

# The Facets of Distinctive Forms as Regards Social Communication

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**ABSTRACT:** The reality of nowadays society belonged to a generalized intercultural dialogue in respect of which the right to an opinion did not represent the prerogative of an educated minority but a constantly expanding forum of social communication. The communication achieved significant amplitudes and mass character while the communicators learned to express differences and affinities, doubts and certainties, anxieties and expectations, idiosyncrasies and preferences. The pattern of communication was considered to be influenced by the social context of the interaction and thus, as regards the understanding of it the use of concepts, images, symbols, arguments and grounds had to be taken into consideration. The theory of communication was perceived as a rather new science with a duration of about half of century, whereas the apparent clarity of this discipline designation encompassed a series of ambiguities and connotations that were acquired along the time. The act of communication involved a different interpretation as it represented an essential component of life that ought to be adequately perceived so as to achieve the goal by explaining social realities and being an useful tool for the individual to understand the surrounding environment.

**KEYWORDS:** communication, code, message, interaction, society, culture, intercomprehension, language

"From the boisterous and abundant muddle of the outer world a human being elects what the corresponding culture has already defined and strive to perceive what one chooses in an imprinted stereotyped form by the culture itself."

Walter Lippmann, *The public opinion*

The present material is intended as a perspective in respect of the act of communication that encompasses part of the research analysis of the doctoral thesis along with a melange of approaches as regards the issue under discussion.

The act of communication constitutes a central part of most of our lives; through it we carry out activities, negotiate relations, attempt to construct understandings about the world around us and develop our own sense of identity. Anthropologists have demonstrated that, in order to use and interpret language, one draws on a considerable amount of cultural as well as linguistic knowledge whereas an ongoing connexion entails sense to our existence. The initial use with regard to the means of mass communication might be identified as being instruments of progress in point of a smooth flow of information within the framework of a society has been altered along the time. Prior to the development of education and mass communication means there has not been a significant access to information and, consequently, there were limitations and barriers in the expression. The political changes, technical advent along with economic turmoil have considerably modified the context. In this line of thought, the French philosopher Daniel Bounoux emphasizes the idea according to which „communication offers itself whilst the information has to be deserved, snatched or sold”. The communication does not represent an aim as such, its purpose is to take action and this represents the core reason for it. Over recent years, particularly the past two decades, the research in point of socio-human environment takes topics that are centered on the relation between ITC (information and communication technology), CMC (computer mediated communication) and various aspects of the societal reality, at micro or macro-social level.

Freedom and independence are highly appreciated values in the society we live in. Our world is one within the framework of which the individualism appears to gain ground, a fact that is quite easy to be noticed in the face of the experiences that we have with others. This aspect might be demonstrated by means of scientific evidence of the socio-human environment, in this regard the essay of the American political scientist Robert D. Putnam *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital* (1995) is representative. In a natural way, the Community realities are supported by communicative relations, that is the human Communities are constituted at the same time with the expression of social communication processes. The defining of the communication concepts and Community integrates common elements, namely: cooperation, conflict, understanding and assimilation. The Community and the society encompass more than what is represented by competitive cooperation/liason, the Community involves features that are meant to sustain the identity through solidarity and collective vision. The classic view of the members of the Chicago school asserts that the notion/concept of Community to be identified with the „place” in which the scholar might be present so as to observe conducts, individual, group or the overall Community interactions (group dynamics, processes of acculturation, assimilation, participation, conflict).

The actual social reality comprises new areas for socialization and even we can take into account further types of Communities. The cyberspace/virtual or Communities space(s) cannot be assimilated with those areas in which one encounters the other *face to face*; the significant aspects for a scholar are the item of information, knowledge or the process of the transfer of information, all of them defining the newly forms of expression of the virtual Communities. The social reality that better illustrates the manner in which the communication sets or configures the Community areas is represented by the public opinion, as the soft component of the Community thus expressing the main value and attitudinal coordinates in a specific moment and Community. The public opinion is just one of the numerous examples that support the existent relations between communication and Community considering the present context in which new forms of communication create new patterns of community.

