1

EXPLORING THE NATURE OF COMMUNICATION
An Overview

Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. discuss the nature of human communication;
2. construct a basic framework for defining communication;
3. analyze the different models of communication and generate new ideas therefrom;
4. dispel misconceptions about communication and reinforce basic concepts;
5. describe the functions and values of human communication;
6. differentiate the modes of communication;
7. identify the levels of communication; and
8. synthesize the common elements of the speech communication process.

NTRODUCTION

Why speech communication?

What other power [than eloquence] could have been strong enough either to gather scattered humanity into one place, or to lead it out of its brutish existence in the wilderness up to our present condition of civilization as [people] and as citizens, or, after the establishment of social communities, to give shape to laws, tribunals, and civic rights?

Cicero
De Oratore 1.33

Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 B.C.), one of the greatest Roman orators and statesmen of his time, underscored the power of speech in the paragraph above. In our global age today the call stands strong. People need to talk. Families become united and stable by communicating. Communities and social groups bond together for the attainment of shared goals and commitments. Fiat in democracy as a form of government in many countries is sustained through freedom of speech or communication. Nations coalesce for the protection of their common interests and purposes through oral communication. Communicating leads to sharing; sharing leads to bonding; bonding leads to uniting.

The Latin word "***communis***" is divided into two parts, ***com-munis*** (common, public). The initial syllable in ***communia*** is com – together and the rest is ***munia*** – duties. From this etymology one draws the sense of "working together." A sense of sharing, a duty to work publicly with is the gist of the word "communicate." Without speech or oral communication, societies could not attain levels of civilization, communities could not organize into living and working groups, mark and ritualize practices and traditions, debate and decide difficult issues, and transform society for its good. People need to talk.

When the boy you admire doesn't know you exist, you run to your best friend to ask for advice. You share on a one-on-one basis. When your family needs to sit in council to plan how to cope with a financial crisis, you share person-to-person and with every person in the circle. When husband and wife talk about rules of child-rearing, one person shares intimately or dialogues with the other. When you are granted that first interview for a job you've always dreamed of, you talk with someone superior to you.

When teachers communicate to their students, they need to share not only content but values as well. When a shop foreman communicates instructions to his men, he needs to motivate them towards a productive work ethic. We could go on ***ad infinitum***.

Oral or speech communication is the preferred form of communication because it flows spontaneously and directly between individuals. Although public speaking no longer defines the scope of human communication, its functions for a society are equally important to individuals and groups (Gronbeck et al 1994):

1. ***Speeches are used for self-definition.***
   Just as church groups recite their creeds aloud and often, societies and communities engage in speech communication activities in order to define themselves or reaffirm their common identity, indicate what they stand for, or what it means to have affinity to a group or organization.

2. *Speeches are used to disseminate ideas and information.*

Even into day's proliferating media, much information needs to be disseminated in a personalized way. Leaders of nations talk to their people in matters of grave interest: emergent societies or republics are galvanized by influential speakers who rally people to a cause. Civic and social action to change society starts in small groups that discuss, share, and think about vital issues of common concern.

3. *Speeches are used to debate questions of fact, value, and policy in communities.*

One could say that civilizations advanced when men learned the art of public debate or verbal controversy instead of resorting to weaponry.

Facts are necessary to shed light on any situation. Values have to be clarified by members of societies or groups in order to ensure the common good. Policy has to be arrived at through a democratic consensus before any rational action.

4. *Speeches are used to transform individuals and groups.*

Speech communication in any form has to be persuasive to bring about change in the individual or in a group. Communities and groups have to adapt to changes in their environments and ways of life if change must occur. Speeches advocating change in order to spur growth of the individual and groups in society can unlock doors to progress in any civilization. Changed attitudes that lead to positive action in the individual become a force when done collectively.

If we relate the above functions to our everyday life, we can say that communication in several instances holds the following values for us:

1. Communication helps us to define and understand ourselves and our environment
2. Communication breaks barriers between two or more persons, thus, leading to relationships.
3. Communication creates bonding in groups and affirms the human need to belong.
4. Communication facilitates cooperative action toward goal attainment.
5. Communication informs and enlightens people for knowledge's sake and informed judgment.
6. Communication leads to enduring friendships and intimacy between individuals and among groups.
7. Communication enhances our understanding of and respect for different cultures.
8. Communication opens avenues for growth of the individual and society.

Now that you've seen how important speech communication is, you'd like to discover what communication is and how it works in reality.

THE NATURE OF COMMUNICATION

In your mathematics class you ask your professor to explain how she arrived at the solution just written on the board; as she finishes you nod your agreement. Then you hurry after class to the dormitory and relish a lunch with your roommate who tells you she understands your moods. At day's end you attend a business meeting with a peer group that gives you a feeling of belonging.

But when you return for the weekend, your father complains that your steady date lacks manners.

You certainly disagree but remain silent and walk slowly away. Then a teenaged sibling with nose up in the air complains about her older sister being more privileged on the use of the house phone. Rather than get into an argument with your father or sister, you withdraw to your room. It seems it's going to be a long, long weekend.

In both sets of examples there is communication taking place. But is one more effective than the other? Words, gesture, body movements, and even silence communicated feelings and ideas. If you think that the first examples characterize more effective communication than the second, what distinguishes the former from the latter? But before we can come up with a basic definition of communication, we need to understand certain core premises on the nature of communication.

1. Communication is a dynamic process.

When something is in process, it is ever-changing, ever-moving and in a state of flux. The idea of process also indicates that there are no clear-cut markers when communication starts and when communication ends. Human interactions in the past affect communication in the present and present ones influence future exchanges. And it goes on. People, settings/ situations, events, words and others are factors constantly interacting in the process. The interplay of these different elements in a continuum results in what Frank Dance (1967) describes as "something that is in constant flux, motion and process....changing while we are all in the very act of examining it..."

When we describe the very process as dynamic, it is not a mechanistic notion of movement or activity as in a conveyor pushing groceries forward to the cashier; rather it is a more complex notion of dynamic change, one in which an indefinitely vast number of particulars interact in a reciprocal and continuous manner (David Mortensen 1972). If you take a pyramid (three-dimensional), from the base the tapering layers or levels can be visualized as successively smaller levels of activity. And each smaller level is itself a composite of interacting elements, all the possible elements relating to one another in an indefinite number of ways. Another analogue of this dynamic process is the activity of the nervous system. Lashley (1954) referred to the complex interacting forces at work in the human nervous system as "...an activity not in terms of individual cells...but even the simplest bit of behavior requires the integrated action of millions of neurons."

