communication as a social practice. In conclusion, it is suggested applications and extensions of the matrix and implications for disciplinary practice in the field of communication theory. Roots of Incoherence The incoherence of communication theory as a field can be explained by communication theory's multidisciplinary origins and by the particular ways in which communication scholars have used and too often misused the intellectual fruits that continue to pour from this multidisciplinary horn of plenty.

### 3.24. Multidisciplinary origins

One of the most interesting facts about communication theory is that it has cropped up more or less independently in so many different academic disciplines. Littlejohn (1982), traced contributions to communication theory from disciplines as diverse as literature, mathematics and engineering, sociology, and

- Pattern shaped like

having the power to enact or establish



psychology. The communication discipline initially tried to set itself up as a kind of interdisciplinary clearinghouse for all of these disciplinary approaches. This spirit of interdisciplinary is still with us and deserves to be cultivated as one of our more meritorious qualities. The incorporation of so many different disciplinary approaches has made it very hard, however, to envision communication theory as a coherent field. What, if anything, do all of these approaches have to do with each other? Developed within various disciplines to address various intellectual problems, they are incommensurable: They neither agree nor disagree about anything, but effectively bypass each other because they conceive of their nominally shared topic, communication, in such fundamentally different ways.

### **3.25. From sterile eclecticism to productive**

#### **3.25.1. Fragmentation**

Communication research has been intellectually impoverished in part because of the peculiar way in which the discipline was institutionalized in U.S. universities. The term communication was used by Wilbur Schramm and others as an institutional legitimizing device in ways that precluded any coherent definition of the field, its intellectual focus, and its mission. In establishing itself under the banner of communication, the discipline staked an academic claim to the entire field of communication theory and research- a very big claim indeed, since communication had already been widely studied and theorized. Peters writes that communication research became "an intellectual Taiwan--claiming to be all of China when, in fact, it was isolated on a small island" (p. 545). Perhaps the most egregious case involved Shannon's mathematical theory of information (Shannon & Weaver, 1948), which communication scholars touted as evidence of their field's potential scientific status even though they had nothing whatever to do with creating it, often poorly understood it, and seldom found any real use for it in their research. The sterile eclecticism of communication theory in this



mode is evident in the cataloguing traditions still appearing in most of our recent communication theory textbooks. The "field" of communication theory came to resemble in some ways a pest-control device called the Roach Motel that used to be advertised on TV: Theories check in, but they never check out. Communication scholars seized upon every idea about communication, whatever its provenance, but accomplished little with most of them—entombed them, you might say, after removing them from the disciplinary environments in which they had thrived and were capable of propagating. Communication scholars contributed few original ideas of their own.

Most scholar theories and research paradigms were borrowed from other disciplines, this meant, in effect, initiating communication research programs closely based upon research programs in those other disciplines, so that much political communication research, for example, was little more than political science as practiced in the field of communication. Similarly, much interpersonal communication research was, and continues to be, little more than experimental social psychology as practiced in the field of communication.

Interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary borrowing are, of course, useful practices in themselves and ought to be encouraged in order to mitigate the fragmentation of knowledge among disciplines. The problem, as Peters (1986) suggested, is that mostly borrowed goods were leveraged to sustain institutional claims to disciplinary status without articulating any coherent, distinctive focus or mission for this putative communication discipline.

Communication research became productive by importing fragments of various other disciplines into its own culture, but the fragments did not and could never, in the ways they were used, cohere as a self-sustaining whole that was something more than the sum of its parts. This condition further explains why communication theory has not yet emerged as a coherent field. Each of the



fragments of communication research has been productive within its own domain. While this is true, the fragmentation of the discipline is thus fragmented, the textbooks will continue to be mired in sterile eclecticism and there will continue to be more and more communication theories but still no field of communication theory.

