


INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION



Why studying interpersonal communication ?

- Interacting is a huge part of our life
- In order to interact we need to communicate ;
- But to communicate can be difficult...

The linear model of communication

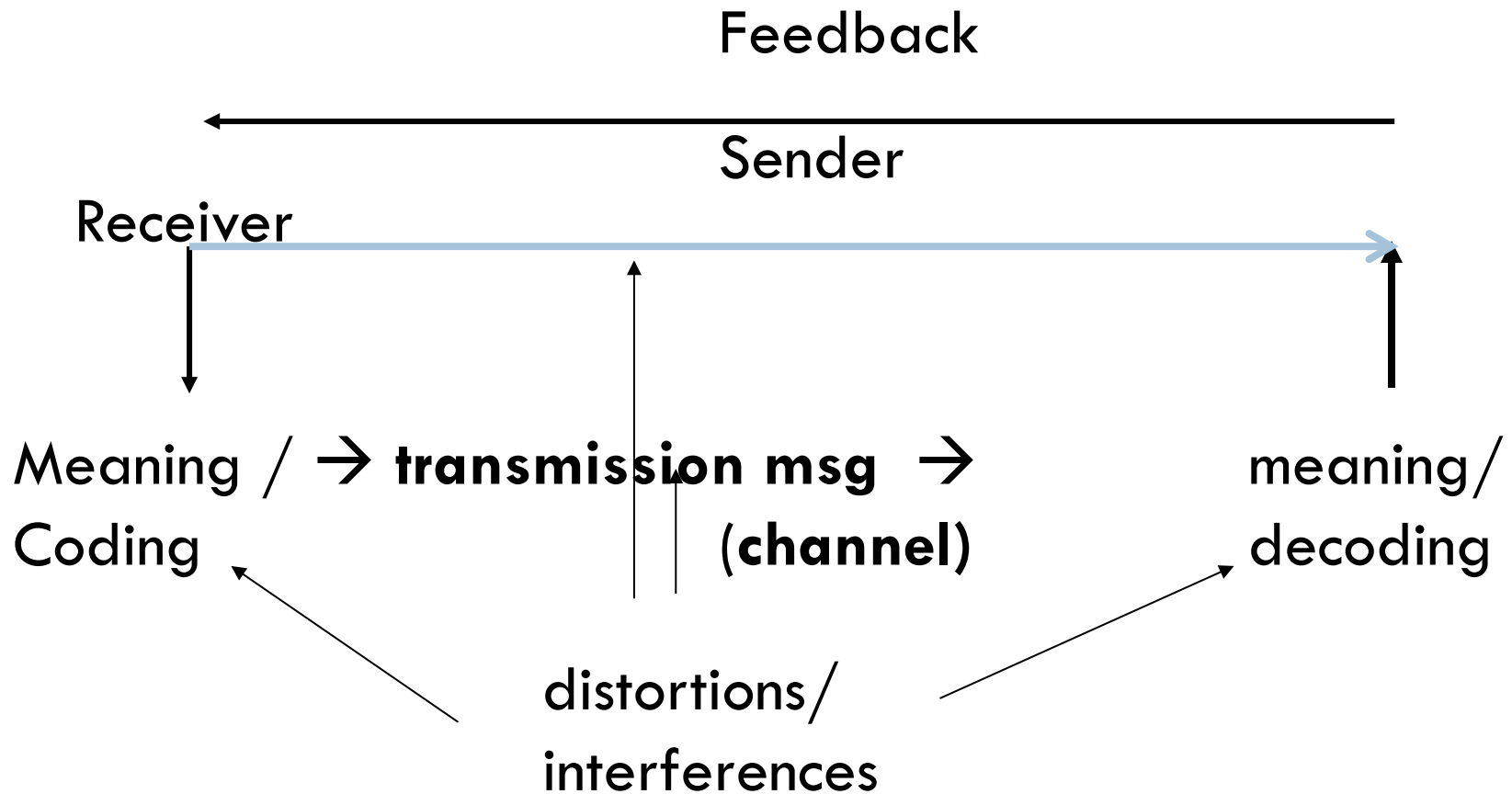
- **Linear communication model** : sender transmits the information to the receiver through a channel (Shannon, 1948, model for the optimisation of communication)
- **SENDER**  **Receiver**
- Is that all that is in the communication process? What's missing ?
- (Gordon, p. 274)

Objectives of interpersonal communication

- Why do we communicate with others?
 - ▣ To transmit information: about a subject, about others...
 - ▣ To influence others (“If I were you ...”)
 - ▣ Need of affiliation (share emotions, experiences...)
 - ▣ To project an image of ourselves (to look good , promote our ego)
 - ▣ Define the rules of the relationship (with communication we define where we stand in relation to each other)

