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## A THEORY OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION – THE TPICC MODEL

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### ABSTRACT

#### *What is communication?*

Communication is the act of giving, receiving, and sharing information -- in other words, talking or writing, and listening or reading. Good communicators listen carefully, speak or write clearly, and respect different opinions. The role that the process of communication has played in the lives of humans can best be understood by its chronology.

The word communication has a long and rich history. Since the beginning of time, the need to communicate has been a part of man's inherent being. The survival of mankind is due to their ability to communicate. The human race has communicated through different techniques and methods; the use of symbols, gestures, sounds, drawings, murals and sign languages were some methods of communication used by the early man.

Archaeological evidence shows that the early men were good artists and have been effectively communicating through the visual sense, the transmission, reception, or reproduction of sound and the study of body movements. Through the years communication has advanced with the development of technology. Hence it is clear that communication has assumed an immense importance in our time.

The key root is 'mun' stemming from the Latin word 'munus' meaning to share publicly/ impart/ make common. Communication can thus be traced back to be derived from the old French term comunicacion and Latin word communicatio . This means 'to share' and are 'common' to all. The word seems to have entered the English language vocabulary in the 14th and 15th centuries. The term originally meant sharing of tangible things; food, land, goods, and property. Today, it is often applied to knowledge and information processed by living things or computers.

Communication plays as much a role in people as it plays in technology. Today Information Technology is synonymous with Communication. Communication connects people and places. Thus, it is clear that communication allows people to exchange their thoughts and ideas through speech, signals, writing, or behaviour. Basically, communication is shared feelings/shared understanding. People have always communicated, but the process of communication became the subject of study in the 20th Century. The serious study of communication was triggered by the development of technologies. Today we communicate in different ways. e-mails, whatsapp, Telephone Calls, and so many different sorts of electronic platforms.

**KEYWORDS:** *Semiological, PAC, Sender, Receiver, Channel, Noise, Adult ego state.*



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## **Chronology of the Communication Process**

### **Model of Aristotle**

According to the model of communication of Aristotle the sender plays a fundamental role in the communication process because it/he/she is fundamentally and centrally in charge for the communication of a message to be effective.

Therefore, the sender must carefully prepare his message by organizing ideas and thoughts with the aim of influencing the receiver, who must respond according to the wishes of the sender. The message, according to this theory, must impress the receiver.

### **1600 -1700**

The era of rationalism began and one of the most important issues addressed was epistemology or theory of knowledge. Jean-Jacques Rousseau speaks of the social contract as a means to establish order in society and Descartes develops ideas about empiricism as a way of knowing the world from experience. All these factors influenced the study of communication and the first scientific theories developed around them.

### **XIX century**

During the 1800s different scholars were interested in the study of different forms of expression, focusing on oral expression in public. Georg Hegel proposed a philosophy based on dialectics, which subsequently influenced Karl Marx to develop his study of the dialectics and pen critique of communication theories treated by different schools of thought.

Establishing a communication theory troubled many thinkers of the time, who found the principles of semiotics influencing the interpretation of signs, language and logic to date .

### **Twentieth Century**

The collective interest to establish a theory of continuous communication and one that relates to the social aspects of human life came from psychoanalysis.

Sigmund Freud is the one who set the basis for a rationalist and empiricist study of the human being as a social entity. In this way, the study of non-verbal communication took shape and gestural communication was established as a universal language.

### **XXI Century**

The theory of communication propounded during this time comprises of more comprehensive studies. It has come to be realized that communication can be focused on different contexts, such as work, public, domestic and academic, among others.

The pedagogy of cognitive communication appears as a critical approach to the study of communication. In the same way, communication is evident in the extent to which telecommunication and other electronic media strengthens and gives way to less personal interactions.

## **Types of Communication**

### **Verbal Communication and Non Verbal Communication**

Verbal communication is a type of communication where information flows through a verbal channel. Words, speeches and presentations are used, among others. In verbal communication the issuer shares information in the form of words. In verbal communication the sender must carefully choose his words and use a tone comprehensible to the receiver.

Non-verbal communication is defined by the theory of communication as the language composed of gestures, facial expressions, hand movements and body postures that provide information about the sender to the recipient. In other words, non-verbal communication lacks words and is expressed through gestures.

## Barriers to Communication

The theory of communication establishes that there may be different barriers or obstacles that impede its effective exercise. These barriers can lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of information by the recipient. Few barriers are considered below.