### 3.25.2. Reconstructing communication theory as a field

In considering remedies for incoherence, the goal should not be some chimerical, unified theory of communication just over the rainbow. Such a unified theory will always be out of reach, and we probably should not want one even if it were attainable. No active field of inquiry has a fully unified theory. A perfectly unified theory would be a state in which the practice of communication itself is very much alive and endlessly evolving in a worldly scene of contingency and conflict. Communication theory, the theory of this practice, in all likelihood will never, therefore, achieve a final, unified form. The goal, indeed, should be the very condition that Dance (1970) was so keen to avoid: theoretical diversity, argument, debate, even at the cost of occasional lapses into academic sniping. The goal should not be a state in which we have nothing to argue about, but one in which we better understand that we all have something very important to argue about. If, however, we should not chase after the chimera of a unified theory, neither should we be distracted from the path of inquiry by the red herring of anti-disciplinarity. Productive theoretical arguments most readily occur within an interpretive community sustained by a disciplinary matrix, a background of assumptions shared in common. Disciplinarity, however, does not require that diversity and inter-disciplinarity be suppressed.

To be a discipline means only, at a minimum, that many of us agree that we disagree about certain matters that are consequential in certain ways and



therefore worth discussing. A discipline in this sense is nothing neither more nor less than "a conversational community with a tradition of argumentation"

Hobbes (1972). The goal, in short, should be dialogical and critical, and the common awareness of certain complementarities and tensions among different types of communication theory, so that its various understandings and uses of different types of theory cannot legitimately develop in total isolation from each other but must engage each other in argument.

### 3.26. Other Theories of Communication (Additional reading)

#### 1) CLASSICAL THEORIES

##### Authoritarian Theory

According to this theory, mass media, though not under the direct control of the State, had to follow its bidding. Under an Authoritarian approach in Western Europe, freedom of thought was jealously guarded by a few people (ruling classes), who were concerned with the emergence of a new middle class and were worried about the effects of printed matter on their thought process. Steps were taken to control the freedom of expression. The result was advocacy of complete dictatorship. The theory promoted zealous obedience to a hierarchical superior and reliance on threat and punishment to those who did not follow the censorship rules or did not respect authority. Censorship of the press was justified on the ground that the State always took precedence over the individual's right to freedom of expression.

This theory stemmed from the authoritarian philosophy of Plato (407 - 327 B.C), who thought that the State was safe only in the hands of a few wise men. Thomas Hobbes (1588 - 1679), a British academician, argued that the power to maintain order was sovereign and individual objections were to be ignored. Engel, a German thinker further reinforced the theory by stating that freedom came into its supreme right only under Authoritarianism.



The world has been witness to authoritarian means of control over media by both dictatorial and democratic governments.

### **Libertarianism or Free Press Theory**

This movement is based on the right of an individual, and advocates absence of restraint. The basis of this theory dates back to 17th century England when the printing press made it possible to print several copies of a book or pamphlet at cheap rates. The State was thought of as a major source of interference on the rights of an individual and his property. Libertarians regarded taxation as institutional theft. Popular will (vox populi) was granted precedence over the power of State.

Advocates of this theory were Lao Tzu, an early 16th century philosopher, John Locke of Great Britain in the 17th century, John Milton, the epic poet ("*Aeropagitica*") and John Stuart Mill, an essayist ("*On Liberty*"). Milton in *Aeropagitica* in 1644, referred to a self righting process if free expression is permitted "let truth and falsehood grapple." In 1789, the French, in their Declaration Of The Rights Of Man, wrote "Every citizen may speak, write and publish freely." Out of such doctrines came the idea of a "free marketplace of ideas." George Orwell defined libertarianism as "allowing people to say things you do not want to hear". Libertarians argued that the press should be seen as the *Fourth Estate* reflecting public opinion.

What the theory offers, in sum, is power without social responsibility.

### **Social Responsibility Theory**

Virulent critics of the Free Press Theory were Wilbur Schramm, Siebert and Theodore Paterson. In their book *Four Theories Of Press*, they stated. "pure libertarianism is antiquated, outdated and obsolete." They advocated the need for its replacement by the Social Responsibility theory. This theory can be said to



have been initiated in the United States by the Commission of The Freedom Of Press, 1949. The commission found that the free market approach to press freedom had only increased the power of a single class and has not served the interests of the less well-off classes. The emergence of radio, TV and film suggested the need for some means of accountability. Thus the theory advocated some obligation on the part of the media to society. A judicial mix of self regulation and state regulation and high professional standards were imperative.