- ▣ (SH, n°16, p.21;30;38)

Interpersonal communication process



Interpersonal communication process

- **Sender** – person sending the message ; he/she determines the type of message he/she wishes to send and the best way of doing it
- He/she should have in mind the needs/ characteristics of the receiver(s); and all that will improve the quality of the message

Interpersonal communication process

- **Coding** – the process through which we organise the elements and attribute them the meaning we want to convey to receivers

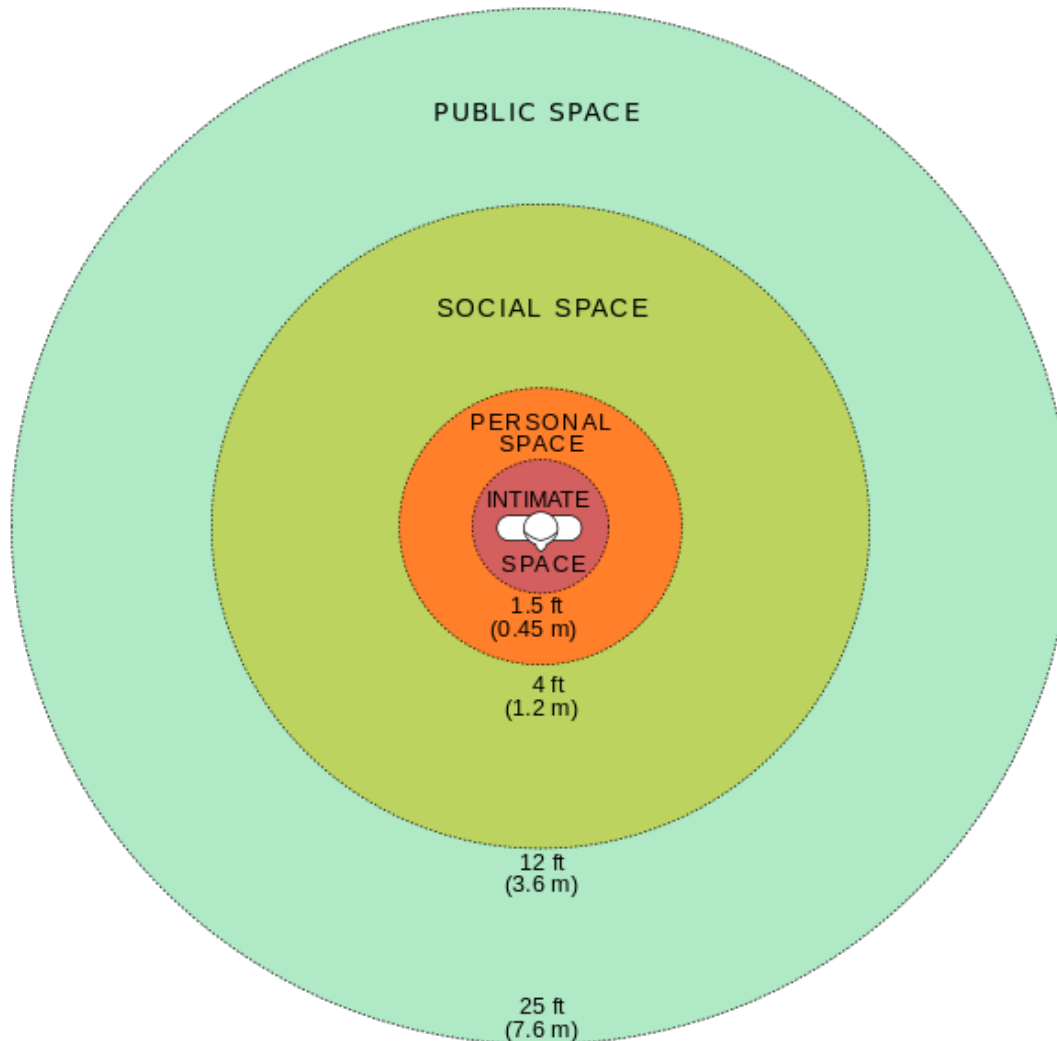
Interpersonal communication process: the message

- **Message** –the content of the communication ; ideas one wants to share ;
- Can be verbal (spoken or written) or non verbal

Interpersonal communication process: : non verbal communication

- Body language (kinesics)
 - Paralinguistic (meta language: volume , intonation..)
 - Proxemics (the use of space)
 - Symbolic (
-
- (in strategic communication)

Non verbal language: Proxemics



Non verbal communication can:

- Repeat the verbal message
- Contradict the verbal message
- Substitute the verbal message
- Reinforce the verbal message

- Thinking about it : as we are communicating virtually most of the time what space is left for non verbal communication? And does it affect our communication?
- And also the strong role of culture here

Interpersonal communication process : channel

- **channel** – it is the means through which the message, once codified , is sent to the receiver
- **The medium is the message"** is a phrase coined by Marshall McLuhan meaning that the form of a medium influences how the message is perceived.
- (in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 1964)
- The richness of the channel – relates to its capacity of conveying the information or the meaning contained in the message

The choice of the channel depends on the :

- Need to obtain immediate feedback
- Need to communicate in multiple ways (verbal and non verbal)
- Existence of a pre defined format for the specific situation

How to choose the appropriate channel ?

- A rich channel is adequate/needed when the
 - Message is addressed to a specific person
 - Timing is important
 - Immediate Feedback is needed
 - The Situation is sensitive
 - The message is complex (difficult to understand)
 - The information is personal

How to choose the appropriate channel ?

- A less rich channel is useful when :
 - The information is routine
 - The message is addressed to a large number of people
 - Immediate Feedback is not necessary
 - Communication must be formal

Which channel in which situation?

- Fire an employee
- Expose a problem to the boss
- Negotiate a pay raise
- To reprimand a competent employee
- To reprimand a colleague
- To inform a classmate of a very weak grade
- To inform a colleague of a class that has been cancelled

Interpersonal communication process : the receiver

- **Receiver** – the person to whom the message is addressed; the main determinant/reason of why the message is sent; **the message only becomes communication when the receiver gets it**
- **Decoding** – the process of giving meaning to the message by the receiver

Interpersonal communication process : the receiver

- **Receiver** – the person to whom the message is addressed; the main determinant/reason of why the message is sent; **the message only becomes communication when the receiver gets it**
- NOTE: receivers are all those receiveing a message independently of whether the sender targeted him/her
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- **Decoding** – the process of giving meaning to the message by the receiver

- the message is received successfully when the receiver tries to understand both the facts and feelings conveyed by the sender
- the receiver has to determine the meaning of sender's message from its perspective
- The receivers have to recognise the importance of non verbal communication and search for hints that support the verbal audition (Gordon p. 279; p. 282)
- Receivers have different styles of listening : one needs to understand his/hers to be able to improve it (ex. judgemental vs exploratory; role of the time of the day; role of the subject discussed)

Successful reception of a message

Interpersonal communication process : feedback

- **Feedback:** any answer – verbal or non verbal – through which the receivers reacts to the message ; it is the only way of the receiver finding out if the message is well received
- Feedback can be voluntary or involuntary

Interpersonal communication process : interferences

- **interferences** : anything that impedes the good reception of a message ; for instance noise , but also distractions , prejudices ...

- **Filtering** – sender purposely manipulates info so the receiver views it more favourably (common in upward communication)
- **Selective perception** – selectively see and hear based on our personal characteristics, interest, experience, background. Also projecting interests and expectations into communication

Examples of Barriers to effective communication

- **Information overload** – humans have a finite capacity for processing data. If too much info they tend to select, ignore, pass over or forget.
- **Emotions** – msgs are interpreted differently whether one is mad, distraught or happy.
- **Language** – even when speaking the same language words can differ (based on age, status, context). We assume words we use mean the same for everyone but this is often incorrect

Examples of Barriers to effective communication

- **Silence** (or withholding of information) -leads to absence of information so it is problematic (is there a problem ? Impossible to know...)
- **Communication apprehension** (or social anxiety) – feeling undue tension and anxiety in oral/written communication. Finding difficult to talk with others face to face or become anxious when need to use the phone , relying on memos or e-mails when a phone call would be more appropriate

Examples of Barriers to effective communication

- **Lying** – or outright misrepresentation of info. The exact definition of lying is not clear (omission vs active role), but lying is frequent (average person lies 2x a day). The frequency of lies and the difficulty in detecting it makes a specially strong barrier to communication – damages social relationships, trust and cooperation

Barriers to effective communication

The success of communication: sharing meaning

- The communication is successful when its meaning is shared by the sender and receiver
- 1st – sender must get the receivers attention
- 2nd – sender must code the message in the right way for that(those) receivers
- Total sharing of meaning is difficult , just an approximation of meanings is possible

practicing what was learned

- Video stay in touch :
 - in group identify the components of the interpersonal communication model in this situation
 - was meaning shared? Yes/no
 - If yes/no: what will happen next ?

- Hand in your answers. Indicate the name of those participating in the group work