2. Communication is systemic.

A system consists of parts or elements that comprise a whole. Communication is a complex process and it takes place within a set of systems. Communicators relate to one another in a system. The social setting they find themselves in is a system. The immediate physical environment is also a system. Each of these systems influences or affects communication as they influence one another as well. A systemic view of communication has four (4) vital implications (Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson 1967):

a) Communication is contextual.

If we consider or acknowledge the fact that communication occurs within a gamut of systems, understanding the process will come easy. Communication does not transpire in a vacuum; it occurs amidst a background or setting, it requires an immediate physical surrounding. The context of communication comprises physical characteristics such as seating arrangement, light, sound, color, physical space and the like. But beyond these it includes things like atmosphere of ambience, of sociocultural background (Mortensen 1972). When a person goes to a funeral parlor with the intent of paying his respects, he enters a situation that is generally somber in

mood. He will be communicating his sympathy because the context so requires. The emotional overtones of the situation will probably communicate warmth, solace or psychological comfort, and affinity. The context engenders these sentiments and feelings.

Brockriede (1968) calls it an "encompassing situation" or encompassing context when an elaborate set of implicit conventions and rules impose on an individual's behavior in given types or categories of social situations, such as the one mentioned above. Mortensen distinguishes between immediate and encompassing contexts by pointing out the impact of particular social situations as constituting immediate contexts for communication whereas an encompassing context would influence a communicator's image of particular social situations. One's immediate surrounding constitutes a context for communication. But the essence of context is extended to embrace all social and cultural milieus.

b) A system has interrelated parts.

In any system the parts constitute a whole and so each component relies and depends on one another. This interdependence makes for efficient functioning of the whole. If every part contributes chances are the system will work as a unit. As an example, let's take your speech communication class as a system. The parts are your professor, classmates, syllabus, textbook, references and your particular room (physical environment). Add to these the bigger system that encompasses your class system – the university and its policies and SOPs (standard operating procedures), Philippine society and its culture. How will changing your present stuffy room into a whitewashed air-conditioned one affect the communication? How will a change in faculty to handle the course affect the system? How will the university's shift in emphasis from arts and letters to mathematics and the sciences affect your communication? In any event change in any of the parts will most likely engender change in the entire system.

c) The whole is more than the sum of its parts.

Communicators, messages exchanged, seating arrangement, lighting, sound system, ventilation and the like may comprise any one particular communication situation. But treating these parts like an arithmetic sum adding up to a whole misses the point. Herbert Hicks (1972) cites the sum of inputs is a bigger number, and not a case of $2+2 = 4$. The interaction of all the parts results in a synergy, where the output differs in quality and quantity from the sum of the inputs.

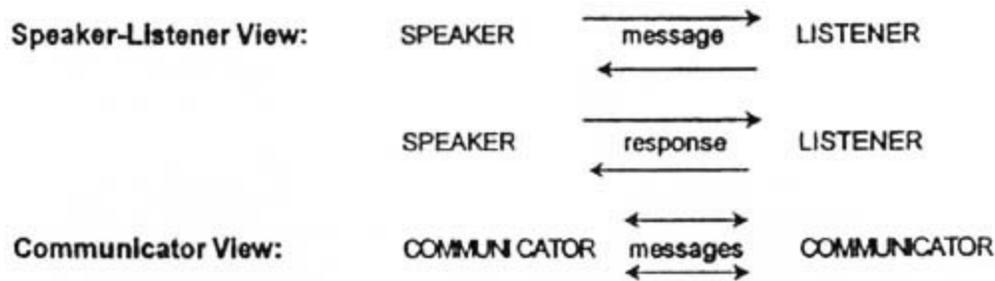## d) Constraints within systems influence or affect meanings.

There is no ideal communication system, human or machine-fed. System constraints are features that influence our efforts at communicating. Meanings intended may be altered, modified, watered down or even distorted by these constraints. Systems contain physical constraints such as stiff chairs, a smoky room, stuffy air, poor lighting or even distances between communicators. Communicators may experience constraints when they perceive status differences among them (sociophysiological). Then there are also barriers of language, norms and customs (cultural constraints).

Thus, a systemic view of communication implies the following: one, communication can be understood only within its contexts; two, all parts of a system are interrelated; three, the whole is more than the sum of its parts; and four, communication systems contain constraints that affect meanings.

3. Communication involves communicators.

Speakers speak and listeners listen, that is obvious. But communicators simultaneously and continuously speak and listen, thus rendering the labels "speakers" and "listener" not too accurate.

Another problem with a speaker-listener view of communication lies in the fact that it may ignore the simultaneous exchange of messages between participants. Even while a listener may be verbally passive, he nevertheless sends messages with perhaps a nod, a smile or frown or whatever. The simple act of facing a person speaking sends a message of wanting to listen at that particular moment. Thus, the speaker is doing things simultaneously – sending and receiving messages. This is also true with the listener.

Speaker-Listener View:	SPEAKER	message → ←	LISTENER
	SPEAKER	→ response ←	LISTENER
Communicator View:	COMMUNICATOR	←→ messages ←→	COMMUNICATOR

4. Communication is irreversible.

The adage "a man can't step in the same river twice" does point to the concept of irreversibility. "Human experience flows as a steam in a single direction leaving behind it a permanent record of man's comunicative experience," (Barnlund 1970). Communicators have no way but to go forward from one moment to the next, from a present state to a future one. Like time running on and moving forward, communication progresses in similar fashion; but this can build upon the significance or meaning of the present instant and succeeding events that unfold.

5. Communication is proactive.

Technical devices of advertising and propaganda – those media with their paradoxical messages – gradually break down our barriers of criticism; glued to the TV screen, people become passive and apathetic...we are all a little bit slave to the great television hypnosis (Meerloo 1968). Persons engaged in communicative behavior bring themselves totally to the situation – their mental, psychological and emotional makeup, their world view, their self-image, etc. Far from being inert or passive bystanders, they are proactive communicators capable of seeing, perceiving, analyzing and shaping situations. Even while asleep, our brain does its work. It goes on processing like a giant factory of ideas. Author Langer (1942 : 33) said: "...the brain follows its own law, actively translating experience into symbols..."

6. Communication is symbolic interaction.

Human communication is symbolic in nature, which means it is created and employed by humans (Wood 1964). Human beings can think and act symbolically. When we say that human communication is symbolic interaction, the communicators interact with and through language. We use language to define ourselves, our surroundings, people and events. In this manner we ascribe or give meaning and importance to our experiences. Unlike animal behavior that responds to stimuli automatically, the human communicator is proactive in that he assigns and acts upon meanings, not on stimuli per se. We act upon our environment – "a man-made world that we have seen, studied and shaped ourselves" (Platt 1968) and this ability elevates us above all other life forms ...

because we are symbol users (Burke 1968; Cassirer 1944).