Social Responsibility theory thus became the modern variation in which the duty to one's conscience was the primary basis of the right of free expression.

### **Soviet Media/Communist Theory**

This theory is derived from the ideologies of Marx and Engel that "the ideas of the ruling classes are the ruling ideas". It was thought that the entire mass media was saturated with bourgeois ideology. Lenin thought of private ownership as being incompatible with freedom of press and that modern technological means of information must be controlled for enjoying effective freedom of press.

The theory advocated that the sole purpose of mass media was to educate the great masses of workers and not to give out information. The public was encouraged to give feedback as it was the only way the media would be able to cater to its interests.

Two more theories were later added as the "four theories of the press" were not fully applicable to the non-aligned countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, who were committed to social and economic development on their own terms.

The two theories were:

### **Development Communication Theory**

The underlying fact behind the genesis of this theory was that there can be no development without communication. Under the four classical theories,

Lecture notes  
on  
Int. to  
Journalism



capitalism was legitimized, but under the Development communication theory, or Development Support Communication as it is otherwise called, the media undertook the role of carrying out positive developmental programmes, accepting restrictions and instructions from the State. The media subordinated themselves to political, economic, social and cultural needs. Hence the stress on "development communication" and "development journalism". There was tacit support from the UNESCO for this theory. The weakness of this theory is that "development" is often equated with government propaganda.

### **Democratization/Democratic Participant Media Theory**

This theory vehemently opposes the commercialization of modern media and its top-down non-participant character. The need for access and right to communicate is stressed. Bureaucratic control of media is decried.

### **2) MAGIC BULLET/ HYPODERMIC NEEDLE/ STIMULUS RESPONSE THEORY**

Before the first World War, there was no separate field of study on Communication, but knowledge about mass communication was accumulating. An outcome of World War I propaganda efforts, the **Magic Bullet** or **Hypodermic Needle Theory** came into existence. It propounded the view that the mass media had a powerful influence on the mass audience and could deliberately alter or control peoples' behaviour. *Contrary to this...*

**Klapper** (1960) formulated several generalizations on the effects of mass media. His research findings are as follows: *"Mass-media ordinarily does not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effect, but rather functions through a nexus of mediating factors and influences. These mediating factors render mass-communication as a contributory agent in a process of reinforcing the existing conditions."*



The main mediating factors which he considers responsible for the functions and effects of mass communications are: selective exposure i.e., people's tendency to expose themselves to those mass communications which are in agreement with their attitudes and interests; and selective perception and retention i.e., people's inclination to organize the meaning of mass communication messages into accord with their already existing views.

### 3) TWO STEP FLOW THEORY

In the early 40's, before the invention of television, **Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Goudet** conducted an American survey on mass campaigns. The study revealed that informal social relationships had played a part in modifying the manner in which individuals selected content from the media campaign. The study also indicated that ideas often flowed from the radio and newspapers to opinion leaders and from them to the less active sections of society. Thus, informal social groups have some degree of influence on people and mould the way they select media content and act on it.

