



Research Article

Research of developmental models and techniques in the function of improving communication capacities

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ABSTRACT



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Communication as a basic form of social interaction is based on transmission of experiential contents through signs, whether they are symbols, signals or their combinations. In addition to the numerous factors that contribute to intensification and more efficient communication, there are also a large number of negative factors that reduce the effect of unforced, easy and relaxed communication. We shall try by this work to open current discussions about the elements, aspects, types, forms, functions, models and techniques of improving communication in social interactions. Consistently to the results of the conducted research, we shall provide new interpretations on manner how to overcome situations when we know "what should we say" but we do not know "how to announce it". The increasing communication capacities, the increasing the probability of better and more successful social interaction occur, which causally initiates an increase in the quality of life.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication is related to human life and without it, we cannot understand people's behavior in any kind of social interaction. Communication is complex and multi-layered, as indicated by the American communicators Frank Dance and Carl Larson in their book "The Functions of Human Communication", collecting around 130 definitions of the term communication. Frank Dance then performed a content analysis of them and grouped them into 15 categories: symbols, understanding, interaction (relation), uncertainty reduction, process, transfer and interexchange, connection, commonality, channel (path), replicating memory, discriminative response, stimuli, intention, time (situation) and power (Dance, 1970). However, none of the definitions of communication fully covers the content of the concept of communication, so the question of what communication is, several answers can be given, depending on whether we mean to 1. the essence of communication among the people, 2. the manifestation of communication behavior or 3. communication as an expression of the functionality of any system, biological, social or technical (Encyclopedia of Media and Communication, 2013).

One of the answers to what communication is, the American engineer Claude Elwood Shannon (1916 - 2001) tried to give, who, together with the American mathematician Warren Weaver (1894 - 1978), defined communication as

transmissions (Claude & Weaver, 1964). The American theoretical communicator David Kenneth Barlow (1929 - 1996), with his generally accepted SMCR (Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver) model of communication (Barlow, 1960), joined this concept. However, it turned out that this model represented a frivolous implementation of mathematical theory in the field of communication.

So, if we are interested in communication first of all as a basic form of social interaction, then the answer to the question of what communication can be reduced to the term process (transmission), which in a wider context implies to: "Communication is the systematic transmission of experiential content through signs, regardless they are symbols, signals, or a combination thereof." (Kuka & Jovanović, 2010).

Communication occurs when one person wants to convey some of their experiential content - information, idea, feeling, emotion, decision, question, etc. to another person. The aim of communication can be to convey the given content, but also to have a certain influence on the behavior of another person. The basic elements that create the act of communication are 1. sender (communicator), 2. recipient, 3. channel (means of transmission), 4. message and 5. the effect of the message on the one who receives it (The International Encyclopedia of Communication, 2008). In order to successfully communicate certain content and achieve the desired aim, the person who initiates the communication needs to create that content into a

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message, which is the most significant part of any communication. The sent message is encoded, i.e., translates it into a signal and transmits it through a certain channel to the recipient who then decodes it, interprets it and returns the signal the same or a different way to the sender.

In some types of communication, we can increase the probability of understanding the sent message. For example, a conversation accompanied by facial expressions, mimics and gestures encodes a message in several different ways, and increases the probability of its acceptance. However, the readiness and desire to establish communication regardless the way of its articulation implies: 1. Is to being ready to invest some effort in order to mutual understanding, 2. when difficulties arise, strive to discover the maximum of common assumptions that lead to difficulties, 3. express a reasonable measure of tolerance and be ready to make certain concessions in order to make thoughts understandable to the interlocutor, 4. strive to an accurate interpretation of the statements of the interlocutor, 5. in case of eventual discussions, it is necessary to be guided by the motive of establishing the objective truth, and to eliminate motives which contradicts this (personal affirmation, vanity, personal or group interest,...), motives that contradict this (personal affirmation, vanity, personal or group interest,...), 6. to be correct, considerate, refrain from any sarcastic comments and from interfering - introducing emotions. (Kuka & Jovanović, 2010).

