

The Role of Culture and Communication in the Socialization Process

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ABSTRACT: Given that people's behavioral patterns are so diverse, there is an unconscious tendency on the part of many to reject such behaviors. To avoid such situations, we need to know the importance of the social dimension of communication that is based on two fundamental factors: One factor is that each person is born in a particular culture with its perspective, its way of thinking and action. The second factor is that each person is born in a particular society, a community that has certain expectations of its members, certain modes of interaction, etc. Consequently, in order to understand the behavioral patterns of a community and to integrate within the community, particular attention must be paid to both culture and communication. At the same time, it must be established that socialization requires understanding and acceptance of changes that need to be made, recognizing that this requires time. Those who share a common culture are a society, a community. Each generation of a particular society receives the culture of society, the community of the previous generation, enriches it, and transmits it to the next generation. Therefore, one can say that a culture is not static but constantly changing. Thus, to communicate effectively and to integrate into a society, communities must have an adequate knowledge of culture.

KEYWORDS: Culture, communication, socialization, behavioral patterns, society

Introduction: Culture and Communication

One of the most commonly used statements about communication is this, "Communication is fundamental to the human being." Interestingly, one of the reasons why many relationships are destroyed is also linked to communication. As Burke (1962, 547) said, "Our problem is Babel." Sir Maurice Mawby also argued that "Man is not a solitary being, he cannot live alone, so he has to learn how to live with other people" (Mawby 1972, 26).

"The language condition in human life seems to be of major importance," said Kraemer (1956, 66), because when the power of the Holy Spirit reigns, in other words, when the divine-human dialogue is restored, confusion caused by different languages disappears and perfect communication is restored".

The communication was perceived by Aristotle, Cicero or Quintilian as an art, their theory being called rhetoric and their oratory practice. [For ancient people, from places like Athens, Rome or Alexandria, rhetoric was the highest intellectual achievement because it involved both excellent learning and persuasive talents. For the common man, today, it probably means more than a bombastic speech. Oratory is the art of composing and speaking speeches; the art of speaking in public, eloquence, DEX, 2nd Edition, Encyclopedic Universe, Bucharest, 1998, p. 725]. Aristotle defined rhetoric as "an art of discovering in every case the means of persuasion available" (Thys & Ingram 1954, 19-24). [The persuasive was successful when he determined his audience to pursue beliefs and righteous actions, which of course were not very easy to define].

Regarding the communication process for integrating an individual within a community, De Fleur (1970, 76) makes the following confession:

The process of communication is fundamental to all our psychological and social processes. Without repeatedly engaging in communication with our closest friends, none of us can develop our mental processes and social nature that distinguish us from other forms of life. Without the language systems and other important communication tools, we could not carry out thousands of organized activities in groups and live our lives in interdependence. However, despite the invaluable importance of the communication process for every human, group, society, we have

less knowledge about it than about the life cycle of a bat or about the chemical composition of sediments at the bottom of the oceans.

Such an observation should concern those who ignore or minimize the role that culture and communication have in the socialization process. Keep in mind that both culture and communication give you the opportunity to have great experiences in integrating into a community. Burke (1962, 579) interprets the experiences of communication as dramas, the analytical tool of his dramatic approach consisting of five elements: act, scene, intermediary (agent), activity and purpose. Shannon & Weaver (1949) built a communication model containing elements such as a sender, recipient, channel, code, encoder, sound decoder, and feedback.

It is therefore important to note that the message is not independent. Many misunderstandings could be avoided if it were understood that, first, the messages are in the human being (transmitters and receivers) and only then they turn into codes - that is, words, images or actions. Effective communication in its own nature, as Kraft (1983, 107) calls it, "receptor-oriented."

A particularly important element at the heart of the communication process is the symbol. It is known that one of the unique abilities of the human being is the ability to sense the elements of a code, which otherwise would have no meaning. In this respect, the Spanish philosopher, Arranguren (1967, 23-26) draws attention to this feature of coded systems when he identifies any means of transmission as a sign that has no meaning isolated. This feature is perceived as being unique to the symbols that are so compared to the signs.