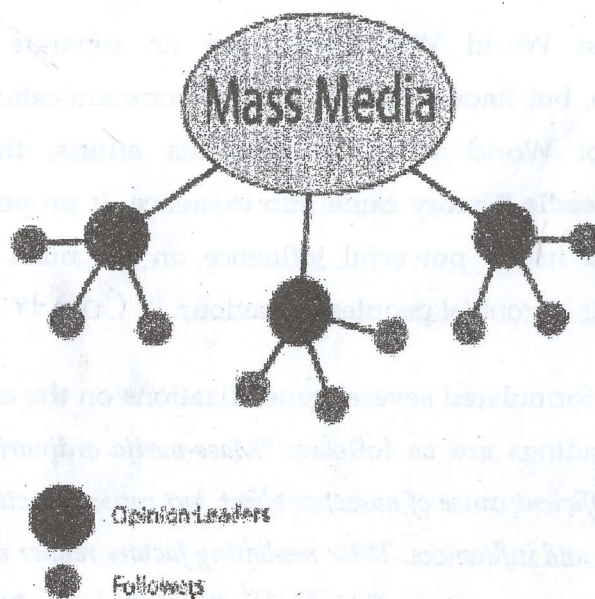


Figure 3.1



#### 4) ONE STEP FLOW THEORY

This theory simply stated that mass communication media channels communicate directly to the mass audience without the message being filtered by opinion leaders.

#### 5) MULTI STEP FLOW THEORY

This was based on the idea that there are a number of relays in the communication flow from a source to a large audience.

#### 6) USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY

This theory propounded by **Katz** in 1970, is concerned with how people use media for gratification of their needs. An outcome of **Abraham Maslow's** *Heirarchy of Needs*, it propounds the fact that people choose what they want to see or read and the different media compete to satisfy each individual's needs.

In the hierarchy of needs, there are five levels in the form of a pyramid with the basic needs such as food and clothing at the base and the higher order needs climbing up the pyramid. The fulfillment of each lower level need leads to the individual looking to satisfy the next level of need and so on till he reaches the superior-most need of self-actualization.

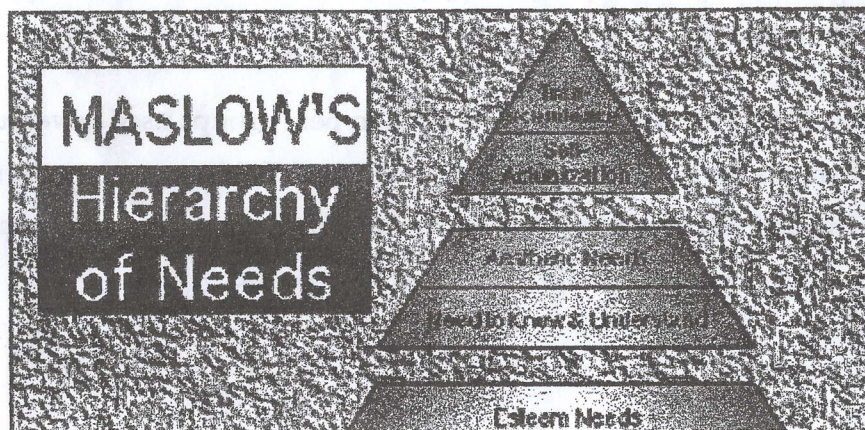


Figure 3.2 Source :William G Huitt - Valdosta University at [chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/](http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/) (used by permission)



**The Uses and Gratifications approach** reminds us that people use media for many purposes. As media users become increasingly confronted with choices, this approach should direct our attention to the audience. U's television research found that families used television for communication, facilitation, relationship building, intimacy, and for structuring the day. In general researchers have found four kinds of gratifications:

1. **Information** - we want to find out about society and the world. We want to satisfy our curiosity. This would fit the news and documentaries which both give us a sense that we are learning about the world.

2. **Personal Identity** - we may watch the television in order to look for models for our behaviour. So, for example, we may identify with characters that we see in a soap opera. The characters help us to decide what we feel about ourselves and if we agree with their actions and they succeed we feel better about ourselves.

3. **Integration and Social Interaction** - we use the media in order to find out more about the circumstances of other people. Watching a show helps us to empathize and sympathize with the lives of others so that we may even end up thinking of the characters in programme as friends.

4. **Entertainment** - sometimes we simply use the media for enjoyment, relaxation or just to fill time.

**Riley and Riley (1951)** found that children in peer groups used adventure stories from the media for group games while individual children used media stories for fantasizing and daydreaming. The study thus found that different people use the same messages from the media for different purposes.