7. *Meaning in communication is individually construed.*

No two people will attribute the same meaning to one distinct or particular situation. Each individual interprets or assigns value and meaning differently on the basis of his past experiences, beliefs, attitudes and values, and cultural makeup. It is well nigh impossible to elicit the same comments because of every person's uniqueness.

Meanings are always personal because we can never respond directly to another person. We come to understand other people's communication through ourselves. The person listens to your message and first interprets it on the basis of his own needs, beliefs, desires, feelings, self-concept and goals. The response is not to your statement but to his interpretation of the same (Wood 1964). It is like saying every person has a unique processing system with which to communicate. For an example, the word "love" elicits quite different images and notions from all ages. To many teeners, a "love-team" on the silver screen probably means romance in a moonlight-dance-wine and roses-setting. To an estranged spouse, the word "love" conjures scenes of a bitter quarrel and love lost. But to a happily married woman, "love" means having made the decision to commit herself totally to her man through thick and thin, and having felt true joy in her relationship. But in each type of situation, meanings of the word "love" will indefinitely vary. Even an individual's meanings are in a state of flux. We have moods, feelings, predispositions and changing perceptions.

COMMUNICATION DEFINED

Thus we can now define communication as a *dynamic*, *systemic* or *contextual*, *irreversible* and *proactive process* in which *communicators construct personal meanings* through their *symbolic interactions* (Wood 1964).

Having a basis for further discussion, let us look at certain models of the communication process.

MODELS OF COMMUNICATION

What is a model? If we were to play a game of association, what words would cue you in to the concept "model?" The words "scale," "ramp," "mannequin," "role," "fashion" would perhaps elicit the key word. But "scale" and "role" would most closely be associated with our meaning. A model describes an object, event, process or relationship. It attempts to represent the essential or major features of what it models. Thus we could say a communication model attempts to describe the communication process – how it works.

Why do we study models? For one, models provide a schema for understanding various phenomena. A good model presents the essential nature of what it describes by highlighting key features thought important by the model builder. Since human communication is such a complex process, no single model can do justice to it. Thus, any model of communication will select certain features and "freeze" them for closer scrutiny. A model visualizes for us how certain features are related to another and provides a more orderly understanding than we might have without the model. Thus, models have organizing value. Another function or value is heuristic in nature. Models that provoke thought with its insights can lead scholars to generate concepts and theoretical frameworks.

Some scholars of communication theory point to the heuristic power of models as their most valuable function.

The Aristotelian Model

The Aristotelian model which was first developed among the Greeks in ancient times is simple and basic. It has three (3) main features, namely: **speaker, message, audience**.

Greek citizens went about their daily life defending or prosecuting in the courts of law, deliberating and debating among themselves in the legislature or simply arguing a case in plain people's assemblies. Thus, a premium was placed on one's persuasiveness to his audience. The speaker's (persuader's) quality of persuasiveness was called "ethos." Such characteristic hinged upon the character of the speaker. However, there are other factors mentioned in Aristotle's *Ars Rhetorica* which determine the persuasiveness of a speaker's message:

1. content
2. arrangement
3. manner of delivery
4. *ethos*
5. arguments
6. *logos*
7. *pathos*

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                        (Message)       (Listener)
      SPEAKER -------> SPEECH -------> AUDIENCE
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(Figure 1: Aristotelian Model)

The Lasswell Model

One of the earliest models of communication was a verbal model advanced by Harold Lasswell in 1948.

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WHO          SAYS WHAT    IN WHAT      TO WHOM      WITH WHAT
Communicator  Message     CHANNEL      Receiver     EFFECT
                          Medium                    Effect
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(Figure 2: Lasswell Model)

The model combines five key elements in a sequential or linear pattern, that of a speaker delivering a message through a channel of communication to another with such impact. As a social scientist, Lasswell premised his model upon three key functions of communication in human society, namely:

1. *surveillance* – a function of surveillors such as diplomats and political leaders designed to alert society to the dangers and opportunities it faces.
2. *correlation* – a function mainly carried out by institutions such as journalists, educators and poll-takers designed to gather, coordinate and integrate into meaningful form the responses of

society towards changes in the environment

3. *transmission* – a function mainly carried out by institutions like the family, church, school, and community in order to hand down values, mores, customs and traditions to the next generation.

To paraphrase Lasswell, communication must perform its key functions to protect, fortify, and enhance a nation's stability. A country is responsible for consolidating its strengths and this can be done by controlling the forces that interfere with efficient communication, e.g., message controllers (censors, agents of distortion and filtering, etc.).

The Shannon-Weaver Model

A model originally designed for telephone communication, it identifies **five (5) basic components:** an information source, a transmitter, a receiver, a destination and noise. Somebody makes a phone call – an *information source*; the telephone is the *transmitter* that converts the message into an electronic signal; the telephone at the other end is the *receiver* that reconverts electronic signal into a message; the message is heard by another person, *destination*; distorting signals like static comprise *noise*.

Briefly, let us look at an example applying the model to a non-telephone situation. The information source became the brain of the speaker; the transmitter became the vocal mechanism. The receiver became the hearing mechanism of the listener, and the brain of the listener became the destination, and noise became anything that interfered with the message.

The Shannon-Weaver model depicts communication as a one-way or linear sequence of transmission and reception. It also depicts noise as an element found only within the message and not throughout the communication process. And since it originally applied to telephone communication, its concepts of transmitter, receiver and noise are mechanical.
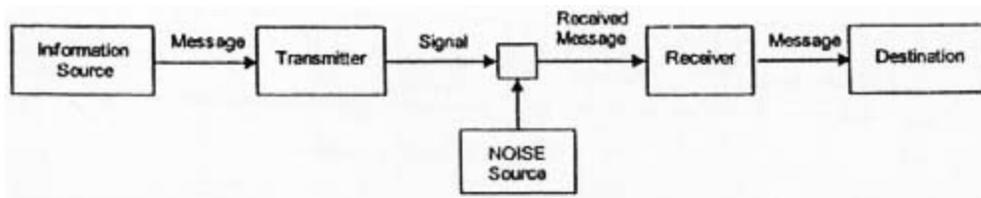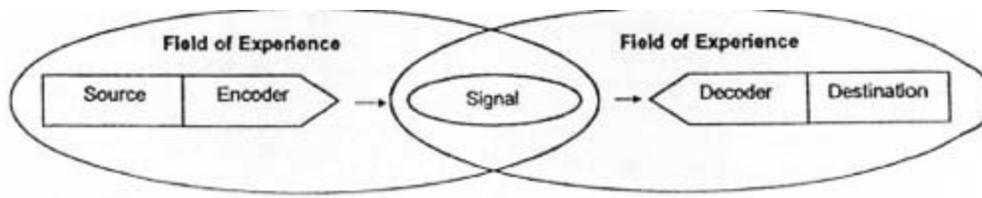

