

CHAPTER I

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

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1. Introduction

Communication (Adler & Rodman, 2006; Anderson, 1996; Aydođan, 2015; Alemdar & Erdođan, 1994; Aziz, 1982; Chaiken, 1979; Chandler & Muday, 2011; Cohen, 1958; amdereli, 2008; Defleur & Rokeach, 1982; Fejes, 1984; Gnther & Domahidi, 2017; Hall, 1983; Hardt, 1992; Kker, 2007; McLuhan, 1977; Mowlana, 1995; Rosengren, 2006; Schramm & Riley, 1951; Tokgz, 2015; Wang et al., 2015; Zilliođlu, 1993; Ziller, 1958) is a conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional process in which feelings and ideas are expressed as verbal and/or nonverbal messages, which are sent, received, and comprehended. Communication is dynamic, continuous, irreversible, interactive, and contextual (Berlo, 1960: 18). A person can be aware of sending a message, for instance, when you sit down with your best friend to discuss a serious problem. Therefore, communication can be conscious and intentional. You plan what you want to say because you want to ensure that is no doubt of the consequences of the situation. Or you can react with an unintentional facial expression that you are unaware of as when your boss tells you that he would like you to work overtime, but you have a date and want to leave on time; communication can be unconscious and unintentional. We call communication dynamic since it is in a constant state of flux, modification, or change. The participant’s attitudes, values, and skills change, the context changes, and so do the messages. Communication is continuous because it never stops. It is irreversible as you cannot take what you say back. Also, communication is interactive and contextual. Communicators adapt as both people continually interact with each other. The words and actions of one person affect the responses of the other, which in turn affect the first person, and so on (Berko et al. 2010). There are many kinds of communication. This chapter describes interpersonal communication with its types and essential elements, and addresses some research conducted in the field in the discussion.

2. Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication (Barbour & Goldberg, 1974; Beebe et al., 2008; Cappela, 1987; Devito, 2013; Floyd, 2011; Gamble & Gamble, 2014; Gao, 2011; Gökdağ, 2016; Hill et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2007; Leary, 1957; Millar & Rogers, 1976; Mutlu, 2008; Myers et al., 1995; Özodaşık, 2009; Paulsel & Mottet, 2004; Roloff, 1981; Rubin et al., 1992; Sullivan, 1953; Trenholm & Jensen, 2000) is an ongoing process rather than an event or series of events. When you think of an event, you usually think of something very definite which has a definite start and a definite finish. It can be misleading to think of interpersonal communication in this way. There are a number of more academic arguments which emphasize the importance of understanding intercultural communication as a continuous unfolding process (Hartley, 1999: 26). "Interpersonal communication is what occurs in interpersonal communication systems. These systems are distinguished from other communication systems in terms of function, structure, and process, but primarily in terms of function. Function is the leading aspect because communication systems, like naturally occurring, are generally assumed to "work" in some way. The basic function of such a system thus becomes a starting point itself, requiring no explanation, which can be called upon to explain other futures of the system. In that sense, function explains structure and process, so interpersonal communication, first of all, gets defined by its unique function, which is to regulate consensus regarding individual self-concepts (Cushman & Cahn, 1985: 16)."

According to Solomon & Theisis (2013: 9), "interpersonal communication is a continuous process. Even when one partner is speaking, the other is communicating through body position, eye contact, and facial expressions. It is also a dynamic process because meanings change and unfold over time, and previous messages affect how subsequent messages are created and understood. Interpersonal communication is consequential. It has consequences-in other words, it produces outcomes. When people actively use interpersonal communication to accomplish a goal, those consequences are deliberate. For instance, you might use interpersonal communication to persuade a classmate to help you with a paper, to resolve a conflict with a sibling, or to cheer up a friend. At other times, consequences are unintentional. For example, without realizing it, you might put down a co-worker, insult a classmate, or hurt a romantic partner. The consequences of intercultural communication, intended or unintended, can take a variety of forms, such as learning, helping, influencing, relating, and playing."

Interpersonal communication, as Gürüz & Eğinli states (2019: 49), is within the study fields of disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, social psychology, and communication. While interpersonal

communication is social rules, norms, and roles from the sociology perspective, the psychological perspective focuses on the psychological characteristics, health and well-being, and cognitive and emotional structures of people. With the perspective of communication, it includes human communication, and human interacting with all its characteristics, it is considered in terms of developing-changing relationships over time and the results of these relationships.

3. Types of Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication types can mainly be divided into two groups: verbal and non-verbal communication. According to Taşdemir (2017: 164), there are some social characteristics that affect the way people use verbal and non-verbal communication they establish with each other. Some of these features are congenital, and some are required later in social life. People build their communication on these perceived features. It is known that many different factors play a role in interpersonal communication in terms of their degree of effect. These effects of these factors are also different. It is the context that determines which of these factors will be more effective during the communication established. The context, which consists of two basic elements, that is, time and place, enables us to make sense of the communication that takes place. The meaning of a spoken word, a physical movement, or an object used is only possible by knowing the context. In other words, every event becomes meaningful in the time and place it happens. Whether it is verbal or non-verbal no event and communication can be evaluated independently of the time and place it occurs.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is a dimension of human communication (Frank, 2000; Taşer, 2004; Vural, 2005; Zillioğlu, 1993). Although Aristotle uttered the phrase "Man is a talking animal," the most important feature that distinguishes man from animals is his ability to communicate with symbols and the complex language system he has developed. People can transfer their feelings, thoughts, and knowledge thanks to language. There are many evaluations about the birth of the language; language is the ability of the social human being, which is defined to be social being, to live together, function in coordination, and most importantly to be understood in order to overcome the inability to be alone in the nature. We find a language system ready at our birth, make sense of the world in it, and we enrich, change, and transform the language ourselves. While language creates important resources for our social coexistence, it also sets limits that determine the way we understand and comprehend the world. Thus, we perceive the world in a certain hierarchy and order. This brings along the perception, and expression of the culture, ideology, and

the system we were born into. However, man does not only use language, he also changes, transforms, and enriches it. Each generation differentiates the language with new transformations and changes so as to express itself. (Eriş, 2012: 21).