**Katz** replaced the question "what do media do to people?" with the question "what do people do with the media?" **Katz, Gurevitch & Hass** found that the media are used by individuals to meet the following specific needs:

Cognitive needs (acquiring information, knowledge and understanding);

Affective needs (emotional, pleasurable experience);

Personal integrative needs (strengthening self image);

Social integrative needs (strengthening self image);

**Tension release needs (escape and diversion)**

**McQuail, Blumler and Brown** suggested the following individual needs categories:

1) Diversion (emotional release)

2) Personal Relationships (substitute of media for companionship).

3) Personal identity or individual psychology (value reinforcement, self understanding.)

4) Surveillance (information that may help an individual accomplish tasks.)

**B. Rubin and Bantz** (1989) studied the uses and gratifications of "new technology" by examining VCR use. They found the following motives for VCR use:

1) library storage of movies and shows

2) watching music videos

3) Using exercise tapes

4) renting movies

5) letting children view

6) time-shifting

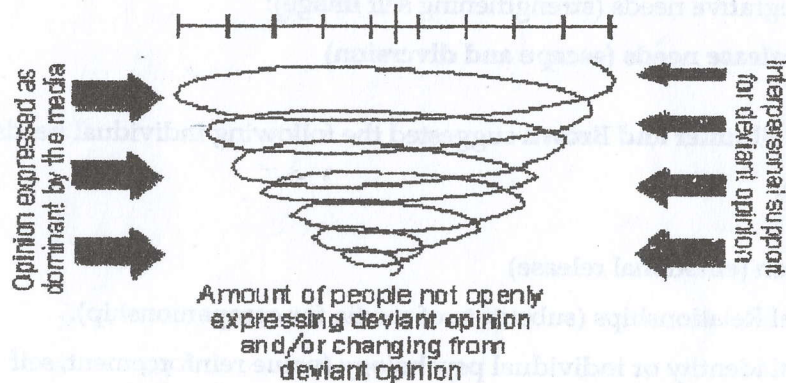
7) Socializing by viewing with others

8) Critical viewing including TV watching and studying tapes



## 7) SPIRAL OF SILENCE THEORY

Propounded by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, this theory states that the media publicizes opinions that are mainstream and people adjust their opinions according to their perceptions to avoid being isolated. Individuals who perceive their own opinion as being accepted will express it, whilst those who think themselves as being a minority, suppress their views. Innovators and change agents are unafraid to voice different opinions, as they do not fear isolation.



Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence

Figure 3.3

## 8) CONSISTENCY THEORIES (1950s)

**Festinger** formulated the consistency theories that talked about people's need for consistency in their beliefs and judgements. In order to reduce dissonance created by inconsistencies in belief, judgments and action people expose themselves to information that is consistent with their ideas and actions, and they shut out other communications.

## 9) McCOMBS AND SHAW'S AGENDA SETTING THEORY

This theory puts forth the ability of the media to influence the significance of events in the public's mind. The media set the agenda for the audience's discussion and mentally order and organize their world. The theory is consistent



with a "use and gratification" approach. **McCombs and Shaw** assert that the agenda-setting function of the media causes the correlation between the media and public ordering of priorities. The people most affected by the media agenda are those who have a high need for orientation

#### **10) Media Dependency Theory**

Developed by **Ball-Rokeach and DeFluer**, the key idea behind this theory is that audiences depend on media information to meet needs and reach goals, and social institutions and media systems interact with audiences to create needs, interests, and motives in the person. The degree of dependence is influenced by the number and centrality of information functions and social stability. Some questions that this theory raised were:

Do media create needs?

Do people turn to media to achieve gratification and satisfy needs?

Are media needs personal, social, cultural, political, or all of these?

"The media are our friends"??

#### **11) STEPHENSON'S PLAY THEORY**

Play is an activity pursued for pleasure. The daily withdrawal of people into the mass media in their after hours is a matter of subjectivity. The effect of mass communication is neither escapism nor seducing the masses. Rather it is seen as anti-anxiety producing, and is regarded as communication-pleasure.