(Figure 3: Shannon-Weaver Model)

Schramm's Model

Wilbur Schramm moved beyond the verbal model to advance a significant insight in his second model (his first model is similar to Lasswell's). Schramm highlights the importance of an overlap of communicators' fields in order that communication can occur.
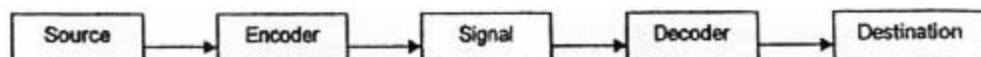

(Figure 4: Schramm's First Model)

(Figure 5: Schramm's Second Model)

Schramm's third model describes the dual role of each communicator in that he is both sender and receiver, and that both encoding and decoding entail personal interpretation. The fourth model presents another heuristic insight by the fact that it emphasizes the dynamism of human communication. People interact in constant cyclical fashion whereas earlier models (Aristotle, Lasswell, Shannon-Weaver) depict communication as a sequence, Schramm finally captures the notions of process and interaction.
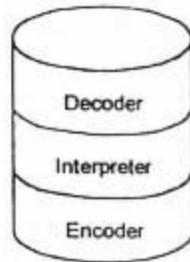
(Figure 6: Schramm's Third Model)
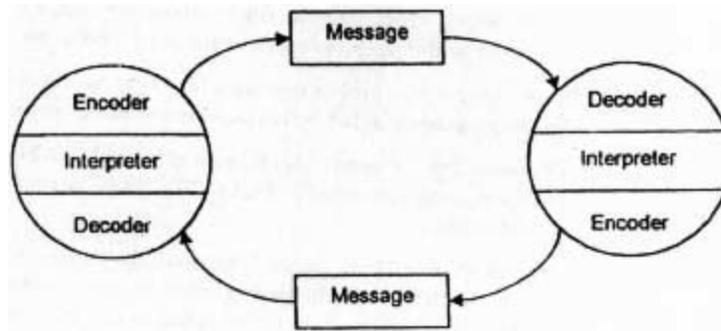
(Figure 7: Schramm's Fourth Model)

Berlo's Model

| S SOURCE	M MESSAGE	C CHANNEL	R RECEIVER
Communication Skill Knowledge Attitude Sociocultural System	Element Structure Content Treatment Code	Seeing Hearing Touching Smelling Tasting	Communication Skill Knowledge Attitude Smelling Sociocultural System

(Figure 8: Berlo's Model)

According to David Berlo's model, source and receiver are influenced by their personal makeup of three (3) factors: knowledge, attitudes and communication skills. A fourth influence is the sociocultural system of the communicators. Where the communicator's message is concerned, three areas matter: message content, communicator's treatment, and coding of content. Channels of communication or the means by which communication is shared consist of five senses, ***seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting***.

Berlo acknowledges the complexity of the communication process as evidenced by the influence of several factors on communication, to include an all-encompassing system – the communicator's sociocultural framework.

White's Model

Eugene White gave his communication students a sequence of events that takes place in communication. These eight stages of oral communication are the following.

1. ***Thinking*** – a desire, feeling, or an emotion provides a speaker a stimulus to communicate a need.
2. ***Symbolizing*** – before he can utter sounds, a speaker has to know the code of oral language with which to represent his ideas and in order to make his selection.
3. ***Expressing*** – the speaker then uses his vocal mechanism to produce the sounds of language accompanied by his facial expression, gestures, and body stance.
4. ***Transmitting*** – waves of sound spreading at 1,000 feet per second and waves of light traveling at a speed of 186,000 miles per second carry the speaker's message to his listeners.
5. ***Receiving*** – sound waves impinge upon the listener's ears after which the resulting nerve impulses reach the brain via the auditory nerve; light waves strike the listener's eyes after which the resulting nerve impulses reach the brain via the optic nerve.
6. ***Decoding*** – the listener interprets the language symbols he receives and thinks further.
7. ***Feedbacking*** – the listener may manifest overt behavior like a nod, smile, or yawn or he may not show any behavior at all (covert behavior like fast heartbeat, a poker face, etc.)
8. ***Monitoring*** – while the speaker watches for signs of reception or understanding of his message among his listeners, he is also attuned to what's going on inside him; the speaker is receiving and decoding messages about himself from his audience in order to adjust to the particular situation.
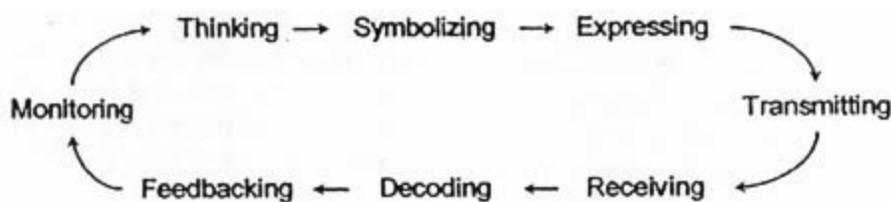

(Figure 9: Eugene White's (8) Stages of Oral Communication)

The Eugene White model implies a step-by-step sequence of events that starts with thinking in the mind of the speaker and ends with monitoring also by the speaker. Communication is a repetitive, cyclical event but the dynamic quality of interaction is not depicted. The speaker is the originator of the communication process and the listener is a passive reactor who does not initiate communication.

Dance Model

   The model advanced by Frank Dance is represented by a spiraling figure – the helix. It depicts the process of communication as one that progresses or moves forward in cyclical fashion — moving forward but coming back upon itself. Notice the spiral moving in progressively larger spheres as it goes upwards. This signifies the dynamic quality of human communication in that what has occurred before influences what we say now. What we say now influences the future. The continuum of human events serves as a backdrop for all human interaction.
   Dance's model is unlike earlier models in that one cannot pinpoint any literal features or elements. However, the helix as a symbol for the dynamics of human communication is visually powerful.
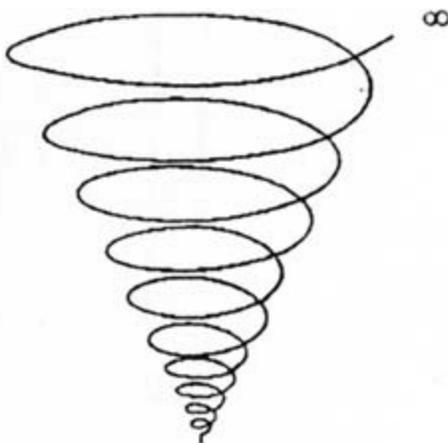
(Figure 10: Dance Model)

A Symbolic Interaction Model (Wood)