Nida (1960, 65) claims that "signs indicate the essence of a particular thing, event, or condition in a given context. Symbols can be understood instead of the immediate context or the stimuli." For the socialization process to take place effectively, it is important to take into account every element involved in intercultural communication. From the perspective of Hesselgrave (1991, 46):

Human communication is only partially effective even in the most ideal circumstances. Why? Because the shared encoded and decoded element is not complete. Differences in culture, personality, experiences, interest, long-term and short memory hitting coding and decoding processes. The result is that the receivers rarely decode exactly the same message that has been encoded by the transmitters. Thus, although we are discussing things such as discovering the author's intention and reverting the impact of the message on the public to whom it was addressed - and in common language we often say understand or see - it must be noticed that effective communication is not easy and communication shortcomings are not easy to avoid.

It must therefore be noticed that the communication process is not limited to factors previously thought. There are a lot of factors that can affect communication. Starting from Eldridge's (1950, 363) understanding of communication, namely "transfer of meaning through symbols" the question arises: Where can the meaning be found? To this question Kraft (1983, 110-115) presents three options:

- First of all, there are those who believe that meaning can be found in the outside world. The meaning is "there" and is waiting to be perceived and understood by people.
- Secondly, there are those who claim that meaning exists in the signs and symbols we communicate with. Kraft calls this theory the 'theory of freight wagon.'
- Thirdly, there are those who claim that the sense of meaning depends on people. The meanings do not exist in the outside world, nor in the symbols we use to describe the world. They are attached or even created in the minds of people who receive messages. As such, the meaning must be sought in people.

Note that without God, man's existence becomes meaningless. Without God, understanding things or messages is impossible and leads to a lack of consistency. After all, "Our basic goal in communication," said Berlo (1960, 12), "is to become agents to" affect "others, the environment and ourselves. Becoming determinants, let us express our opinion about how things are. In short, we communicate to influence - to

influence having an objective.” The more effective communication is, the faster the socialization process will take.

It is important to note that the extraordinary development of the society, the special resources available do not end the problems in the communication process. As Parks (1966, 167) said:

Different things can be transported across cultural boundaries, but their interpretation will depend on the context that those who interpret them will attribute. And this context will depend more on the experience of the past and the temperament of the present people, of those to whom the words are addressed, than of the kindness of those who speak them.

The distance between the progress of society and the communicative abilities of man is probably one of the most challenging aspects of modern civilization. Intercultural communication is as complex as the sum of human differences. Kluckhohn (1949) claimed that: "Culture is a way to think, to feel, to believe.

It is the group of knowledge of a group preserved for the future, (Kluckhohn 1949, 23) "while for Luzbetak (1963, 60-61): "Culture is the design of life. It is a plan through which society adapts to the physical, social and ideological environment. [...] Cultures are nothing more than different answers to the same human problems. Also, Barney (1973, 48-55) highlights that: "Every generation of a particular society receives the culture of society from the previous generation, modifies it, and transmits it to the next generation. So a culture is not static but constantly changing". All of these things, however, have a special role to play in the socialization process

When talking about integration within an ecclesial community, one cannot ignore the relationship that exists between Christ and culture. Richard H. Niebuhr has classified five perspectives on the relationship between Christ and culture developed by various theologians:

1. **Christ vs. Culture** - ex. Christ is the only authority, the demands of culture must be rejected.
2. **Christ of culture** - ex. the Christian system is no different from the culture in its own way, but only in quality, the best of the culture should be selected to conform to Christ.
3. **Christ above culture** - ex. receiving grace improves and complements culture.
4. **Christ and culture in paradox** - ex. both are authorities that have to listen, and the believer, therefore lives in this tension.
5. **Christ as Transformer of Culture** - ex. culture reflects the fallen state of mankind, in Christ humanity is redeemed, and culture can be renewed to glorify God and promote His purposes. (Niebuhr 1956)

An ecclesial community cannot therefore effectively communicate by ignoring the culture because the process of communication cannot be separated from culture. McGavran (1974, 67) points out that "every culture is reasonable in the specific circumstances in which it has developed." According to Kraft's (1979, 49) statement: "An observer should be careful in evaluating a culture, first of all in terms of its own values, goals, and interests before venturing to compare it with another culture (either positive or negative). Evaluation should therefore only be made when enough effort has been made to understand the culture of the receiver from its point of view and not on the basis of personal cultural assumptions.

