

LINEAR MODEL OF COMMUNICATION, A CASE STUDY

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1. Introduction

A first idea, which expresses the complexity of the notion of mass communication, is related to the multiple attempts to define and classify: this complex and contradictory phenomenon of mass communication has known, as it is natural, many types of definition and many perspectives of classification. For example, Ch Wright's definition has long been considered quite clear. According to him, mass communication was defined by three characteristics: it is aimed at a large, heterogeneous and anonymous audience, messages are transmitted publicly, often planned to reach most audience members simultaneously, communication tends to be or operate in an organized complex system and expensive. According to other authors, mass communication emanates from an individual or organizational source, through ways of coding and multiplication, addressing to relatively large, heterogeneous and anonymous audiences, which only have limited possibilities for feedback or it is the practice and product that provide entertainment and information to an audience made up of unknown people; these contents have the status of goods, which are produced industrially, by the help of complex technologies, are regulated by the state and financed by private companies; these contents are consumed personally, privately, by their public.

2. Conceptual delimitations

2. Definitions and concept

Communication is the basis of interpersonal relationships, these ones being impossible in the absence of receiving messages. We can define human relationships as communicative interactions, which take place in a social environment. In order to give a definition of communication, it can be admitted that in the light of human connections, communication is the sum of physical and mental processes through which we do the operation of relating to one or more people with a view to achieve certain objectives. Thus, communication is essential for making connections between people, considering it is the easiest

way to understand and make oneself understood. For the beginning, we will consider relevant the circumstances in which communication is seen as a technical situation, C. Shannon elaborating in 1952 the communication scheme and defining communication as the transmission of a message from one place to another. The scheme appeared in the context of cybernetics, and it was a real success among linguists and information theory experts in the idea that the communication process can be represented graphically in such a simple and clear way. However, C. Shannon's model also had some disadvantages, namely the fact that groups might also be involved in communication, not only individuals, the process seems linear and problems with encoding and decoding messages might occur. Following these problems it appeared another definition from the point of view of psychosociological analysis: Communication is the set of processes through which exchanges of information and meaning are made between people in a given social situation.

2.2 Presentation of the communication process

Nowadays, communication represents a very important topic for the society we live in, but at the same time it raises many questions and often creates certain problems or difficulties that are not enough debated, communication has become a central topic of debate. And yet, many people ask themselves: why are there so many communication problems? The simplest answer would be that barriers or blockages in communication often occur. In order to better understand what communication is, we can follow the etymological path of the word. Thus, the first meaning of the word appears in the sixteenth century, meaning to put together, to be in a relationship, being close to communion, sharing, participating. Starting with the 17th century, another meaning appears, that of transmission, related to the development of the post office and the roads. In the 19th century, the meaning of transmission appears again with the development of modern means of communication, first physical - train, car, plane, then remote - telephone, radio, television. We can consider relevant the definition proposed by J.-C. Shelter: Communication is a vast and exciting field of reflection, study and achievement. To understand this phenomenon, as a universal matrix of social connection, there are two important theories, understanding communication as a fundamental anthropological operator, based on a double theoretical reference: The Theory of Structural Anthropology, C. Levi-Strauss, who defines society as a relational tissue of individuals and groups that communicate with one other and that integrate in

these fundamental communication processes the fundamental triptych of the exchange of women, riches and symbolic messages.

2.3 Elements of communication process

As P. Anghel stated: the communication process starts from a simple, elementary action - speech, thus referring to the importance and elements of communication, to the characteristics of the sender, the receiver and the environment. The elements of communication are: sender, receiver, message, communication channels, encoding, feedback, and any communication model consists of the following steps: Transmission: the sender launches a message to the receiver and believes that his message is understood correctly by him. But he must make sure that his message is received correctly, that he expressed exactly what he thought, because otherwise everyone will understand what they want from his message. Encoding: the message is encoded by the sender and structured in a logical form - in our case in the form of language. That is why it is important that both the sender and the receiver know the same language, because otherwise the communication becomes useless. Transmission: can be verbal, written, graphic, visual, etc. But in any of these situations the sender must ensure that his message reaches the receiver, so as not to communicate in vain. Reception: consists in the fact that the sender must not only make sure that his message reaches the receiver, but also to have the certainty that it is received. Decoding: usually the receiver uses the same codes as the sender and turns the message into ideas, thoughts or even actions. The receiver has the duty to check if he is indeed the recipient, if he received correctly. Understanding: for a correct communication it is necessary that the receiver understand the idea transmitted by the sender.