   Language is a system of symbols and words are symbolic. In the course of interaction or shared experiences, people "generate, convey, and invest meanings and significance" in these symbols.
   This model reflects the nature of communication as a dynamic, systemic process in which communicators construct personal meanings through their symbolic interactions. Notice that communicators are linked together by their symbolic interactions. Interactions may be either sequential or simultaneous since there is no direction specified. Then a given interaction evolves out of earlier interactions and is influenced by previous encounters as well as by the present situation. As communication progresses over time (T1, T2, T3...), the shared world between communicators is enlarged. As people communicate they learn each other's values, beliefs, attitudes, predispositions to situations, moods and interests. Over time people also learn to use common symbols to designate ideas, concepts, perceptions, rituals, and expectations. Shared experiences may lead to a greater understanding between communicators. It is communication that enables people to build shared worlds.
   Let's consider an example of the process by which people construct a shared phenomenal world. Recently a freshman was admitted to a university dormitory facility. She met her roommate with whom initially she had rather an uncomfortable, stilted encounter. As the two tried to find common areas of interest in their high school life and as they warmed up to each other in view of their similar goals and expectations of college life, they began to communicate better. The discovery of a shared world spurred them both to relate with a sense of togetherness in a new, exciting environment that is

college. Communication can thus enlarge the shared worlds between communicators. Thus, the model emphasizes the temporal dimension of communication—a given interaction serves as a starting point for the next and future interactions.
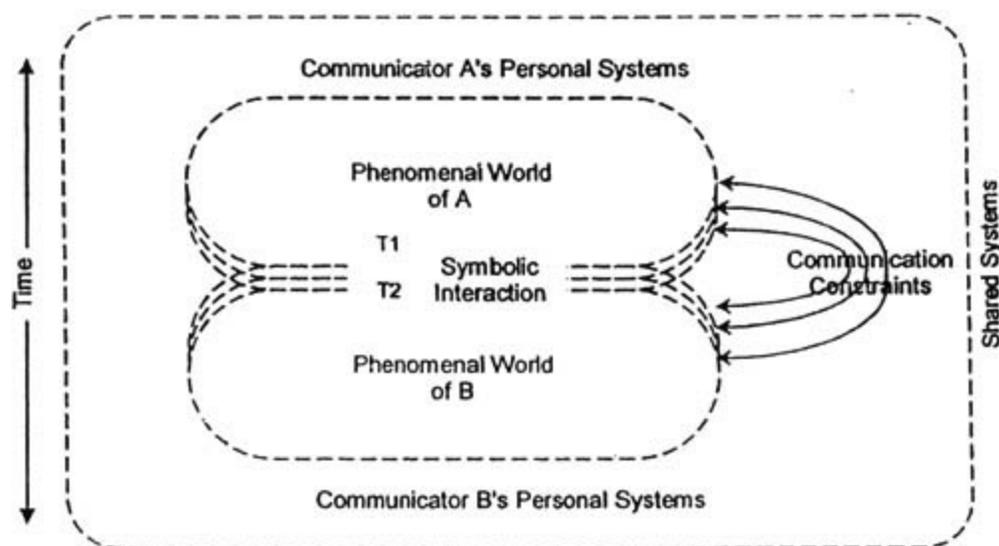

(Figure 11: Wood's Symbolic Interaction Model)

In addition to the model's dynamic feature, there is also the systemic quality of communication. Several levels of systems are represented within the model. Both communicators live within a vast social system or social world composed of all the social systems that make up a given society. Each communicator belongs to a few not all of such systems and is represented by dotted lines. This is to indicate the openness of these systems to forces of outside of them. The dotted lines also mean that there is interrelatedness between systems.

Furthermore, the model emphasizes the communicator's personal construction of meanings through his individual phenomenal world. This world consists of everything that makes up an individual — self-concept, goals, emotions, thoughts, skills, attitudes, past experiences, beliefs, and values. This world is the basis for interpreting communication. In the model Communicator B interprets A's messages through his phenomenal world, not through A's. To the extent that these two worlds overlap A and B will have a clear, shared understanding of symbols. Their personally constructed meanings when found to be common or similar will lead them to deeper communication.

Finally, the model presents a feature not highlighted by the other models: constraints. The series of lines indicates the existence of constraints throughout the communication process. Constraints may come in the form of conditions beyond our control (i.e., unstable economy) and they may also be found in the communicators (i.e., biases, moods, dislikes).

The Speech Communication Transaction Model (Gronbeck et al)
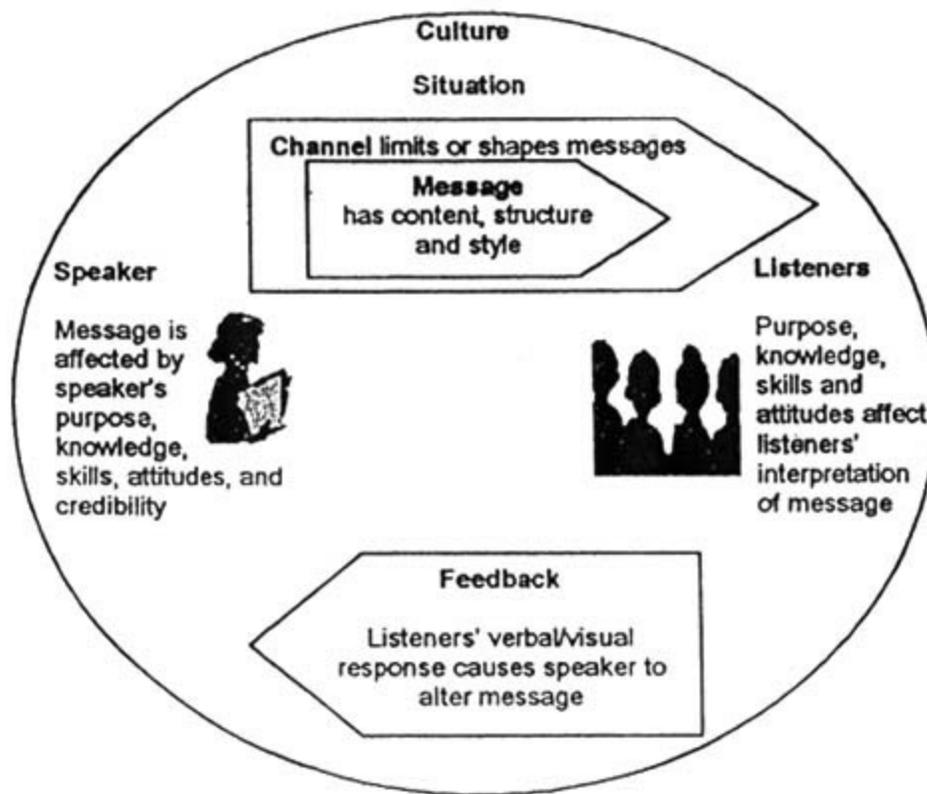
(Figure 12: Speech Communication Transaction Model)