Observing communication from the point of view of general, interpersonal interaction, the American communicator Fisher B. Aubrey singles out its four basic aspects: 1. an individual behavior → implies that an individual, regardless to his attitudes, values or emotion, creates the behavior that enables him to a communication message conveys to others, 2. models of causal effects → imply a series of actions (not only individual behavior) that are jointly connected in the course of the inter-relationships, 3. content and relational dimensions → have two aspects; the first one provides an informational content and the one second provides an information about the relationship between the participants, 4. a social system → implies that communication is social, it relies on interaction between individuals and does not consider their internal state. (Fisher, 1978).

Communication is multi-functional, it is the primary means to achieve certain goals, which speaks of its instrumental function, and persuasion is only one way of realizing that instrumental function of communication. The consultative function has an immediate value strictly for the communicator, without the essential intention of influencing the other. Unlike the type of message, we have four basic functions of communication: 1. information, 2. entertainment, 3. instructions and 4. persuasion. Three basic aims of communication can be set from the previously defined functions: 1. a cognitive or an informative goal of communication related to cognition, 2. an aim of persuasion related to human emotions and 3. an aim of entertainment. (Kuka, 2002).

To understand the concept of communication, models are often used that show the characteristics of this complex process in an abstract and simplified way. In fact, a model is defined as "a structure of symbols and operational rules that should correspond to a series of relevant points in an existing structure or process." Frank Dance states that models can have four different functions: 1. an organizing function that indicates that the models are able to organize data that was not previously observed, 2. a predicative function that helps to explain what we did not understand and, based on this, can predict what should

be done, 3. the heuristic function leads to a new and to an unknown facts and methods, i.e. the model enables a whole range of predictions from the simple type "yes - no" up to quantitative predictions that examine "when and how much", 4. the measurement function that occurs when the model enables quantitative predictions "when and how much". All these functions form the basis for evaluating the model. (Dance, 1970).

Literature Review

Numerous types of communication differ depending on the classification criteria, and they depend on the number of participants in the communication, on the types and forms of channels, i.e., means of transmitting the message, types of messages and many other factors. Thus, considering the number of participants in communication, it is differentiated into 1. intrapersonal, 2. interpersonal and mass communication, 3. verbal and non-verbal communication, 4. personal and a personal, 5. the one-way and the two-way communication, etc. (Encyclopedia of Media and Communication, 2013). The most often names of the classified species indicate the criteria by which the classification was made.

Intrapersonal communication is focused on the mental process that takes place inside the individual; it is "an inner speech" or "a conversation by oneself". This type of communication represents an introspection of one's own behavior, abilities or attitudes. An individual creates, sends and receives messages through the three-channel communication: 1. a self-talk, 2. mental images and 3. a non-verbal communication. An intrapersonal (an inner) communication includes listening, thinking, reading and reasoning. An interpersonal communication can be defined as an interaction in which one person conveys a certain content (information) to another person in order to influence his/her behavior or participate in the creation of situations that will contribute to changing own values. Considering the spatial distance of the sender and the recipient, an interpersonal communication can be 1. at a short distance "face to face", 2. at a longer distance – by shouting, 3. at long distances - a telecommunication connection. Mass communication is directed to a wide and heterogeneous audience and is usually realized using by contemporary media. Information (messages) are transmitted publicly and are available to those who are not involved in organized forms of receiving the given information. (Kuka & Jovanović, 2010).

The appearance and development of the media caused the basic personal form of communication to expand to a personal communication as well. When two or more people communicate with each other without intermediary means, we are talking about personal communication. Any communication that is mediated by some technical (a personal) medium is designated as a personal communication.

Some of the communication theorists (Franc H. van Eemeren, Robert T. Craig, Charles Berger, etc.), show the dichotomy between one-way and two-way communication as unfounded, considering that any successful communication necessarily needs to be the two-way even if it seems one-way. However, this classification is still necessary because in a traditional school, i.e., teaching is dominated by one-way communication, which is not a function of teacher-student-teacher interaction, but aims at a monologue presentation of teaching content, without a dialogue. The two-way communication implies the possibility of mutual provision of feedback between communicating subjects.

Communication between two or more people, who are in the same place where they can directly communicate, is called telecommunications. Telecommunication generally means any exchange of information over a certain distance but without material transport. We also talk about telecommunications when, for example, educational programs are taught by written means (correspondence classes), by television or when two (or more) people communicate by telephone or some other interactive mass media. A direct (an immediate) communication is the most social form of communication. It can be verbal and non-verbal, so it is possible to achieve an intensive and a high-quality education through it easily.