#### **12) MODELING BEHAVIOUR THEORY**

Behaviors which are modeled from media experiences can become habitual if found useful and/or if they are reinforced in the environment. This is not about violent or criminal behavior.



### 13) STALAGMITE THEORIES

These theories suggest that mediated experiences induce long term effects that are very difficult to measure. The effects are like stalagmite drippings building up over time. Meaning Theory and the Cultivation Theory are two of the most significant Stalagmite theories.

#### MEANING THEORY

Framing Theory

Media experiences mould meanings by putting things in a particular framework. Does "NYPD Blue" depict the real world of New York City police detectives? Questions like this are coming from a Meaning Theory focus on media.

#### CULTIVATION THEORY

George Gerbner tried to determine the influence of television on viewers' ideas of the environment they lived in. He found that dominance of TV created a common view of the world and that it homogenized different cultures. TV portrayed the society as a bad place to live in leading to people becoming distrustful of the world. Over time, particular symbols, images, messages, meanings become dominant and are absorbed as the truth. Cultural stereotypes, ways of assessing value and hierarchies are established.

#### 14) Diffusion of innovations theory

Pioneered in 1943 by Bryce Ryan and Neil Gross of Iowa State University this theory traces the process by which a new idea or practice is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system. The model describes the factors that influence people's thoughts and actions and the process of adopting a new technology or idea.

#### 15) Social learning theory

Formulated by Albert Bandura at Stanford University, this specifies that mass-media messages give audience members an opportunity to identify with



attractive characters that demonstrate behavior, engage emotions, and allow mental rehearsal and modeling of new behavior. The behavior of models in the mass media also offers vicarious reinforcement to motivate audience members' adoption of the behavior.

**Baran and Davis (2000)** classify mass communication theories into three broad categories:

1. **microscopic theories** that focus on the everyday life of people who process information - for example, uses and gratifications, active audience theory, and reception studies;
2. **middle range theories** that support the limited effects perspective of the media - for example, information flow theory, diffusion theory, and
3. **macroscopic theories** that are concerned with media's impact on culture and society - for example, cultural studies theory.

Theories of mass communication have always focused on the "cause and effects" notion, i.e. the effects of the media and the process leading to those effects, on the audience's mind. **Harold Lasswell** and **Berelson** have succinctly expressed this idea. **Lasswell's** essential question is timeless (1949): "*Who says what in what channel to whom with what effects?*" **Berelson** said: "*Some kinds of communication, on some kinds of issues, brought to the attention of some kinds of people, under some kinds of conditions, have some kinds of effects.*" (1949).

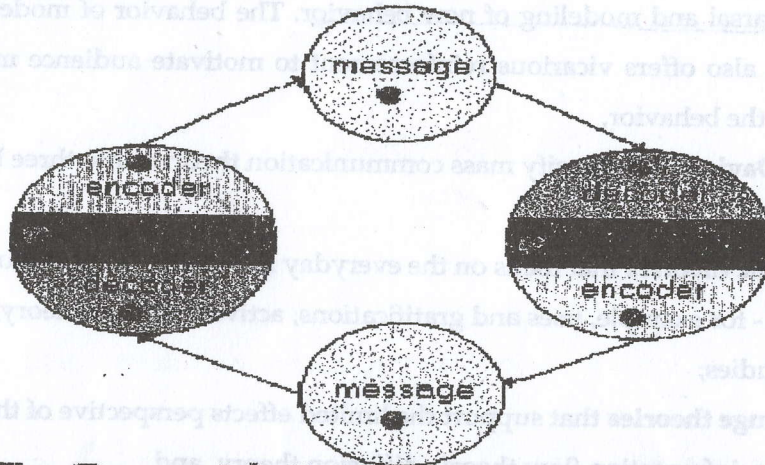
**Wilbur Schramm** stated: "*In fact, it is misleading to think of the communication process as starting somewhere and ending somewhere. It is really endless. We are little switchboard centers handling and rerouting the great endless current of information....*" (Schramm W.1954) quoted in McQuail & Windahl (1981)

#### **16) The Osgood and Schramm circular model emphasizes the circular nature of communication.**

The participants swap between the roles of source/encoder and receiver/decoder.