Premised on speechmaking, this model is comprised of essentially the following components: a *speaker,* the primary communicator, gives a speech, a continuous, purposive oral *message,* to the *listeners,* who provide *feedback* to the speaker. The exchange occurs in various *channels* in a particular *situation* and *cultural context.*

SPEAKER

The speaker must evaluate himself on four (4) key areas every time he communicates: a) purpose; b) knowledge of subject and communication skills; c) attitudes toward self, listeners; and subject d) degree of credibility.

a) *Speaker's Purpose.* Every speaker has a purpose or goal to achieve. It may simply be to befriend someone or it may be more complex, as in trying to change people's beliefs and behavior. A speaker may wish to inform or add knowledge, entertain or amuse, impress, inspire or motivate. In all cases, a speaker has direction and, thus, acts in a goal-directed manner.

b) *Speaker's Knowledge.* Listeners generally await a speaker with high expectations. Does the speaker display deeper-than-surface knowledge of his subject? Does he share new, fresh, relevant, and significant insights? Is there depth and breadth in his message? Can he be considered an authority on the subject? Does his message make it worth their while?

c) *Speaker's Attitude.* A baseline source of a healthy attitude towards self and others is one's *self-concept,* a term usually grouped together with *self-worth, self-esteem, self-efficacy,* and *self-image.* If you feel good about yourself, you will reflect and radiate such an attitude when you communicate with others. If you don't feel good towards yourself, you might not want to see, talk or communicate with people. Confidence, pleasantness, amiability, commanding presence and other positive traits tend to be manifested by the speaker with healthy attitudes towards himself,

the listeners, and his subject. Shyness, uncertainty, poor self-confidence, phlegmatic presence and other self-defeating traits tend to show when the speaker does not hold a healthy attitude towards himself, the listeners, and his subject.

d) *Speaker's Credibility*. When listeners judge a speaker to be high in trustworthiness, competence, sincerity, attractiveness, and dynamism, the speaker's chance of success will be high. Otherwise, his speech communication transaction will be a failure. The concept of credibility is traced back to the classical Greek concept of **ethos**, a word that means character. Authors Gronbeck, Ehninger, McKerrow, and Monroe attest to the fact that where a speaker can heighten his credibility, there he will also produce a heightened impact of his message upon the audience.

MESSAGE

Your message often comes in the form of ideas or information. In public communication, there are three vital aspects of the message: ***content, structure,*** and ***style.***

a) *Content*. Mere facts or descriptions do not a content make. Something more substantial is needed. A speech's content is the substantive and valuative materials that form the speaker's view of a topic, and of the world. Content can be likened to an umbrella in whose shade certain select ideas and information come under. Content is conceptualized by the speaker according to his purposes for a particular audience.

b) *Structure*. Presenting ideas, facts, and information any which way is structure of some sort. But a speaker's structure needs to be one in which his ideas, facts and information can be properly and effectively understood through patterns or coherent arrangements or sequencing of ideas. Such arrangement gradually guides and leads listeners to grasp or comprehend the speaker's message. At the end there must be unity of thought.

c) *Style*. Personal and impersonal, intimate or distant, poetic or plain, reportorial or impressive, you communicate your speaking style when you select certain words and arrange them in some way. Style often refers to those aspects of language that convey impressions of your personality, your view of the world, and your individuality or uniqueness as a person.

LISTENER

In the communication transaction the listener serves as the speaker's counterpart. He receives and thinks about what is said in light of his ***a) purpose; b) knowledge of and interest in the topic; c) level of listening skills; and d) attitudes toward self, the speaker, and ideas presented.***

a) *Purpose(s)*. Often listeners come to listen with single or multiple expectations. Some want to hear the latest on a raging controversy, others simply want to see what a person looks and sounds like, and still others come to be entertained or humored. Speakers must match their listener's expectations in order to succeed. It is important to know that listeners want their needs satisfied.

b) *Knowledge and Interest*. Do the listeners know little or much about the topic? Would they care to hear or be attracted to listen to the topic at hand? Is there something in it for them? Is the group a highly motivated audience?
A thoughtful speaker would not initiate a message without first studying his audience on these two critical areas, areas of high impact.

c) *Command of Listening Skills*. Listeners vary in listening skills. Some are naturally receptive

while others can't wait to hear the speaker's final "thank you" or "good day!" Others persevere through long chains of reasoning while the rest are struggling to see the point. Children cannot listen to lectures or long discourses whereas adults can sit through these. The degree of appreciation in a listener is a function of his listening skills. Training in the discipline of listening is vital to any form of human communication.

d) *Attitudes*. Since attitudes of persons are generally shaped by the values they hold, it would be unwise for a speaker to antagonize his audience with contrary opinions. Listeners tend to seek out speakers whose beliefs and views they already agree with, and retain longer those ideas they strongly approve of. A speaker who wishes to alter listeners' views must start from familiar and common ground, then slowly build up to his alternative or contrasting ideas.

FEEDBACK

Feedback is a two-way flow of ideas, feelings, and information from listener to speaker, speaker back to listener. Listeners yawn or frown, nod or shake, smile or laugh. The speaker instantly interprets these as signals of comprehension or confusion and boredom or satisfaction. The speaker adapts, adjusts, alters, and modifies his speaking behavior in order to respond to such signals. It takes skill and sensitivity to spot cues in audience behavior.

CHANNELS

Public communication cuts across multiple pathways or channels. The **verbal channel** carries words; the **visual channel** transmits gestures, facial expression, bodily movement, and posture of speakers and listeners; the **aural channel** or **paralinguistic channel** carries the tone of voice, variations in pitch and volume or loudness, as well as cues on the emotional state of the speaker and tenor of the speech. At times a **pictorial channel** aids the communication process by use of visual aids such as diagrams, charts, graphs, and objects. Simultaneous messages are being communicated through these channels.

SITUATION

Your speech is affected and influenced by the physical setting and social context in which it occurs. A church congregation awaiting services will behave differently from a crowd at a political rally. A function room decorated in heavy dark drapes and lighted dimly may dampen audience response; a wide, brightly lighted space with comfortable chairs may enhance listening behavior or response; a subordinate taking orders from a superior seated behind a massive desk may connote the authoritative and powerful stance of the boss; a roommate talking to another who is chummy would be comfortable and at ease communicating, and so on and so forth.