In the relation Community-communication there are determinations as regards the Community areas over communicative processes. The most iconic example in point of the above mentioned idea is the well-known *spiral of silence* that has been an intrinsic part of the socio-communicative theories in 1984, the author being Elisabeth Noelle-Neuman. The pattern has presented the mechanisms of influence at the level of Community. In the cases in which the individuals succeed to detect among the persons around them attitudinal and opinion/viewpoints coordinates different from the ones pertained, then they express significantly nuanced and to a certain degree reluctant the positions/opinions by reference to the rest of the Community members. Still, there are circumstances/instances when the views and beliefs of the individuals appear to be broadly similar to the ones that are expressed by the rest of the Community and as an outcome the attitude towards the standpoint changes towards more firm support. Reserved comportment than the people holding dissimilar opinions might signify the avoidance of the risk to be ridiculed or socially isolated. To uphold a view in accordance with the people around involves either the integration or the acceptance as a member part of the Community.

The newly emerging communicative means - CMC (computer mediated communication)/ITC (information and communication technology) constitute elements of changing the realities of the Community as both allow the relationships among individuals and groups of the corresponding collectivity, thus permitting a significant increased mobility of various items of knowledge. The innovation or the development are not the result of an increased amount of information, but, rather stems from the rapid flow and easy access to the actual/current information. A series of essential changes might occur due the relation between society and technology, the upgrade/modernization of communication technologies as follows: the creation of new opportunities in point of learning and awareness; the

establishment of further possibilities as regards the democratic participation; the development in respect of ensuring the proper conditions for the appearance of countercultures; difficulties that are related to the intellectual property rights and ethical issues; the reconsidering of the relation human being – machine. There is, therefore, a wide range of common features corresponding to the virtual and present realities, among which is important to enumerate the need for a sense of belonging, the existence of a shared identity, of a set of written or unspoken regulations that are assumed by the members of a community, customs or specific forms of expression. The cyberspace is expected to continue, in the near term, its contribution towards the collapse, restructuring or even the emergence of new patterns of social interaction, reconfiguration of information and communication and the evolution along with the transformation of human Communities. Not only the computer but the internet might be viewed as purveyors of hope and trust rather than creators of the next social forms; the individuals or the society intend or think about changes that to support the social reality they live in. The considerable diversification of the dissemination sources is possible to lead to a manipulative practice, being based on exact codes, yet identifiable only by individuals with expertise in the field and totally unattainable to laymans or persons that do not possess specialized information.

Communication as a "social function" has been the approach of Collin Cherry in respect of the concept of conveying meanings that involves a process which is grounded on the basis of a relation between an emitter and an addressee. The emitter, namely the individual who intends to submit an item of information, is to adequate the message within the framework of an accessible and compatible language with the means of communication that are used. This technique is known as "encryption", that once it has been elaborated, the message is expressed and sent out by means of a concrete communication channel. The exchange of information and meanings along with the communication processes are to be referred to as social phenomena that have as basis interactions or being determined by these. Any communication is, therefore, an interaction and is subject to a process of mutual influence among several social actors. An act of communication is perceived as a settlement between speakers, as follows, the emission and reception are simultaneous, the emitter being, at the same time, emitter and addressee and not emitter and then addressee. Moreover, communication represents a deliberate or involuntary, mindful or unconscious social act that represents the basis of social liason. The Austrian psychologist Paul Watzlawick, a specialist as regards the theory of communication, sustains the idea according to which in an interaction any type of behavior has the value of a message, thus representing, a form of communication or disclosure.

Jürgens Habermas considers the public space as an extension of economic exchanges but still attached to the public exercise of reason whilst the french linguist Patrick Charaudeau defines the public space by means of the notion of "discourse in use" or "functional discourse", the latter signifying a sum of empirical utterances that are produced in the aim of identifying actions along with events and corresponding features of judgments. These statements are to be identified in discursive contexts such as textual extraits, namely proverbs, adages or sayings and any other expressions that might vary, thus constituting sociolects.

The theoreticians of communication have devised a relatively escalated concept that encompasses all forms of communication. The analysis of a part of the theorists approaches the act of submission as a fringe science, while others compile the definitions of the communication act. In this context, the opinion of Douglas Kellner is essential to be considered as relevant, stating that: "we live in a period of dramatic changes and upheavals. The 60's initiated spectacular social and cultural transformations all over the world. The sixth decade meant an era of intense social upheavals that questioned the existent social order

inflicting new forms of counterculture along with alternative forms of the daily life.” (Kellner 2001, 27).

The communication to be adequately understood needs to be analyzed along with concepts, images, symbols, arguments and reasons, being a privileged source as regards the access to reality and a less or more discrete form of manipulation the masses. Moreover, the communication entails an user attitude as each individual updates the language as a means of expression „that must be performed in a convenient manner” (Ducrot, Oswald, Schaeffer, Jean-Marie 1996, 20-21).