In the process of socialization, the contextualization of the transmitted messages also has a very important role. Speaking about contextualizing a message, Kato (1975, 12-17) wrote: "We understand that the term means creating relevant concepts and ideas in a particular situation."

Also, Nicholls (1975, 647) defines the contextualization as: "The translation of the unchangeable content of the Gospel of the Kingdom in a verbally understood form to the peoples of a certain culture, and within in particular existential situations." Peters (1977, 169) highlights that: "Properly applied contextualization means discovering the legitimate implication of the Gospel in a particular situation. This goes beyond the application. I can apply or not what I am reading without being injured. Involvement is required by a correct exegesis of the text." Contextualization can therefore be perceived as

an attempt to communicate a message in a way that is understandable to recipients in the cultural context in which they live, thus contributing to socialization.

According to Geisler (1978, 241-257), it should be noted that: "No one sees the world exactly as it is. Everyone sees it through the "smoky glasses" of his own perspective." Therefore, in order to convince others it is important to identify with them. Regarding this, Burke (1962, 579) said, "Convince a man only when you speak his tongue, through speech, gestures, tone, order, image, attitude, ideas, identifying your own ways with his ways." Ignoring these aspects only makes it difficult or even block the socialization process.

Eugene Nida attempted in this sense to correlate the degree of identification with the levels of communication as follows:

1. "The first level of communication is where the message has no significant effect on the behavior and the substance of the message is valid by itself. For example, if someone says two and two make four, he is not worried that the transmitter should identify psychologically with the receiver.
2. In the second level of communication, there is a message that, although it does not have a permanent effect on someone's system of values, affects their behavior immediately. For example, if a man says a flood has begun due to the breakdown of the dam, the receptors want to make sure that the transmitter identifies himself with the message he is transmitting - that is, if he also prepares to leave the city for that reason.
3. In the third level of communication, the message concerns not only a large segment of the person's behavior but also its entire value system. If, for example, someone insists that another should abandon his lifestyle, settle in a place, marry, [...] besides identifying with his own message, he must show an identification with the receiver because the receiver must be convinced that the broadcaster understands his provenance and respects his ideas even if he does not agree with them.
4. There is also a deeper level of communication, one in which the message was so effectively communicated that the receiver feels the same urge to communicate that the transmitter feels too. The handset then becomes the transmitter for later communication of the message. [...] At this last stage of communication, identification is complete" (Nida 1960, 164-166).

When this level of communication is reached, it can be said that the socialization process has been achieved. Kraft highlights seven "activities" of the receiver that need to be retained to make the socialization process work in an efficient way:

- 1. Interpretation.** Receptors interpret everything that is said or done as "parts" of the message.
- 2. Construction of the meanings.** The meaning is built by receptors based on the interpretations given to them by words and other communication symbols
- 3. Assign or withdraw the permission of the communicator to enter their communications space.** This is done in view of the religious messages, the credibility of the missionary, and the acceptance of the language used.
- 4. Evaluation.** The receptors consistently assess every aspect of a communication event.
- 5. Maintaining balance.** A person's relationship with his or her group of reference will often be an important factor when considering conversion and change.
- 6. Support feedback.** This receiver activity is always of special importance to the emitter and should be the subject of a special study in intercultural situations.
- 7. Decision making.** Due to the fact that he has engaged in the above activities, the receiver must ultimately decide on the message (Kraft 1983, 97-105).

All those involved in transmitting messages that wish to have an impact on others must therefore take these things into account. It is known that the way people see reality can be determined by their

perspective on the world. [...] What people see is what part exists and what we are, said Abbey (1960, 54), while Redfield (1952, 30-36) defines the world perspective as follows:

"The Perspective on the World" deals in particular with everything that is defined by culture, the way in which a man in a particular society sees himself in relation to the rest. They represent the properties of the different existence and at the same time related to the self. In short, man's idea of the universe. It is the organization of the ideas that answer a man with the questions: "Where am I? Where do I go? What are my links to these things?"