**Noise:** Noise is a common barrier to effective communication. Generally in the presence of noise the intended information is distorted and the message arrives incompletely at the receiver. Crowded spaces prevent information from reaching the recipient's ears correctly. In case the information arrives, it is possible that the receiver is not able to interpret the message correctly. There are finite number of utterances but infinite number of inferences which neither the utterer nor the utterance intended.

When it comes to noise I'm intrigued quite curiously by what happened during the Apollo 11 Lunar mission. Just after Neil Armstrong set foot on the Lunar surface, the first words that he radioed to Earth were, "That's one small step for man, one huge step for mankind." There was a furore about the grammatical correctness of the utterance. Had Neil in fact uttered the words that are in quotes, then he had committed a glaring grammatical error. Because, whether one says Vitamin C is good for man or Vitamin C is good for mankind, they both mean the same. Then, in the light of the above sentence, Neil did goof up.

So there was much speculation about the Lunar utterance, so much so that even the actual landing took backstage. So, computer programmers began to write computer programs to check if Neil indeed pronounce the Indefinite Article 'a' in 'a man'. It was emphatically proved by scientific means that Neil did indeed pronounce the article 'a'. That settled the debate once and for all. This goes on to prove that noise can create communication hiccups and in this case noise created by electronic transmission. What our physiological faculties could not capture could be captured by far more accurate and sensitive electronic probes.

**Unstructured Thoughts:** Not being clear about what is meant and how it is to be presented poses an obstacle that makes effective communication difficult. The sender should always construct clear ideas and ways about what and how he wants to communicate. Once this happens, it will allow for clearer ways to sending messages. Otherwise, the intended communication will not be effective. Clear thought leads to finite utterances. Unstructured thought lead to infinite and unclear expressions.

**Unknown Content:** The content of the message should emphasize the information to be transmitted. The theory of communication indicates that in order to give force to the ideas that are wanted to be transmitted it is necessary to know its meaning. Otherwise the speech will lose meaning for both the sender and receiver. An economist must sense the pulse of the interviewer while in the process of being interviewed. It is called implicit sense. As much as Implicit Sense is inherent, it can be developed with conscious effort and practice.

**Lack of confirmation:** The sender must check if the receiver has successfully decoded the message. When the message is not acknowledged, it is common to find that the sender and receiver do not share the same information. It is as much the responsibility of the Audience to confirm that the message is being understood and is that the message is relevant and interesting.

**Voice Tone:** The tone of the voice should be clear, the words paused and precise. The volume must be established taking into account the noise in the environment. A loud pitched tone sprinkled with bombastic words could signal that the speaker is actually anxious. An easy, mild and calm speech gives us a fair enough hint that the speaker knows his subject well, is keen in sharing his know-how and is confident about his mastery of his subject.

**Receiver Attitude:** The recipient's attitude affects the correctness of the delivery of the message. An impatient receiver will not take enough time to fully absorb the information being delivered, generating

interruptions in the communication process. This can lead to confusion and misunderstanding between the sender and the receiver.

To sum up, communication is thus a curious and important facet of human existence. Then, it's no surprise that we have so many theories on communication and personality:

Aristotle's model, Schramm's model, Helical model, Westley and Maclean Model, David Berlo's SMCR model, Berne's PAC model, Shannon's Mathematical Model, Noam Chomsky's LAD model, Persuasiveness model of communication and The Communication theory by S.F. Scudder

So I thought it's only fair to formulate a model of communication that is comprehensive in its approach to the process of communication. I chose four models with due respect to all the other models to propound the TPICC model of corporate communication and the title of my thesis is a cumulative effect of these four theories: Fusion of Berlo's SMCR model, The Persuasiveness model, Berne's PAC Transactional model and Shannon's Mathematical model to arrive at the **TPICC [Transactional Persuasiveness Integrated model of Corporate Communication] model of corporate communication.**

### A GENERAL THEORY OF COMMUNICATION –AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TPICC MODEL

#### The premises for my model are:

1. Communication is Psychological in Nature. 2. Communication is a sensitive process in that, it can either make or break a relationship. 3. Communication can be learned. 4. Direction is required, not necessarily a mentor. Having said that a trained Professional can structure the process for the trainee. 5. Communication is an organic phenomenon, and 7. Communication happens at different levels.