A social context is a particular combination of people, purposes, places, rules and conventions that interact communicatively. A mix of the factors of age, gender, profession/occupation, ethnic aggrupation, power, degree of intimacy and others will determine the context in which one communicates with others. For example, younger people generally defer to their elders and elders generally speak authoritatively to the young.

Certain purposes or goals are more or less properly communicated in varying social contexts. For instance, a *miting de avance* is a context for attacking or criticizing the program of the incumbent government but not for eulogizing the deceased. Some places are more conducive to certain exchanges than others. You would hesitate delivering a sermon on board a public bus but speak with fervor in the pulpit on a Sunday.

Societies observe certain customs, norms, and traditions that form the framework for social interactions. These give rise to communication rules or norms that often specify what can or cannot be said, how to say what to whom in what circumstances. Adherence to these rules facilitates and enhances communication. Non-deference entails the risk of non-acceptability.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Finally, elements of communication may have different meanings depending upon the culture, or society in which the communication takes place. Each culture has its own set of rules for interpreting communication signals. While it may be perfectly alright to address parents by their first names in the U.S.A., the Filipino custom is not to call them by their first names but to always use the words "*po*" and "*opo*" or the third person "*kayo, sila*" while talking to parents and elders. This is a good example of cross-cultural context wherein communication behavior is predicted on prevailing norms and customs. The serious or thoughtful communicator needs to examine and analyze the culture he is in at the time.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT HUMAN COMMUNICATION

Now that we've explored at some length what human communication is, let us look at some commonly held misconceptions, or **what communication is not.**

1. *What we need is more communication.*

People generally think more communication improves anything and everything. The pervasive comment, "What we need here is more communication" usually indicates a desire to exchange more words, more talk between people. But will mere communication solve poverty, political, and religious problems? Many problems cannot be solved by words and more words alone because many problems do not originate from unclear or inadequate words. Many problems, however, can be addressed through the avenue of communication. Communication can help resolve conflicts and address problems when there is *better* not more communication between persons and groups of people. In the end we can maximize the strengths of communication if we know its limits.

2. *Speakers bear the burden of effective communication.*

Even if everybody agreed that a speaker should be responsible for effective communication because he normally initiates, listeners are also to bear in part the burden because they mirror by their response or behavior the clarity of understanding and comprehension the message elicits. Listeners are the other half of an effective communication transaction. When listeners do their part by feeding cues to the speaker, they exercise considerable influence on the effectiveness and impact of the exchange.

3. *Communication breakdown stops communication.*

Since a breakdown actually occurs within a fixed sequence of events (i.e., machine operations), there is no breakdown in communication because the process is cyclical, interactive, dynamic. The notion of breakdown suggests communication can be fixed by detecting the defective part. This is not consistent with the system view of communication wherein all features or components are interrelated.

Does communication stop? Our process view of communication cannot pinpoint exactly where the beginnings and endings of communication are located. Words may originate at some specific point in time during a given transaction and also close at a given time, but when it exactly began or when it will end is not certain. Words may stop at some point but thinking and reflection go on. How about situations where listeners do not or cannot respond to our messages in the way we would expect? Communication has not stopped. It is possible that in those cases communicators may have attached different meanings to the symbols used or did not agree with the desired response (i.e., walking out, boycotting). Ideas were exchanged, meanings were personally constructed, but in the end speaker's desired outcomes were not realized.

4. Communication consists of words.

"Just say what the other person wants to hear" may work once or twice but not all the time. Often our words are contradictions of what our body stance communicates to the other. Words in order to become meaningful must be accompanied by the body, especially facial expression and tone of voice. The communicator's body must be attuned to what he is saying. Often what words cannot convey, the body does eloquently.

5. Meanings are in words.

Human beings construct meanings and therefore meanings vary from person to person. In theory this is accepted by most but in practice we attribute intrinsic or inherent meaning to words. Some people react negatively when hearing words such as "male chauvinist," "feminist," "leftist," "union-buster," and the like. Others may react differently to the same words. These words by themselves are neither good nor bad, but different people assign meanings which are good or bad or somewhere in the middle. We choose the way we interpret the symbols we use and hear. As we interact with these words or symbols, we actively assign meaning as well as value to them.

6. Effective communicators are born, not made.

If this were true, then there would be no need for communication courses at all. If this were true, then this reading material would not have been written for students. The fact is year in and year out, communication students who at first thought so turned out to become effective communicators after a semester of hard work and persistence. Any student who is willing to invest much time and effort can enhance his communication skills dramatically. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes that comprise good communication can be developed or cultivated over time.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNICATION MODELS

As a summary of the communication models, let us extract their essential features and draw similarities as well as differences. Try generating new ideas from them.

A SUGGESTED SURVEY OF COMMUNICATION MODELS

MODEL	ORGANIZING VALUE What features and relationships are emphasized?	HEURISTIC VALUE Can you generate new insights? Can you ask stimulating questions?

Aristotle	**Features:** speaker, speech and audience **Relationship:** linear, sequential among the 3 elements	
Lasswell Model	**Features:** speaker, message, receiver, channel and effect **Relationship:** linear, sequential among 5 elements	What are the effects of messages? Who sends messages to whom? What is the message? How does channel affect message?
Shannon-Weaver	**Features:** information source. transmitter, receiver, destination, noise **Relationship:** linear, sequential relationship among 5 elements	How do ideas from a source arrive at the destination? How does noise distort signals? What are the kinds of noise?
Schramm	**Features:** communicators, messages, fields of experience **Relationship:** interactive, circular relationship among elements	How is communication affected by varying overlaps in the fields of experience? How do communicators cope with simultaneous messages?
Berlo	**Features:** source, message, channel, receiver **Relationship:** not explicit in model but visual placements suggests linearity from source to receiver	How do characteristics of source and receiver affect messages? How do source variables influence coding and treatment of messages? How do channels affect reception of messages?
White	**Features:** eight (8) stages-thinking, symbolizing, expressing, transmitting, receiving, decoding, feedback, monitoring **Relationship:** cyclical, sequential relationship among the eight elements	Do these stages point to the role of listeners? How? How does feedback affect the speaker's message?
Dance	**Features:** time-orientedness, reflexrvity **Relationship:** cyclical, self reflective progression over time	How does a message at a given time affect later messages? When does the impact of communication stop? When and where does communication begin? How does time influence the impact of communication?
Wood	**Features:** communicators, phenomenal world, time dimension, symbolic interaction, constraints **Relationship:** dynamic, systematic, enlarged shared phenomenal world between communicators, interactive	How does an initial conversation build the foundation for future interactions? How do members of a family or community build a common or shared phenomenal world?