Kearney (1984, 41) wrote, "*People's perspective on the world is their way of looking at reality. It consists of basic assumptions and images that provide a more or less coherent way of thinking.*" Hiebert (1985, 45) describes the worldview as "*the basic assumptions about the reality behind the beliefs and the behavior of a culture.*" The outlook on the world can be simply summarized as follows: the way we see ourselves about the rest and the way we see the rest in relation to us, influencing the socialization process.

Speaking about the role of culture and communication in the socialization process, Reyburn (1958, 343) points out that: "True communication takes place between two people when each of them understands the assumptions which is beyond the words or phrases of the other." On the other hand, talking about non-verbal behavior, which in turn plays a particularly important role in the socialization process, Ramsey (1979, 106-117) makes a few important remarks, namely,

Verbal and non-verbal behaviors intertwine. It does not matter just what we say. What we do is just as important. They all connect to the same communication event. [...] All forms of non-verbal behavior have at least communication potential. [...] Two levels of communication must be distinguished - the informational level of the content and the informational level of the relationship. The first is related to facts, events, feelings and ideas. This kind of information is usually given verbally. The latter is related to the relationship between the transmitter and the receiver and is usually non-verbal. To understand the meaning of each must be understood in the context of the other. [...] Non-verbal communication seems to have a potentially immeasurable potential. [...] Non-verbal communication is much more important than is generally believed.

That is why it is important that socialization takes into account non-verbal communication. Mr. R. Birdwhistell argues that in a normal conversation between two people less than 35% of the communication is verbal and more than 65% is non-verbal communication (Knapp 1972, 12). Monroe (1939, 21) defines gestures as *any movement from any part of the body used to make a thought or excitement or to emphasize oral expression*. Rahskopf (1965, 213-217) points out that although the bodily actions may have a limited denotative meaning, they have a generous connotation. So they give a new meaning to the interaction, making it smoother, more complete. Culture should therefore be studied much more carefully from the point of view of communication, given that: "If communication is effective, then the understanding grows together with the corroborated action" (Hall & Foote Whyte 1960, 5-12) and socialization can be made much easier.

In *The Silent Language*, Hall (1959, 91) said: "If a person really wants to help introduce the cultural change, they should find out what is happening at an informal level and show what informal adaptations seem to be the most successful in day-to-day activities. To bring them to the level of awareness." In this way, an individual can easily integrate into society, or a community.

Referring to the process of cultural and socialization, Bohannan (1963, 16) argued that these two processes intertwine and work together with the individual to form their personality,

Importantly, culture, society and personality are not empirically separable from each other. In order to have social relationships, we must have culture as a means by which to express them, and we need to have personalities to handle culture and to play a role in social relations. Whatever we start with, the other two are necessary dimensions. A separation can only be done analytically.

Conclusion

Socialization cannot therefore be achieved without culture and communication. An effective communication approach would be to familiarize yourself with how members of the "target culture" think. Without such understanding, socialization would be impossible. The communicator should therefore clearly define what his objectives are and take into account the cultural context in which he is. At the same time, it must be kept in mind that effective communication requires a high degree of identification. Lack of identification with the other prevents integration into a community.

To avoid any bias, it is especially important to know both: the importance that culture and communication have in the socialization process and the benefits that they can bring when properly understood and used. For example, it is known that women and men have not only different ways of acting but also different ways of interacting. At the same time, it must be known that the way people in different cultures think about decision-making and how they make decisions is totally different.

Different factors, which may seem unrelated, can thus be gathered in a special cultural significance. It cannot communicate efficiently without any concern for the culture of those who are spoken, because the communication process cannot be separated from the culture.

A paradox of communication, which can be remarked from all these observations, is the following: The attempt to change culture has led to changing people, while changing people has led to a change of culture. The more communication follows the patterns of the existing social structure, the more effective it will be in terms of socialization.

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