Violence can be defined as a physical or verbal form of behavior intended to hurt certain persons or to cause a damage to objects. Recent literature in the field of social psychology of communication (Hook et al., 2016) says that the key factor in defining violence is "an intention" - that is why a violence is an intentional behavior with the aim of causing physical or psychological pain. Considering that communication most often means the participation of two or more people, a violent communication could be described as a process in which the sender of the message does not take into account the recipient of the message. It is precisely from this discourse that the notion of communication conflict emerges, which results from insufficiently well-realized communication. The non-violent communication is a communication of understanding and compassion on the line sender - recipient of the message and the entire educational system in its modern orientations is directed towards this type of communication.

If we are interested in communication as a basic form of social interaction, then its essence lies in the transmission of experiential content through the signs, regardless of being symbols, signs or their combination. Actually, communication is described through three basic dimensions: 1. content, 2. form and 3. destination. Based on these definitions, in addition to verbal communication, communication scientists study a whole series of phenomena that are generally referred to as non-verbal communication. These types of communication have different representation of their constitutive elements: words (9%), tone of voice (37%) and non-verbal signals (54%) (Danesi, 2017). We can say that a verbal and a non-verbal communication are the basic forms of communication, while all the previously mentioned classifications are forms of manifestation of these two basic forms of communication.

Verbal communication is communication through words, regardless of whether they are written or transmitted orally, which is the usual and the most common form of our everyday communication. The largest part of our daily communication is oral communication, which is not continual in time if we do not record it (record it). This type of communication implies to certain rules: 1. every oral communication should have a certain meaning, 2. during oral communication we should make a clear and argumentative (reasoned) comment and be active listeners in the conversations, 3. every oral communication should be conducted in a way that expresses respect to our interlocutor. Unlike an oral communication, a written communication can provide a longer (permanent) record. By means of contemporary communication techniques, one written message in a short period can be sent to a large number of those who (do not) expect the message. The disadvantage of this form of communication is the possibility of abuse through various forms of mass media manipulation (Kuka & Jovanović, 2010).

Materials and Methods

Contemporary social changes are manifested in all spheres of life, and individual and social adaptations to these changes

are the cause and the effect. The most characteristic form of human adaptation to changes are anger, joy, sadness, fear, disgust, surprise, which are manifested through different types and forms of communication.

Our direct and comparative investigations, observations and perceptions indicate that communication as a basic social interaction between people develops, improves, changes... just like the person himself. Our first research (interviews, surveys) was conducted in 2001 - 2002, and published in the book "Love and Allow to be Loved" (Kuka, 2002). About 475 respondents participated in the research (women/men: 235/240, average age 38 years, the research was conducted in the Republic of Serbia, cities: Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, Zrenjanin, Leskovac). The next research i.e. examining of communicative social interaction (interviews, surveys) were conducted in 2008 - 2009 and published in the book "Communication and Management" (Kuka & Jovanović, 2010). In the research 613 respondents participated (women/men: 317/296, average age 44 years, the research was conducted in the Republic of Serbia, cities: Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, Šabac, Pirot). The last research i.e., examination of communicative social interaction was conducted in 2023 - 2024 with students in their final years of study (academic and professional-vocational-applied studies in Serbia). Around 384 respondents/students participated in the research (women/men: 188/196, average age 23 years, the research was conducted in the Republic of Serbia, at the faculties in Belgrade and Nis).

We will show the survey that was used in the first two researchers (2001 - 2002, 2008 - 2009), while in the research conducted with the students, the survey was shown modified for that age category.

SURVEY

This survey is anonymous and is used exclusively to examine the potential impact of social changes on human emotions

1. Gender: (a) Male (b) Female
2. How old are you?
3. What is your profession?
4. Are you employed and where do you work?
5. Do you work in the profession for which you were educated?
6. My salary meets my living needs:
 - (a) I totally agree (b) I agree (c) I have no answer
 - (b) (d) I disagree (e) I totally disagree
7. Are you married, and if so, for how many years?
8. Do you have children (how many):
9. How would you rate your verbal communication on the scale shown below?
 - (a) extremely bad (b) bad (c) no attitude
 - (d) good (e) extremely good
10. What do you think you miss in order to make your verbal communication even better?
 - (a) vocabulary (b) formed fears
 - (c) character capacities (d) (write it by yourself)
11. Have you ever used any of the techniques (exercises) in order to improve your verbal communication?
 - (a) yes (b) no
12. What technique (exercise) have you used so far to improve your verbal communication?