Figure 3.4



**The Osgood & Schramm Circular Model**

*Please click a button for further information*

**(Message, encoder and decoder  
will take you to Shannon-Weaver)**

**17) Gerbner's General Model**

Gerbner's General Model also emphasizes the dynamic nature of human communication.

**18) The Shannon-Weaver Model.**

Shannon and Weaver produced a general model of communication known after them as the Shannon-Weaver Model. It involved breaking down an information system into sub-systems so as to evaluate the efficiency of various communication channels and codes. They propose that all communication must include six elements: **Source, Encoder, Channel, Message, Decoder and Receiver**

This model is often referred to as an "information model" of communication. A drawback is that the model looks at communication as a one-way process. That is remedied by the addition of the feedback loop. Noise indicates those factors that disturb or otherwise influence messages as they are being transmitted.

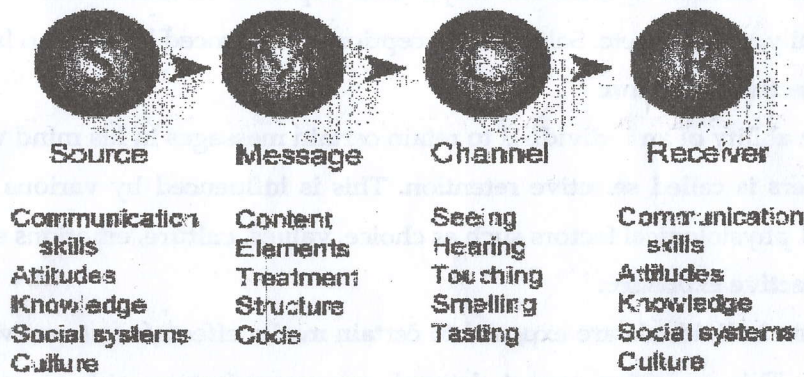


**19) Berlo's S-M-C-R Model**

**Berlo's SMCR (SOURCE, MESSAGE, CHANNEL, and RECEIVER) model** focuses on the individual characteristics of communication and stresses the role of the relationship between the source and the receiver as an important variable in the communication process. The more highly developed the communication skills of the source and the receiver, the more effectively the message will be encoded and decoded.

**Berlo's model** represents a communication process that occurs as a **SOURCE** drafts messages based on one's communication skills, attitudes, knowledge, and social and cultural system. These **MESSAGES** are transmitted along **CHANNELS**, which can include sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. A **RECEIVER** interprets messages based on the individual's communication skills, attitudes, knowledge, and social and cultural system. The limitations of the model are its lack of feedback

**SMCR Model of Communication**



**Figure 3.5** Source: from the Internet



### **Terms used in the chapter:**

#### **Mass-media:**

It is a collective phrase that represents not only the press, cinema, radio, television and internet, but also to some extent, books, magazines, pamphlets, direct mail literature, posters, folk media, and natural communication methods such as rumours, education and preaching. It is so termed because its reach extends to vast heterogeneous populations. Generally the mass media employ technological means to communicate to the masses. They are founded on the idea of mass production and distribution. **Wiebe** defined mass media as those readily available to the general public.

#### **Selective attention:**

The media are full of competing messages. The process of screening vast amount of information in which one has no interest through mental filters is called selective attention, for example, an adult will be more tuned to listening to the news while a child would rather watch a cartoon show.

#### **Selective perception:**

This is the tendency to interpret communication messages in terms of one's existing attitudes. People of distinct psychological character interpret the same media content in different ways. This depends on factors such as age, values, family, opinions etc. Selective perception is influenced by social relationships.

#### **Selective retention:**

The ability of an individual to retain certain messages in his mind while ignoring others is called selective retention. This is influenced by various psychological and physiological factors such as choice, values, culture, emotions etc.

#### **Selective exposure:**

Some individuals are exposed to certain media effects/messages while some are not. This screening aspect depends on many factors such as reach of media, accessibility, age, cultural acceptability, taboos, etc.