An assessed and well known theory belongs to Bernard Voyenne that identifies a number of four means of information remittance, as follows: *one-to-one*, *one-to-many* and *many-to-many*. In this regard, the French theoretician has ascertained that ”the act of living in a society entails to communicate” (Voyenne 1998, 27-28) namely the need of transmitting or learning new ideas, items of information or even feelings which represents a fundamental and vital necessity of the individual. Within the framework of this context, Bernard Voyenne sustained the idea according to which the exchange of information, ideas, the intercomprehension are that essential for a society as it is the breath for the organism, taking into consideration that the act of communication represents the basis of social organization that controls the cress-sectoral relations among people still involving the vertical aspirations of them in an ascendant movement towards the upper levels of reality.

The relation between culture and communication might be successfully analyzed if one takes into account commune features, meaning that both function/exist by means of individual experiences are subject to constant changes of component elements. In this respect, an idea has to be emphasized, that is a cultural analysis will highlight ”both the manner in which the dominant ideology is structured in point of the text and the receptor subject along with the specific features that allow a brokered lecture. The cultural assessment carries the conclusion in respect of the ethnographic studies of the historical and social semnifications are in direct relation with the semiotic analysis of the text.” (Kellner 2001, 50). Nevertheless, between culture and communication cannot be established either elements of complete identity or definite priority rapports in point of the history of mankind or the formation of individual consciousness.

An essential component of the communication is represented by the language, one of the characteristics of the ”human culture”, meaning the part that the individual ”adds to the culture” and not what one might inherit from ancestors. The language does not function only as a component of culture bat also as a vehicle of all cultural practices, namely the word mimics the world to the same extent in which it signifies the surrounding milieu. In the work *Les mots et les choses*, Michel Foucault had demonstrated that the individual and the language were not able to coexist unless both articulated one another.

From the cultural perspective, the specificity of an epoch and ethno-linguistic area is referred to by means of the rapport between tradition and innovation. The stableness and mobility are opposable features, in particular cases conflictual but at the same time complementary, defining a culture in each phase of its evolution. If any text or discourse, regardless the profile either compositional or fictional represents the direct expression of an intention and of an act of communication, the basic principle is to properly identify the context in which the discourse/speech is launched along with the expectations of the target audience in relation to the respective context. The communication issues are to be related to the field of semantics, whereas the strain in respect of communication is important to focus on the closeness of the two poles codes. That is to express the idea according to which the words should have the same meaning for both the emitter and the recipient as the gratification of communicate means a conditioned response to certain stimuli and consequently it should be considered along with other patterns of experience and demeanor.

The English analyst Robert Blood as regards the issue of strategic communication has asserted that by means of communication the icons alter the values and beliefs of individuals. A different opinion belongs to Gille Ferréol and Noël Flageul and states that efficient communication is clear in expression, thus establishing the limits of a particular topic. The messages that constitute the object of communication are to be correctly coded or decoded in the situation in which both communicators/interlocutors know the system of symbols that is being used whereas the social communication appears as an act of symbolic disclosure that stresses the predictable changes:

”The contemporary communication process might be labeled as a complex and flexible one as regards both human and technical intercession (of the computer). The mediation from the perspective of the individual is a form of refusal in point of the passive role within the framework of communication, of reconstruction from the side of the perceptive subject, thus maintaining the self identity in the process and expressing personal exigencies in the informational act, therefore, a form of subjectivity, more precisely a manifestation of intentionality (to surpass oneself as regards the intention in the process of reflection) as a fundamental possession of the human consciousness” (Rădulescu 2005, 103). The communication might be considered as an essential element in the analysis of cognitive phenomena and the molding of collective mind. Social representation is conditioned by the discursive context, while the conditions of elaborating a discourse are the basis in the formulation or identification of a representation. To the extent that any communicational exchange involves various goals and is directed towards the reconstruction of reality, it implies an alienation tentative of the one onto the other – or an attempt to impose a possible world that might ensure the control over the interests that are at stake.

The language as a modality and expression of thought represents the most important means of cultural production in any system while the discourse irrespective of type (political, social, economic) offers the speaker the possibility to present ideas and to endorse them in order to facilitate the understanding and comprehension of the message or to persuade the target audience. Genuinely, the aim of communication is directed towards the transmission of a meaning or message, an act that cannot function with either influence or targeting. To communicate and to influence form one and the same action, according to Alex Mucchielli, whereas the science of communication assumes a different perspective as regards the relation between influence and persuasion on one side and the act of communication on the other. The communication among individuals ought to be regarded as a particular expression of social interaction, taking into account that the entire human activity is held within the framework of a social climate.

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