#### But why we do need another model?

The need for people in general and Employees in particular to communicate effectively has never been so imperative. Never has there been a time in corporate India when the need for its myriad employees to communicate proficiently been so vital. The need of the hour is for corporate employees to start communicating effectively as tomorrow's employee is going to be a Global Citizen.

Many questions need to be answered? One very important question to be addressed is:

Are prospective Corporate employees prepared?

When we answer this question, we need to consider two dimensions: Academic and Psychological. Then comes the two vital ingredients necessary for the success of any manager or professional: Information and Communication. As I'm writing this article I'm interviewing a prospective Management school candidate who wants a seat in a top tier B-school in the country. The questions that I asked him were:

Tell me about yourself?

Tell me about your childhood?

Why did you choose to do Engineering?

Who is the Chief Economist of the IMF?

What are the recommendations of the IMF to improve the GDPI of economies around the world that seem to be plummeting because of the unprecedented circumstances that we find ourselves in?

Who is the governor of the RBI?

How much has the Government planned to borrow from the RBI to fund the projects of the NHAI?

What is the Demand Curve?

What is the GDPI of Tamil Nadu, the state you hail from?

While he answered the first three questions, he messed up in the rest.

Let's analyse: The reason that he could give reasonably fine answers to the first three while he could not answer a single one in the remaining leaves many questions unanswered. Even the first three were not up to the mark, not really what one would expect to hear from a young Engineer who has happened to have enjoyed the unique privilege of studying in English medium institutions all his life. He seemed out of sorts. There was no energy and he gave me the feeling that, by just giving answers in a

mundane and an unrefined manner he would fit as a candidate for a seat in any B-school, let alone a premiere B-school. That is complacency. You cannot take anything for granted. A prospective B-school candidate is pitched against various other candidates who enjoy enviable skills. So how do we prepare a candidate to crack an interview that calls in for diverse skills. This is not an isolated case. I observed this inadequacy in hundreds of students and hence formulated the TPICC model of communication.

## CONCLUSION

What were the conclusions that I could draw from my interviewees?

1. Many were reluctant to speak, 2. Many were colloquial in their speech, 3. They were too straight faced, 4. They lacked energy, 5. They gave me the feeling that they want to get done with this and go home, 6. Few spoke more than what was asked, 7. Few seemed to be authoritative and bordered on the arrogant, 8. Few seemed to be harsh, 9. Few seemed to be inundated with content but lacked communication skills, 10. and vice versa...They could communicate but did not have the content, 11. Many were nervous, 12. Many seemed too enthusiastic that they slipped into a colloquial tone, 13. Few were unprepared, and 14. Few seemed too doubtful about many things.

I began to wonder about a solution to all these concerns. If one were to examine closely, the concerns are diverse in nature. It's natural that each of our concerns are unique. So we need to have a universal theory of communication.

Being in the communication business for so long: first in the corporate world and now lecturing B-school aspirants taking up huge examinations like the CAT, GMAT, GRE and on, I am uniquely placed to comment on their general performance and then propound a model. This is the fallout of around two decades of observing how students learn to communicate and the hurdles they meet and the measures they need to take to overcome the concerns.

Be it communication at a corporate work place or preparing for the verbal module for a B-School exam, few underlying principles are the same. There is a certain structure in the system of coining phrases. This provoked me to research Shannon's Mathematical model. Next I saw this pattern: sender-message-channel-recipient. Hence I pondered into the nuances of Berlo's SMCR model and clubbed it with Shannon's model. I realized as I interacted with my students that communication was inherently psychological in nature and hence looked into Berne's PAC model in considerable depth. And finally, nothing works as much as persuasion and so lastly I clubbed The Persuasion Model of communication into the above three models and formulated the TPICC model of communication.

TPICC holds that all living beings on the planet have the ability to communicate. This communication occurs through movements, sounds, reactions, physical changes, gestures, language, breathing, color transformations, among others.

It is established in this theory that communication is a necessary means for the survival and existence of living beings and allows them to give information about their presence and state. Communication is used to express thoughts, feelings, biological needs and any type of information relevant to the state of a living being.

According to this theory of communication, animals also have communication systems to send messages between them. In this way they ensure that their reproduction takes place successfully, protect themselves from danger, find food and establish social bonds.