**Opinion leaders/change agents:**

The opinions of people in a group are influenced by what they hear from "opinion leaders". An individual who is a member of a group manifests certain characteristics in his thinking and behavior that contribute to the formation of "public opinion". The opinion of the leader is based on rational thinking due to education and experience. They weigh the pros and cons of the information they receive and then give their judgments on it.

**Encoder:** In the process of communication, the sender or source of the message is referred to as the encoder.

**Decoder:** The person receiving the message and decodes it is referred to as the decoder.

**Feedback:** Feedback, a term from cybernetics, the study of messages. It refers to an inquiry, response or experiment. Feedback can be positive (when the required result is achieved) or negative; instantaneous (when the response is immediate) or delayed. Feedback is used to gauge the effectiveness of a particular message put forth or situation that has taken place.

**Noise:**

In all communication, there is a sender, a message/communication and a receiver. The meaning of a message is greatly dependent on the culture in which it is transmitted. The sender encodes a message, the receiver decodes it. Between the sender, the message and receiver, noise gets in the way and complicates the process. A noiseless communication does not exist. There always is some kind of noise entering the communication. Noise can be physical noise for example static or psychological i.e. when culture, taboos or values come into play to disrupt the normal transmission process of communication. Misunderstanding of a particular message i.e. distortion of meaning is a form of noise, example, the game of Chinese Whisper a person starts off with a particular message and the original message may be distorted by the time it comes to the final player.





## SELF-TEST EXERCISE

1. What are the classical theories of Communication?

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2. How is the Development Communication Theory relevant to developing nations?

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3. What is the role of opinion leaders? Explain with reference to communication flow theories.

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4. Explain 2 theories that highlight the dynamic nature of communication.

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5. What are the elements of communication? In this context explain Shannon-Weaver's model and Berol's SMCR model.

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6. Write short notes on:

· Selective perception and retention: \_\_\_\_\_

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· Cultivation theory: \_\_\_\_\_

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· Media dependency: \_\_\_\_\_

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· Spiral of silence: \_\_\_\_\_

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· Uses and Gratification: \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What is your understanding of the questions "What does media do to people?" and "What do people do with the media"?

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8. In the light of the powerful effects of the media on its audiences, is there any danger of the media doing more harm than good? Elucidate your answer with recent and relevant examples.

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9. What is the need for studying media theories?

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10. How is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs relevant as a tool in understanding media uses and gratifications?

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11. What is the role of feedback in communication? How does 'noise' affect feedback? Elucidate with examples.

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**References:**

Berlo, David K. (1960): *The Process of Communication: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Baran, S.J. and Davis, D.K. (2000): *Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future*, 2nd Edition. Wadsworth Publishing, Belmont, CA

Casimir, F. L. (Ed.). (1994): *Building Communication Theories: A Socio/Cultural Approach*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.



## CHAPTER 4

# LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

## LINGUISTIC APPROACH

### Objectives

At the end of the Unit, students will be able to:

- understand language use and communication
- understand discourse and conversation

### 4.1. Pragmatics: The study of language use and communication

#### Some background concepts of pragmatics

When a diplomat says *yes*, he means 'perhaps';

When he says *perhaps*, he means 'no';

When he says *no*, he is not a diplomat.

When a lady says *no*, she means 'perhaps';

When she says *perhaps*, she means 'yes';

When she says *yes*, she is not a lady.

*Voltaire* (Quoted, in Spanish, in Escandell, 1993.)

These lines are surely correct in reminding us that more is involved in what one communicates than what one literally says; more is involved in what one means than the standard, conventional meaning of the words one uses. The words 'yes,' 'perhaps,' and 'no' each has a perfectly identifiable meaning, known by every speaker of English. However, as those lines illustrate, it is possible for different speakers in different circumstances to mean different things using those words. How is this possible? What's the relationship among the meaning of words, what speakers mean when uttering those words, the particular circumstances of their utterance, their intentions, their actions, and what they manage to communicate?