Monroe, Gronbeck, Ehninger & McKerrow	**Features:** speaker, message, channel, listeners, feedback, situation and cultural context **Relationship:** interactive, transactional, contextual, dynamic, public communication-oriented	How does cultural context influence messages? How does situation interplay with a speaker's goals or purposes? How can absence/lack of feedback affect the speaker and his message?
Casambre	$$C = \frac{(S\text{—}L) + (W\text{—}R)}{Thinking}$$ Language **Features:** thinking, language, transmission skills, reception skills **Relationship:** communication's roles of transmission and reception of ideas; common denominator thinking, a process utilizing language	Why is thinking common to all communication skills? How is language important to the transmission of ideas? **How** do you interpret the model herein?

LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

Now that we have enough models of communication, perhaps we should familiarize ourselves with the different levels or relational forms of communication. According to Monroe and Ehninger (1974), there are three distinguishable forms: 1) interpersonal; 2) small group; and 3) public communication. Communicologists Ruesch and Bateson (19__) classify human communication into four (4) levels, namely: 1) intrapersonal, 2) interpersonal, 3) group; and 4) cultural. The following typology would give us a broader perspective:
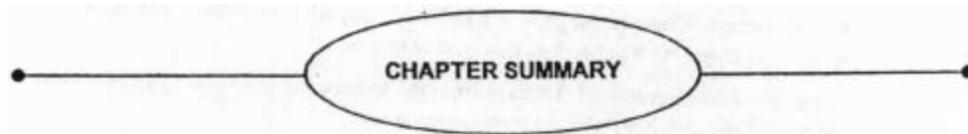
1. *Intrapersonal Communication* – communication occurs in the individual (i.e., a student chooses to study for an exam instead of attending a party)
2. *Interpersonal Communication* – communication takes place between two or more persons; this has two forms, namely: *dyadic* (between 2 persons) and *group* (among 3 or more persons); (i.e., a mother-daughter dialogue; and a meeting of a study group of 5 classmates in Math 14)
3. *Public Communication* – communication occurs between a speaker and several listeners (i.e., the UP president welcomes the freshman population in June)
4. *Mass Communication* – communication occurs between the source (speaker) and a vast audience/readership/viewership via mass media/channels of radio, television, and print (i.e., presidential candidates engage themselves in pre-election debate on a radio-TV network)
5. *Organizational Communication* – communication occurs within the workplace between and among members in order to carry out an organization's objectives and purposes, defining goal-directed behavior for efficiency and effectiveness; (i.e., a division manager enunciates the latest policy on employee productivity and initiates an open forum)
6. *Intercultural Communication* – communication occurs in verbal and nonverbal ways to promote understanding and goodwill between and among cultural communities/nations; (i.e., soirees, symposia among Filipinos and international students in the UP campus; cultural/stage

performances highlighting Korean traditions through dance and music)

7. ***Developmental Communication*** – communication occurs between progressive nations and developing societies of the world in order to facilitate the total development of individuals and nations (i.e., UNESCO experts/workers mobilizing communities among developing countries to launch educational and livelihood projects)

MODES OF SPEECH COMMUNICATION

In each of the relational forms of human communication (interpersonal, group, public), two modes of oral or speech communication prevail: one, ***verbal mode***; two, ***nonverbal mode***. In the verbal mode, the speaker or communicator uses his voice or vocal mechanism while in the nonverbal mode, the speaker or communicator displays bodily behavior/movement in forms such as facial expression, eye contact, gestures of the hands and shoulders. In the verbal mode listeners hear the human voice while in the nonverbal mode listeners see the speaker's bodily movement and behavior. But as a whole, the speaker communicates his message through both avenues—verbal and nonverbal. As these will be dealt with more lengthily in a later chapter, let us end our discussion with a summary of the essential points learned from this foundational chapter.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. Communication is a dynamic, systemic process in which communicators construct personal meanings through their symbolic interactions.
2. Models of communication have a two-fold value: organizing, which clarifies the structure of complex events; and heuristic, which leads to innovative and productive thinking.
3. The different models of communication starting with Aristotle's down to Dance's, and others show us the features or components selected or highlighted by the model designers, which features help us to understand the nature and complexity of the communication process. The evolving models drive home the point that there is still much to learn and discover about human communication. The progression from linearity of communication to dynamism and transactionalism proves this.
4. The following are widely held misconceptions about what communication is and does:

    a. More communication improves anything and everything
    b. Speakers are responsible for effectiveness in communication.
    c. Communication breakdowns stop communication.
    d. Communication consists of words.
    e. Meanings are in words.
    f. Effective communicators are born, not made.

5. The 3 basic levels or relational forms of human communication are: interpersonal, group and public communication. The broadly inclusive classification has the ff: 1) intrapersonal; 2) interpersonal, which consists of dyadic and group; 3) public; 4) mass; 5) organizational; 6) intercultural; and 7) developmental communication.
6. The two modes of speech or oral communication are verbal and nonverbal. The verbal mode

utilizes the speaker or communicator's voice while the nonverbal mode uses the speaker or communicator's bodily movement and behavior. In sum, the speaker's vocal or oral message is clarified, enhanced, and reinforced by his nonverbal behavior.

EXERCISES
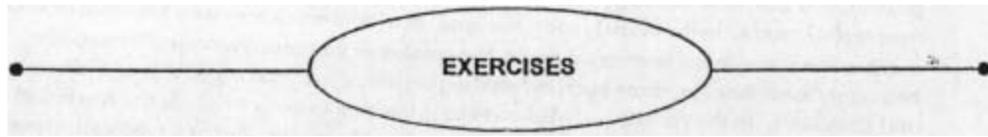
1. Study and analyze the communication system in your own family. Draw up a schema or a diagram of its main components/features. Explain how it works using any or a combination of the communication models taken in class. Share your insights with a classmate and listen to her response as well.
2. Choose any of the 3 relational forms of human communication: interpersonal, group, public. Explain and describe how these communicators interact or communicate with one another. You may recall a recent event which you are familiar with. Or the situation could be an event in the past which is still vivid in your memory. Focus your discussion on how they speak and how they show bodily behavior.
3. Write a single-paged comment on any of the following statements/maxims:

    a. "You cannot not communicate."
    b. "Actions speak louder than words."
    c. "Say what you mean, mean what you say."
    d. Parents should listen more
    e. "A man cannot step into the same river twice."
    f. "You take back your word."
    g. Communicating is speaking and listening.

READING LIST
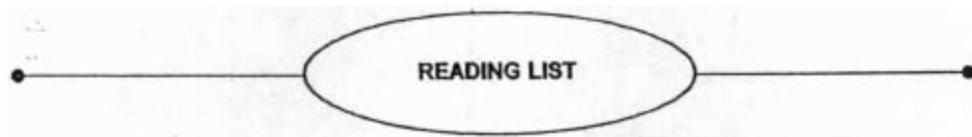
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