ANOTHER LOOK AT MAPPING THE TERRITORY: SEVEN TRADITIONS IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION THEORY

Oberiri Destiny Apuke

Department of Mass Communication, Taraba State University,P.M.B 1167, Jalingo, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT: *Each passing day, we come across different signs, images, and symbols as well as impression flashing before our eyes. Different messages collide to prompt our own sense of reasoning. How we process and digest the diversity of information and understand the symbols of what each message means is something to be looked upon. There have been a lot of theories that has tried to explicate the nature of human communication and how human comprehend symbols as well as how it is applied in a given society or community, this is so because there are different, individualistic perception of a particular form of communication symbols and sign due to the complex nature of assimilating the meaning and application of communication. These have made different traditions of understanding, communication to be formed to better explain different concepts and viewpoint of communication. This paper reviews Robert Craig propounded model that encapsulates the field of communication into seven traditions. These are known as the semiotic, the phenomenological, the cybernetic, the socio-psychological, the socio-cultural, the critical, and the rhetorical traditions''. Thus, each of this tradition, captures a different aspect or specialized area of communication and knowing each one gives new and sometimes conflicting viewpoints on why we relate and comprehend the information we absorb on a daily basis.*

KEYWORDS: Seven Traditions of Communication, Communication, Messages, Symbols, Information.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Each passing day, we come across different signs, images, and symbols as well as impression flashing before our eyes. Different messages collide to prompt our own sense of reasoning. How we process and digest the diversity of information and understand the symbols of what each message means is something to be looked upon. There have been a lot of theories that has tried to explicate the nature of human communication and how human comprehend symbols as well as how it is applied in a given society or community, this is so because there are different, individualistic perception of a particular form of communication symbols and sign due to the complex nature of assimilating the meaning and application of communication. These have made different traditions of understanding, communication to be formed to better explain different concepts and viewpoint of communication. Buttressing on this, Littlejohn & Foss (2008, p. 34) reveals that "Robert Craig propounded a model that encapsulates the field of communication into seven traditions. These are known as the semiotic, the phenomenological, the cybernetic, the socio-psychological, the socio-cultural, the critical, and the rhetorical traditions". Thus, each of this tradition captures a different aspect or specialized area of communication and knowing each one gives new and sometimes conflicting viewpoints on why we relate and comprehend the information we absorb on a daily basis. Therefore, this project will make a vivid description of the seven traditions of communication.

Maguire (2006) in her article "Making Sense of the Seven Communication Traditions" summarizes the seven traditions in the field of communication theory as follows:

Socio-psychological tradition: Communication is theorized as expression, interaction, and influence. Cause-and-effect relationships can be discovered through careful, systematic observation.

. Cybernetic tradition: Communication is theorized as information processing, with the goal of getting the most information across with the least amount of interference. Feedback is the key concept that makes effective communication possible within a system.

. **Rhetorical tradition:** Communication is theorized as the practical art of discourse.

Persuasion in the context of collective or public deliberation is often the focus of teaching and inquiry.

. **Semiotic tradition**: Communication is theorized as intersubjective mediation by signs and symbols. Because meanings are in people, gaps between subjective realities are bridged through a shared language or sign system.

. Socio-cultural tradition: Communication is theorized as the (re)production of social order. Reality is socially constructed through micro level interaction processes.

. **Critical tradition**: Communication is theorized as discursive reflection. Social justice can be restored when ideological distortions are recognized through communication practices that enable critical reflection.

. **Phenomenological tradition**: Communication is theorized as dialogue. Authentic human relationships are sustained, and common ground is established through the direct experience of others (Craig, 1999; Griffin, 2003; Maguire, 2006).

Therefore, this paper shall explicitly explain each tradition with contemporary examples.

Seven Traditions in the Field of Communication Theory

Socio-psychological tradition:

According to Krauss, & Fussell, (1996, p. 3). Social psychology traditionally has been defined as the study of the ways in which people affect, and are affected by, others. Buttressing on this, Podgorecki, (2004) says that "socio-psychological tradition is embodiment of scientific or objective perspective. Its researchers believe that detailed and systematic observation makes it possible to discover the truth of communicative phenomena. Cause and effect relationships are sought so that the anticipation of victory and failure of communicative behaviors is possible. The discovery of cause and effect relationships leads to the assumption that we are approaching the answer to the ever returning question posed by persuasion practitioners - What else can be done to make people change their mind"?