TPICC establishes that communication is the process of coding and transforming information that takes place between the sender and receiver, where the receiver has the task of decoding the message once it is delivered

## FRAMEWORK

The term 'theory' is often intimidating to students. Theories provide an abstract understanding of a process. It is simply a summary of a process. It is as "a set of inter-related propositions that suggest why events occur in the manner that they do". A theory is, "a way of framing an experience or event—an effort to understand and account for something and the way it functions in the world". Any thoughts or ideas about how things work in the world or one's life are personal theories. Theories are essentially

frameworks for how the world works, and therefore serve as a guide about how to function in the world.

A theory is an idea of how something happens. It is an attempt to explain or represent an experience. The term communication theory may refer to a single theory or an entire set of theories related to communication. "Theories are not just things to be read and learned. They are constantly evolving works."

The origin of the word 'Model' could be traced to the French word *modèle*; Italian *Modello*, and Latin *modus*, measure, standard; Model refers to representation/replica of the original. A Model is thus a schematic description of a system, theory, or phenomenon that accounts for its known or inferred properties and may be used for further study of its characteristics.

Communication Models seek to represent the structure and key elements of the communication process.

In a field like Communication, theories are important to understand because they directly impact our daily lives.

1. The first function that communication theories serve is that they help us organize and understand our communication experiences.
2. A second function is that they help us choose what communicative behaviours to study.
3. A third function is that they help us broaden our understanding of human communication.
4. And the fourth function is that they help us predict and control our communication.
5. A fifth function of theories is that they help us challenge current social and cultural realities and provide new ways of thinking and living.

While theories serve many useful functions, these functions do not really matter if we do not have well-developed theories that provide a good representation of how our world works. Any communication theory must be "any conceptual representation or explanation of the communication process".

A Communication theory can be seen as a discipline that studies the principles of transmitting information and the methods by which it is delivered (as print or radio or television, etc. ). It is an attempt to explain how and why humans communicate meaningfully with each other. Such theories can originate from a variety of different fields, including Psychology, Biology, and Philosophy, though the actual study of the nature of communication is a field in itself. At its core, a communication theory is generally devoted to providing an explanation of how, exactly, one individual is able to communicate meaning to another and the degree to which the speaker and the listener can understand each other.

The TPICC model fuses different points of view , Mechanical , Psychological , Persuasiveness and Structural, ably supported by four different theories of communication.

### 1.Mechanical:

This point of view indicates that communication is simply the process of transmitting information between two parties. The first part is the sender and the second part is the receiver. I have woven **Berlo's theory of communication** to substantiate the Mechanical part. The different components of the Berlo's model are:

**Sender :** The sender is the source that attempts to share information. It can be a living unit or not, since the only characteristic necessary for it to be the source is that it can supply some type of information and has the capacity to transmit it to a receiver through a channel.

**Message:** The message is the information you want to communicate. The theory of communication indicates from a semiological perspective that the meaning of the message depends on how it is created through the use of signs. In this way, the message is successful insofar as the receiver understands the same thing that the sender wants to inform.



**Coding:** Is the process of constructing the message in order for the recipient to understand it. That is, communication can only be established when both the sender and the receiver understand the same information. In this way, it is understood that those individuals who are most successful in the communication process are those who encode their messages taking into account the capacity of understanding of their receiver.

**Channel:** A message encoded by the sender must be delivered by a channel. There are multiple categories of channels: verbal, nonverbal, personal, impersonal, among others. The purpose of the channel is to allow the message to reach the receiver.

**Decoding:** Is the process opposite to the codification in which the receiver must decipher the message that was delivered to him. At this point the receiver must carefully interpret the message. The communication process is considered successful only when the receiver decodes the message and understands the same as the sender.

**Receiver:** Is the one who receives the message. A good transmitter takes into consideration the possible preconceptions that the receiver may have and the frames of reference of the same, in order to determine possible reactions when decoding the message. Having a similar context helps to spread the message effectively.

## 2. Psychological:

According to this point of view, communication comprises more elements than the simple, straightforward and mechanical transmission of the information from the sender to the receiver. It includes the thoughts and feelings of the sender, who tries to share them with the receiver. In turn, the receiver has some reactions and feelings once decoding the message sent by the sender. I have incorporated Berne's PAC model to account for the psychological dimension of communication alongside the social, systematic and critical views.

The PAC Model: Parent, Adult, and Child

Each "ego state" in the PAC Model represents a different type of information we learned throughout life.