- (a) I read professional books (b) I watched professional shows (c) I observed people who have good verbal communication (d) I listened to the advice from those around me (e) (write it by yourself)
13. Did the applied techniques (exercises) improve your verbal communication: (a) yes (b) no
14. State, which applied technique (exercises) you think, benefited the most:
15. How would you rate your non-verbal communication on the scale shown below?
(a) extremely bad (b) bad (c) no attitude
(d) good (e) extremely good
16. Which form of a non-verbal communication do you most often use in social interactions?
(a) facial expressions (b) gestures (c) touches
(d) facial expression changes (e) (write it by yourself)
17. In social interactions, do you exclusively use verbal communication or do you supplement it with a non-verbal communication:
(a) I exclusively use verbal communication
(b) I supplement a verbal communication with a non-verbal
18. What makes the strongest impression on you during communication?
(a) the speech itself (b) facial expressions of the interlocutor (c) a non-verbal aspect of the conversation (d) (write it by yourself)
19. In your opinion, how important is communication in the achievement of any set social aim
(a) absolutely irrelevant (b) irrelevant (c) I have no opinion (d) important (e) extremely important
20. Name three or more professions in which, according to you, communication is not important in order to be successful:

Thank you for participating in this survey

Survey: Research on aspects of communication in social interactions

People of different cultural heritage think in different ways. They articulate the expression of that opinion not only through the language, but in numerous non-verbal ways; gesticulations, facial expressions, mimics, gestures, perception of space and time, etc. Non-verbal communication can often replace verbal communication (nodding the head instead of saying "yes"), then it can enhance the impression of a verbal message (smiling when expressing happiness), etc. However, non-verbal communication can also be an interfering factor in verbal communication (tics, excessive gesturing, moving in space during the presentation). Conducted research has shown that people have more trust in actions than in words: 52% of impressions are made by facial expressions, 43% by non-verbal aspects of speech and 5% by speech itself. (Kuka, 2002; Kuka, 2010). Since it is largely situated in the sphere of unconscious human behavior and that includes a wide range of expressions, a non-verbal communication enables learning not only about the participants in the communication process, but above all about the type of relationship in which they are. A non-verbal communication consists of many signs, i.e., codes, each of

which has its own meaning and we either use them or recognize them in other people's everyday communication. A non-verbal communication has several functions: 1. regulates the mechanism of social interaction; 2. complements, confirms or disputes a verbal message and 3. can be a substitute for a verbal message or a direct expression of an emotional state (Kuka & Jovanović, 2010).

Results and Discussion

Our decade-long direct and comparative researches, perceptions and observations, indicate that there is a trend of progressive communication difficulties, i.e., increasing difficulties to overcome the situation when we know "what to say" but do not know "how to declare it".

In this paper, we will focus on the systematized presentation of those methods and techniques that the respondents used the most often in order to increase the efficiency of their communication capacities. In order to enrich and improve communication, we have systematized the answers of respondents into nine methods, i.e., technique, which were used as exercises:

1. *Revive the words*: the respondents often used the exercise "playing with the words". They would choose a word and try to find as many metaphors for it as possible, which they would utter loudly, for example: mother → the one who gives life..., love → what gives life a meaning...

2. *Be a poet*: the respondents often used the exercise "choice of a favorite writer (the most often a poet) whom they liked to read", with attempts to say out loudly, i.e., they discover what the poet alluded to when he wrote those verses.

3. *Revive the picture through words*: the respondents often used the exercise of "observing a picture" of their favorite painter and making a list of associations (notes write on the paper) that crossed their minds while the pictures were observed. In addition, a number of respondents indulged to their imagination by inventing a story for each picture, which they would say out loudly.

4. *Follow the word*: since people think about certain things more with the words than with the pictures, the respondents often used an exercise where they would choose a word at random, write it on a piece of paper, and then write a series of words that come to mind, making a chain of logical associations. (sea → blue, turquoise, clear, cold, warm, with / without waves...). In addition, they would list as many species of birds, trees, modes of transportation, egg dishes as possible. etc. what they would say out loudly.