2.4 Communication axioms

As I said in the previous chapters, the initial meaning of communication has changed over time, the meaning of transmitting of the communication appears in the early 17th century. Due to the high importance of the media nowadays, the sense of transmitting of communication has become conclusive, as we can see. The Palo Alto School was established around the Institute of Mental Research. This institute appeared in 1959, being founded by Paul Watzlawick and Dan Jackson. This School in Palo Alto tried to recover the original meaning, having its origins from sharing the meaning of communication, opposing the meaning of transmission offered by the mathematical-cybernetic model. Communication axioms are not axioms in the strict mathematical way, but rather defining principles resulted from research on

the communication process. They apply especially where communication has certain dysfunctions that generate blockages in communication. There are five axioms developed by the Palo Alto School and are presented below. The first communication axiom: it is impossible not to communicate. Even when you don't say anything, you're still saying something. Communication, as most of us know, is of many types: verbal communication, nonverbal communication and paraverbal communication. According to this axiom, even when we do not say anything, that is, we do not use verbal communication, we still say something through nonverbal and paraverbal communication.

3. Baseline of research in linear communication

3.1 Researching linear mass communication

According to DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, the significant mankind progresses depended more on the mastery of communication systems than on the materials they used to build tools. Their point of view brings to mind the biblical story of the Tower of Babel, no matter how skilled people were at building, without an intelligible communication system, they didn't manage to build the great tower. Indeed, this example strengthens the point of view of the two theorists, emphasizing the need for the communicative act in the development of human civilization. In this sense, the two theorists formulate an evolutionary perspective concerning a historical progress of mankind from the perspective of communication systems: the history of human existence should be explained more appropriately, through a theory of transitions - that is, in terms of distinctive stages in the development of human communication, each of them having deep consequences on the individual and collective social life. Thus, they distinguish many ages: the Age of Signs and Signals, the Age of Speech and Language, the Age of Writing, the Age of Printing, the Age of Mass Media, and the Age according to current situation: The Age of Computerized Media. These were ages associated with the development of communication through signs, speech, writing, printing and communication by the help of the media, as we know them today. The age of signs and signals began very early in the evolution of pro-hominid and proto-human life, long before our ancestors went upright.

3.2 Research in the field of mass communication

Just as controversy has appeared around the concept of mass communication, the same thing happened in the case of mass communication research where more perspectives have formed over time. Probably this is also

due to the interdisciplinary nature of the perspectives and the fact that over time the field of research in communication sciences has been disputed by: sociologists, linguists, psychologists, economists. As M. Coman stated, mass communication is considered by most specialists to be synonymous with the media. But let's not forget that the media can be viewed from many perspectives: 1. from an institutional perspective and 2. from the perspective of the communication process. In this way, most research methods come from the social sciences. Of course, researchers in the social sciences are not the only theorists who have and have had contributions in media research and the communication process. Also, literary critics, social philosophers, artists, pedagogues and even the ones from the spectrum of social sciences: sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, economists and political scientists have identified over time humanistic, empirical, theoretical and critical perspectives in this field. As we stated in the previous paragraph, from the point of view of research, this field is mostly associated with problems and research in the social field. But the authors mentioned above point out that only some of the research methods in the social sciences can be applied to communication, and the most important argument is that the social sciences cover a far too wide range of issues, so some of them can't be associated with the field of mass communication.

3.3 Harold D. Lasswell's linear model

Harold Lasswell's theory of the five factors, developed in 1948, inspired other approaches of communication phenomena generated by various IT-based media and media techniques, either functionalist, behaviorist or post-functionalist. The empirically based studies are placed in the sphere of the audience, seconded by methodologies that have been consecrated in the wider field of sociological measurement techniques, such as: P. Lazarsfeld, Berelson, R. K. Merton. W. Schramm, E. Katz, D. McQuail. H. D. Lasswell was in charge with the study of political propaganda from 1920-1930 in the United States. He tried to capture communication in a matrix, creating one of its general models, which he called the linear model of communication. This model illustrates a typical feature of the first models of communication: they take it for granted that the sender has certain intentions of influencing the receiver, and therefore communication should be treated primarily as a process of persuasion. It is also assumed that messages always have effects. H. D. Lasswell considers that the communication process can be reduced to the five typical questions of a journalist, to which two more can be added: who, what,

where, why, when, how and by what means? The crucial questions launched by Lasswell at the beginning of a period of contesting the supremacy of the media in structuring interpersonal relationships appeared on a ground on which behaviorist paradigms also developed.