The **Parent** is a recording of *external* thoughts and feelings *observed* by your parents, parental guardian, or other strong authority figures like teachers or doctors. It's often driven by the desire to judge ("right" or "wrong"), including the desire to reward or punish certain behaviors. Many family patterns that we've picked up represent information stored in the Parent.

The **Child** is a recording of *internal* thoughts and feelings *replayed* from your childhood. It's often driven by the desire to be accepted, be loved, and be paid attention to. If a person lacks positive childhood experiences early on in life, then his or her Child will often develop "games" or unhealthy habits later in life to feel accepted, loved, or paid attention to.

The **Adult** is not only your rational analysis of your thoughts, feelings, and observations in the moment (taking in information from your surroundings), but also recognizing how your "Child" or "Parent" may be influencing your responses too. The Adult has the ability to step back, reflect on all the information they have, and make the best decision available to them.

## 3. Persuasiveness :

In a field like Mentoring and Training, one very important tool that is at the disposal of the Trainer is persuasion. Thankfully, a number of researchers have created theories that help explain how people can be persuaded. While there are numerous theories that help to explain persuasion, TPICC explores two of them: social judgment theory and the cognitive dissonance theory.

#### 4. Structural :

Science seeks the basic laws of nature. Mathematics searches for new theorems to build upon the old. Engineering builds systems to solve human needs. The three disciplines are interdependent but distinct. Very rarely does one individual simultaneously make central contributions to all three — but Claude Shannon was a rare individual.

Claude Shannon wrote a master's thesis that jump-started digital circuit design, and a decade later he wrote his seminal paper on information theory, "**A Mathematical Theory of Communication.**"

Before Shannon, the problem of communication was primarily viewed as a deterministic signal-reconstruction problem: how to transform a received signal, distorted by the physical medium, to reconstruct the original as accurately as possible. Shannon's genius lay in his observation that the key to communication is uncertainty. After all, if you knew ahead of time what I would say to you in this column, what would be the point of writing it?

This single observation shifted the communication problem from the physical to the abstract, allowing Shannon to model the uncertainty using probability. This came as a total shock to the communication engineers of the day.

#### METHODOLOGY

I want to follow the following steps to help trainees communicate :

1. Use Berlo's SMCR model to make trainees understand the prime components of communication. Awareness is to key to learning. Insight into the attributes that the sender of the message needs to enjoy will enhance structured and informed learning. I see the following attributes that the sender needs to compulsorily enjoy: Pronunciation , Vocabulary , Ideas , Tone , Clarity of Thought .....
2. Use Berne's PAC model to make trainees understand that Communication is essentially a Psychological Process . The PAC model introduces the concept of ' The Adult Ego State' which is the most desired state to operate from while being perched in a corporate set-up.
3. Use The Persuasiveness model of communication to enforce the Learning process into the Trainee's cognitive faculties.  
And finally,
4. Make the Trainee realize that the communication process as suggested by Berlo is in sync with the hugely comprehensive 'Mathematical Model of Communication' as propounded by Shannon and Weaver.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE MODEL

One must realize that as much as a theory can help in the communication process , Communication by nature is an inherent attribute. The discretion to do the Learning is ultimately in the hands of the learner. Surely 'Persuasiveness 'will help in the process , however, without perseverance from the Learner's side TPICC would not help much.

Several questions became apparent regarding the application of the TPICC Model to the persuasion process.

First, does the TPICC Model account for the elements involved in interpersonal communication?

Second, does the TPICC Model account for source-encoder variables such as credibility?

Third, does the TPICC Model account for message variables such as use of evidence?

Fourth, does the TPICC Model account for variables such as verbal and nonverbal communication?

Fifth, does the TPICC Model account for receiver-decoder variables such as the stable audience characteristics?

Sixth, does the TPICC Model be predictive rather than descriptive in nature?

The accuracy and effectiveness of this theory depends on how convincing are the answers that we find to the above questions.



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Tentative answers to these questions were not, of course, 'available until this study had been completed. There have been indications of possible solutions in the most of the literature reviewed. The Thesis researches into how TPICC goes about addressing these questions. We know that the TPICC Model is a culmination of Berne's, Berlo's and Shannon's ideas. While the underlying scheme is S-M-C-R, the TPICC Model justifies its recommendations by being pragmatic in its approach, as its main objective is to show itself as a working model and not a mere theoretical construct.

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