Furthermore, the trait theory, a major focus in this tradition, explores the attitude and the connection between personality and one's communication. It is easy to understand the collaboration between communication and psychology in the sense that one's personality or psychological influence will impact how they react to certain messages, accepting them or

being biased against them, and how they communicate their own values, in the form of coming across in certain stereotypical behaviour.

The basic tenets of this tradition are:

- Truths to be discovered by careful, systematic observation (experiments)

- Scholars of this tradition seek to provide insight in the ways we process information

- Relationship between communication stimuli, audience predisposition, and opinion change.

- Attention is also paid to persuasion and attitude change as scholars realize the power that other persons can have on others and how messages affect the mind as well.

- The central question of this tradition is: What can I do to get them to change?

- E.g., the Yale attitude studies investigated 3 causes of persuasive messages:

    o Who says it (expertise, trustworthiness)

    o What is said (fear appeals, order of arguments)

    o Whom is it said to (personality, susceptibility to influence)

For instance, a message from a high credibility source produced a larger shift of opinion than a message from a low credibility source.

The Cybernetic Tradition

Cybernetics is a little bit different than the previous two traditions. It examines the overall workings of communication in relation to systems. A system being "a system of parts, or variables, that influence one another, shape and control the character of the overall system" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008, p. 40).

"Norbert Wiener, an MIT scientist, coined the word cybernetics in order to characterize artificial intelligence. The term is a transliteration of the Greek word meaning controller, ruler and illustrates the way in which feedback enables information processing in the minds and computers. During World War 11, Wiener developed anti-aircraft defense systems. These systems were able to allow for the future trajectory of an enemy flight based on the earlier taken measures regarding its movement. The term of feedback, proposed by Wiener, enabled cybernetic tradition to be embedded in the belief, assuming that communication is a link between separate parts of any system, i.e. computer, family, institution, media systems" (Podgorecki, 2004).

 Therefore, Cybernetics refers to a tradition of complex systems where the interacting elements influence one another. In this tradition communication is seen as a system of processing information, feedback and control. Furthermore, the vision of communication as information transfer was strengthened by Claude Shannon, the Bell Telephone Company scientist, who developed mathematical signal transmission theory. His objective was achieving a maximum capacity of transfer line accompanied by a minimum signal distortion. Shannon was neither interested in the meaning of the message nor in the effect it exerted on the receiver. His theory was only aimed at solving problems of non interfered sound transmission. As Bell laboratories

covered all Shannon's research cost, an example of the telephone conversation can be presented to explain the communication model.
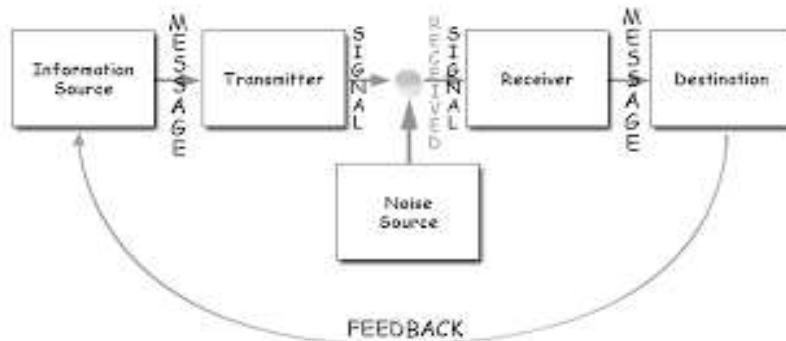
Shannon and Weaver's Model of Communication

From the wealth of research, using a telephone call to explain Shanon's and Weavers model of communication is the most appropriate.

Shannon sees you as the information source; you speak your message into the telephone mouthpiece which transmits a signal through the telephone wire channel. Therefore, the receiver signal picks up static noise along the way. This altered signal is reconverted to sound by the receiver in the earpiece. Thus, information loss occurs on the way so that the message you received differs from the one sent. However, a lot of people believe information is something that matters to a person or messages of significant value. Rather, Shannon sees information as reduction of uncertainty; He further sees information as the ability of a message to combat the chaos of noise.

For example, if you phone home from European University of Lefke and tell your parents you have been offered a 100% scholarship, this reduces uncertainty in the mind of your parents as to future. On the other hand, Shannon views noise as the number one enemy of information as follows:

Channel capacity= information + Noise .