5. *Shape the music into pictures*: the respondents often used the exercise of listening to the music they had not heard before, and then trying to imagine what the music was about and saying it out loudly. Additionally, while listening to a new melody, a number of respondents tried to connect it with the one they had already heard, and they would say these recognitions out loud.

6. *Check on your memory*: the respondents frequently used the exercise which is implemented with a partner and based on observation of the certain picture within a time framework of 20 seconds and the possibility to later recall all the details they remembered (question ↔ answer). For example, you observe the picture "Wheel of History" (Kuka M. 2004) for 20 seconds, and then you pass the picture to your partner who, looking at

the picture, asks questions and checks your answer, e.g., is Napoleon in the picture, if answered correctly YES, the next question is to determine where he is located in the picture in relation to the centered wheel. The person who can recall the

picture should describe it in as much detail as possible, e.g., the picture of Tesla is located above the picture of Napoleon in the upper left corner in relation to the wheel. Tesla is pensive, has a white shirt under a gray jacket, etc.



Figure 1: Kuka, Miroslav. WHEEL OF HISTORY c. 2004. Private collection - Lille, France

7. *Make up a story:* respondents often used the exercise "observing a group of people in a public place". They would try to remember their facial expressions, body postures, way of walking or certain facial expressions, gestures, and then they would allow their imagination to invent a story about the people they saw. They would tell that story out loudly.

8. *What are all things for:* One brick can be used for many purposes and not only for building a house. Respondents often used the exercise in which they presented primary purpose of some object in its second use value and exposed and explained the purpose of use. On this way the individual develops his mental activity through communication (monologic) and gives it more originality.

9. *Changing the ending:* Just as on one question can give multiple answers, so each book or movie can have different endings. Respondents often used the exercise in which they started reading a novel or watching a movie, they would stop in one point with reading or watching and try to write the ending out loud by themselves, keeping all the characters and all the events in mind and working them out at the end. A variation of this exercise respondents was often modified by imagining themselves as the hero or heroine of a book or movie and saying what they would do if they were in their place.

Investigations of the students' communication capacities lead to the conclusion that the enrichment and improvement of their verbal communication, with the aim of successfully reproducing lectures or taking exams, is increasingly focused on the so-called model. "Verbal imitation" of the professor. Namely, due to frequent repetition made by the professor, students notice certain phrases, sayings, proverbs, fully formed sentences, and purposefully, with premeditation, "insert" them into their

vocabulary, realizing in the conversation with the professor the so-called "communicative kinship". In this way, interlocutors indirectly get closer to each other, become more understandable and closer. The model of "communicative imitation" has its analogy in male-female relationships (Kuka, 2023). could be found in the fact that couples learn what the other party likes, wants... and in communication express positive attitudes towards these findings to these discoveries.

Conclusions

Communication as a basic form of social interaction among people is expressed through the processes of: 1. cultivation i.e. development of basic human abilities such as: learning languages and methods of communication, acquiring experience from a certain culture and training for independence, 2. socialization, i.e. the process by which we are introduced to the rules of social life, but at the same time we create our own standards and criteria of behavior, 3. individualization, i.e. the process of developing an internal system of motivation in accordance with the characteristics of one's own personality.

A contemporary society is apathetic, insincere and egoistic, with the basic need to apparently satisfy human short-term interests and unimportant needs; therefore, it is important to make a distinction between perception and communication. For example, we are sitting in a restaurant and we see at another table a woman rummaging through her things in an open purse, just as she finished her lunch. We can reasonably assume that she is looking for makeup. The meaning we ascribe to this event results from our perception and experience, not communication. For communication, it is important that the alter selects information and consciously communicates it to the ego. In the above example, the woman rummaging through her purse is not even

aware of the presence of the observer. This example is given because the progressive development of information technologies in a contemporary society transforms an immediate, a direct communication into more and more indirect, i.e. apersonal, with a wide range of presentational codes related to the communicator, which can be reduced to four groups: 1. kinetic communication (body, head movements, facial expressions and gestures), 2. proxemics communication (use of space and territoriality), 3. paralinguistic communication (intonation, tone of voice, tempo, vocal noise and pause) and haptic communication (the power of touch) (Kuka & Jovanović, 2010). Traditional, direct verbal communication tends to be marginalized in the social interactions of modern societies.

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