3.4 Shannon's and Weaver's linear model

This model refers to the means of communication, respectively the telephone, later being applied also to the mediated communication. Such a model presents the communication as a linear process, which contains several phases. Although the model was designed for technology, the graphic model developed by Shannon and Weaver was used, by analogy, in linguistics and in the behavioral research. Of course, technological problems differ from human ones, but it is easy to identify features of the Shannon-Weaver model in other models related to human communication, which appeared later. The first element of this process is represented by the source of information, which produces a message or packets of messages in order to be transmitted. In the next step, the message is converted into signals by the sender. The signals must be adapted to the particularities of the channel that leads them to the receiver. The function of the receiver is at the antipode of that of the transmitter. The receiver builds the message from the received signals. Thus, the received message reaches the destination. This model has been developed over time by several theorists. In this way, we remark the contributions of DeFleur, Osgood and Schram. DeFleur developed the Shannon and Weaver model in an analysis of the correspondence between the significance of the sent message and the received one. He notes that in the process of communication, the meaning is transformed into a message and describes the way the sender transforms the message into information, which then passes through a channel.

4. The research of the effects. The American Contribution- the most important to the study of linear communication.

4.1 Researching the effects of mass communication

In the United States, between the second half of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century, a very strong current enters the philosophy, law, social sciences. According to this current, the absolute, immutable rational principles do not explain and govern the universe. There are no a priori truths, and metaphysics is only a facade for ignorance and superstition. Only applied concrete scientific investigation can lead to authentic knowledge, and this authentic knowledge can and must be supported by empirical evidence. The prestige associated with the natural sciences has been

the main point of support for this current. Physics and Biology were models of scientific fulfillment, they were sources of inspiration for the way in which human behavior was going to be studied. Scientific knowledge must be entirely objective, based on real observations, verifiable data, and the knowledge base must be empirical, not abstract. The function of the researcher was to separate objective and observable facts from confusing and subjective interpretations of ordinary people. The scientific results were considered valid only to the extent that the identified correlations allowed predictions.

4.2 Predecessors and founders of the study of linear communication

As we have shown, the systematic study of mass communication is, to a visibly great extent, an American creation. American researchers understood to base their assertions on empirical, applied research, to prove the correlations I am talking about. The issue of an entire generation of researchers, concerned with experimentation, applied and rigorous work, has generated a lively debate about the predecessors and founders of the study of communication. Who are the founders, those who spoke about communication as a distinct phenomenon, those who, keeping their initial field of specialization - psychologists, sociologists, political scientists - conducted research of great interest in the field of communication, after which they retired to the field of the specialty that consecrated them? On such a gentle land, where affiliations, cultural affinities intervene, opinions are diverse. Bernard Berelson, for example, talks about the four founders of the study of communication and, later, Wilbur Schramm enshrines this interpretation in a memorable formulation: Thus, in the 1930s and 1940s, four true giants from the social sciences emerged as specialists in human communication. Adolf Hitler - we don't thank him, because he did it without realizing it - gave us two of them: Paul Lazarsfeld and Kurt Lewin. Robert Maynard Hutchins - we don't thank him because he didn't see such a contribution - gave us the third, Harold Lasswell.

4.3 Lasswell – four valuable contributions

As we talked in this section about founders and forerunners, we will continue to make some references to the second founder of the discipline of communication, Harold Lasswell. Professor of political science, Lasswell notes four contributions which will be integrated as distinct areas of communication: the five C formula, propaganda analysis, media functions, and content analysis. Lasswell's formula. Between 1939 and 1940, Lasswell actively participated in the Rockefeller Foundation Seminar for the Study of Mass Communication,

which dealt with the communication strategies of the American government in the event of a war. It is considered that the basis of the entire activity of the seminar was Lasswell's formula, probably the best known statement in the field of communication: Who? - What does he say? Through which channel? To whom? With what effect? The formula was meant to structure the debates about communication but, just as significantly, it defined the fundamental elements of the communication process. Each question, so each element of the communication process, represented the object of study of a distinct field of research, which, in time, became an independent field of analysis: who ?; what?; through which channel ?; to whom ?; with what effect ?. Moreover, Lasswell points out that, beyond this description through the five fundamental questions, it is important to look at the communication process as a whole, in close connection with wider social processes.

5. Conclusion

Communication is omnipresent, it quickly invades all places where social life is organized, so all social institutions begin to be attracted by it. Among the first institutions to start using it we find small and medium-sized institutions, audiovisual industries, public administrations, territorial communities, large scientific laboratories, sporting events, and at this time, the educational apparatus and large associations, not to mention the political organizations that grasp for political marketing. In the book *The Society Conquered by Communication*, Bernard Miège concludes: It is impossible not to communicate, thus citing a fundamental principle of communication described by the representatives of the Palo Alto School. Society is gradually conquered by communication. The obligation of communication approaches the so-called modern iron law; it manages to impose itself in a few years in different categories of social actors; it settles in the developed societies of the West, but it also raises questions. Both research and theoretical models of mass communication will certainly continue to develop themselves with the media and will continue to create controversy among researchers in this field. All of these definitions have evolved with the definition and development of the concept of media. In this regard, John Hartley provides a conclusion concerning attempts to define mass communication. The term itself must be used very carefully.

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