Thus, "each channel is restricted by the quantity of data things it can exchange. Regardless of the possibility that a man talks at the speediest conceivable pace, he or she could at least say six hundred words in three minutes at most. Though the obstructions of the transmission line, clamor and data murmur ever introduce in the collector's psyche force securing a piece of transmission potential limit with regards to rehashing key message particles, which generally could be lost. Then again, if reiteration happens time after time, correspondence excess prompts weariness of conversationalists and in addition to channel limit potential waste. Shannon sees correspondence as connected science going for setting up and keeping up harmony amongst consistency and vulnerability. Shannon's transmission hypothesis is the architect's response to issues coming about from informative frameworks over-burden, confusions in their working or even total break.

The Rhetorical Tradition: Communication as Artful Public Address

The next tradition of communication is the Rhetoric Tradition." Podgorecki, (2004) outline the tenets of this tradition as follows:

Several characteristics of this important tradition of rhetoric, communication can be listed:

- The belief that speech differentiates a man from an animal. As far as verbal communication goes, Cicerone asks what else could concentrate the dispersed mankind in one place to establish a society

 - The belief that public speech given in a democratic forum is a more effective means for political problems solving than ruling based on decrees and resorting to violence. Within the framework of this tradition it would be unreasonable to state that something has ‚only rhetorical" value.

- A situation in which an individual orator tries to influence a wide audience through persuasive, open discourse. Public speaking is, as matter of fact, one way communication.

- Rhetoric training as a basis of the leader's education. The orators learn to formulate persuasive arguments and give speeches with a loud voice reaching to the audience edges with no electronic amplifiers support.

- The stress on the power and beauty of the language capable of moving emotions and pushing into actions. Rhetoric is rather an art than science.

- Public speaking as men's domain till the beginning of the ninetieth century women did not actually have a chance to speak in public. Therefor a key characteristic of the American feminist movement fought for the right to speak in public (Podgorecki, 2004).

The Semiotic Tradition

This tradition views communication as the process of sharing meaning through signs. Podgorecki, (2004) sees sign as any element capable of representing something else. A high body temperature is a sign of infection. Birds flying south are a sign of winter. Possessing an expensive car is a sign of richness. Words are signs too. They are symbols. Contrary to previously mentioned examples they do not link naturally to any object or phenomenon for which description they serve. No sounds or letters of which a word is composed, says anything about the word's meaning. I.A. Richards, one of the pioneers of the semiotic tradition has elaborated a systematic description of how words function. According to Richards words are arbitrary symbols which mean nothing on their own. He warns against the misconception that words have precise definitions. The meanings are found in people's intentions. Richard and C.K. Ogden suggested a semantic triangle. It shows direct relations between symbols and their assumed references. Such a reference is illustrated in the figure below, where the word a dog is analyzed. The figure represents a supposed link between the word ,,dog and the real dog which has to be fed and walked out every day. The top of the triangle shows a thought which appears in one's mind when he or she is looking at the puppy in the downright comer. The picture of the puppy evokes thoughts about warm and faithful friendship. Since a direct or cause and effect relation occurs, Richard matches them with a continuous line. The symbol of a dog placed in the left down corner provokes some thoughts. Naturally, the word dog is used to symbolize the thoughts. This cause and effect relation is also marked by Richard with a continuous line. However, the link between the word dog and the animal itself hardly exist. Richards illustrates it which a dashed line. Two different people might use the same word with reference to two completely distinct animals. Though Richard and Ferdinand de Saussure (a Swiss linguist who coined the term semantics, were fascinated with the language, a large number of researchers representing semiotic tradition, concentrated on non-verbal emblems

and picture descriptions. These scholars have always been interested in how signs convey meaning and how they can be used to avoid misunderstanding in communication.

The Social Cultural Tradition

"In the Socio-cultural tradition communication is considered as a process that involves concepts like social structure, norms, rituals, identities and collective belief systems. This tradition focuses on the effects of the production, maintenance and reproduction of social formations from small 12 groups to a global phenomenon" (Ochieng, 2014). Buttressing on this, Graffin (2000, p. 41) says that "the socio-cultural tradition is based on the premise that, as people talk, they reproduce culture. Most of us assume that words reflect what actually exist. However, theorist in this tradition suggests that the process often works the other way round. Our view of reality is strongly shaped by the language we have used already since we were infants".

On the other hand, modern socio-cultural theorists agree that it is through communication that reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed. Therefore, juxtaposing this tradition with the semiotic tradition that deals with symbols and signs which are said to be arbitrary and base on one's interpretation, socio cultural tradition theorist are with the view that through communication we get to understand certain things and these shapes us as we grow. Therefore the understanding of reality is obtainable through communication. For example a red sign in a particular country might mean a different thing from another country or community. How then did the people get to know the meaning of a particular sign or word? it is definitely through communication.

The Critical Tradition

Communication as a reflexive challenge of unjust discourse

The very notion of critical theory derives from publications of a group of German researchers known as the Frankfurt School, because they worked in an independent Institute for Social Studies at the University of Frankfurt. The Frankfurt School, originally established to critically examine the views of Karl Marx, rejected the economic determinism of orthodox Marxism, at the same time keeping the Marxist tradition of social criticism (Podgorecki, 2004). Therefore, the Frankfurt scholars came to a consensus that "all previous history is has been categorized by an unjust distribution of suffering" They revealed that this same pattern of inequality exist in modern democracies; where those who have exploit those who don't have. Furthermore, the Frankfurt school analysed the disparity between liberal values of freedom and equality that leaders preach as well as the unjust abuse of power by leaders. Their analysis shows that leaders preaching on liberalism and freedom are just a mirage. Moreso, critical theorists challenge (among others) 3 features of modern society as pointed by (Podgorecki, 2004).

'The control of language to perpetuate power imbalances

 Critical scholars also condemn each use of words, which hinders emancipation. For example, feminists argue that women as a group usually do not speak in full voice because men control language. As a result, the public discourse is full of war and sport metaphors, masculine domains with their own internal jargon. Such a vision of groups devoid of the right to voice their opinions in not new at all. Marcuse claimed that ,,[...I the avenues of entrance are closed to the meaning of words and ideas other than the established one - established by the publicity of the powers that be, and verified in their practices".

Role of mass media in dulling sensitivity to repression

Marx described religion as opium for the people. He claimed that religion only diverts the attention of the working class from their ,real interests. According to the critics, today this role is often taken over by some elements of television, films, CDs and printed publications. Adorno hoped that people would rise in protest as soon as they become aware of the unjust repression they are subjected to. He also noted that ,,[...I as communities submitted more and more to the power of mass communication, the preformation of minds became so strong, that practically no room remained left for realizing the state of affairs". Marcuse was even more pessimistic about the prospects for social changes initiated by ordinary citizens, who, under the influence of mass media, became indifferent to everything. He claimed that any hopes for changes in the society are connected with ,,[...I those rejected and alienated, exploited and oppresses, belonging to other human races and having a different skin color, with those jobless and those who will never find a job".

Blind reliance on the scientific method and uncritical acceptance of empirical findings

Horkheimer argued that ,,[...I naivety and bigotry are demonstrated by thinking and speaking only in the language of science". Naivety, because science, contrary to what is propagated by scientists, is not a disinterested pursuit of knowledge. Bigotry, because using opinion polls, scientists assume that a sample of public opinion is a true representation of reality. According to Adorno ,,[...I a cross-section of opinions stand not for an approximate depiction of truth but for a cross-section illusion". These scholars are especially critical about government, economy, and education leaders who are using the empirical appearances of social sciences to vindicate the existing unjust state of affairs, obviously to the benefit of their own interests.

The Phenomenological Tradition

Communication as the experience of self and others through dialogue.

Although phenomenology is a very complex term to define, in reality it is about analyzing everyday life from the viewpoint of its participant. Therefore, the phenomenological tradition emphasizes the interpretation of one's own subjective experiences. Individual experiences, gain particular importance, become more authoritative than research hypotheses or communication axioms. Psychologists Carl Rogers claims that, Neither the Bible nor the prophets, neither Freud nor research neither the revelations of God, nor a man can take precedence over my own direct experience." (Podgorecki, 2004).

This implies that two individuals cannot have exact experience. Therefore, if we cannot experience the experience of others, we tend to depart and fell people seem not to understand us. In order to get a better understanding of this, Carl Rogers, who was able to establish a personal and relational development between him and his patients outline three factors of achieving experience barrier and understanding between human as follows:

Congruence: Appropriateness of the behavior of the speaker, sender, etc. A person whose behavior is appropriate shows authenticity, realness, transparency. This quality enables him to break the barriers of experience between the sender and the receivers in a communication chain.

Unconditional positive regard: This is an attitude of accepting a person without considering his performance, uniqueness and characteristics

Emphatic Understanding.

This involves keeping aside our ego, values, and fixing ourselves in the shoes of others.

These three factors when applied according to Carl Rogers will go a long way in fixing the issues of experience barrier between people who converse day in day out because communication is life.

CONCLUSION

The map of traditions represents the 7 traditions of theory in relation to their Objective vs. Interpretive character.

– Cybernetic and socio-psychological on the left are more objective

– Phenomenology, critical theory, and socio-cultural on the right are most interpretive.

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