In the interpersonal communication process, especially in face-to-face communication, verbal communication meets the principle of unity "at the same time and place," and with the development of communication technologies, people can communicate their verbal expressions with various tools regardless of place and time. Whether it is established with or without a tool, a language is constantly used when speaking and listening in verbal communication. This language usually allows people to get along with each other. Every society produces and uses the necessary words according to its specific conditions. In other words, the lexical resource of the language in a certain society and period is related to the cultural life of that society. Words are not what they are spoken of, they are the signs and sound that represent them, and they gain existence and value in their use (Uztuğ, 2003: 88).

Non-Verbal Communication

Communication between people can take place in two forms; verbally and non-verbally (Argyle, 1996; Berman, 1999; Çizgen, 1994; Gombrich, 1992; Knapp & Hall, 1997; Leathers, 1997). In other words, it is possible to use one or both of these two forms in social interaction (Öztekin, 2016: 53). Communication established by people both verbally and non-verbally also emerges as a social need. Communication that takes place via both speech and body gestures is achieved through learning and mediatic construction in the socialization process, and it develops and consolidates with the individual over time and remains dependant on the environment, time, and culture in which he grows up and develops. In this context, both words and movements must have common patterns for the source and target audience. As is known, words and movements affect each other. Gestures put together with the words and body movements, such as body posture and voice also increase or decrease the effect of the spoken word, make it better understood, or change the meaning of the word (Poyraz, 2018: 43). Facial and body expressions are made with or without intention. People transmit certain meanings to each other through intended expressions. Nodding, raising eyebrows in the sense of "no" or expressing indifference by shrugging shoulders are examples of intended non-verbal communication. Even though such expressions are not verbal, they are synonyms with the expressions used in verbal expression. Therefore, the intended expressions, like languages may differ from culture to culture. For instance, in Turkey, raising the head from front to back means no, whereas in western countries, those who want to say no shake their heads.

"A while ago, a neighbour of mine who lived in Germany for many years made me a "come" gesture from a distance. When I got to her, I realized that she hadn't called me over. It turned out that the sign she made only meant "hello." When we want to say hello, we open our hands, raise them at the shoulder level, and shake them slightly from side to side. That gesture conveys different meanings in two different cultures. That is why we must accept such movements made by the face and the body as non-verbal language (Dökmen, 2011: 46)."

The first thing that draws attention when we meet any human being is the other person's appearance, smile, and liveliness in their eyes. Then we begin to see the person's behaviour. Perceptual information, such as the speech, tone of voice, and movements enable us to have a thought about that person. When we communicate, we get 90% of their lasting impressions within the first 30 seconds. When we first meet, we make positive or negative judgements about the person we communicate. We can decide whether the person is friend or foe. The first positive or negative judgement determines the scope or perception direction of the other characteristics of the person (Aytaç, 2000: 122). Non-verbal communication is the presentation of the image of ourselves or by which we appear to others. The judgements reached by the receivers from the images we present build a good part of the impression. The success of non-verbal behaviours in the way we present ourselves depends on the degree of harmony and interactivity of all non-verbal messages. Non-verbal signs make the first impression of someone's role in the receiver. According to some research, non-verbal messages carry a heavy load of burden of the first impression. Non-verbal signs that are particularly responsible for the formation of the first impression are physical appearance and sound characteristics. People can even read our personality based on our body type. Our body shape is a sign in the communication process, which greatly affect the first impression of new acquaintances (Burgoon & Guerrero, 1994: 152).

4. Elements of Interpersonal Communication

Sender- Receiver

The source is the participant who enables interpersonal communication by initiating and continuing communication, and receiver is the one who interprets the sent messages. According to Işık & Biber (2006: 13), the main purpose of the source, being the first basic component of communication, is to influence the target audience. The source may want to change, transform, or reinforce the emotions, thoughts, attitudes, and behaviour of the target audience through the message transmission. For this reason, persons, institutions, or organizations at the resource position should be able to quickly comprehend the relationships between events to make accurate decisions,

and to express their feelings and thoughts in a fluent, rational, and effective manner. To Mısırlı (2004: 5), there is often expected attitude behaviour from the target in the content of the message sent by the source. In addition to fully perceiving and analyzing the messages sent, when the target shows the predicted behaviours, it is safe to say that a truly effective communication is achieved.

Coding-Encoding

Code is a system of meaning owned and shared by the members of a culture. Codes consist of rules and agreements that determine in what contexts and how indicators are to be used and how they can be put together to create more complex messages (Fiske, 2011: 94). Coding in interpersonal communication is the way messages are produced and made appropriate. Coding is the understanding of information, feelings, and thoughts through various symbols. Both coding and encoding are involved in communication. Encoding is messages becoming meaningful. It is the process when the messages sent by the source are deciphered and interpreted by the receiver.

Channel

Messages are carried through channels. The way a message is transmitted from the source to the receiver is called channel. Devito states, (2013: 13) communication rarely takes place over solely one channel. Generally, two, three, or four channels are used at once in communication behaviour. For example, in face-to-face communication, participants speak and listen (audio-auditory channel), at the same time they send information via non-verbal messages (moving-visual channels), and emit odour and smell others (chemical-odour audio channel). When communicating online, participants often post photos, audio, or video files.

Message

One element of communication is message. In its simplest form, any information, emotion, and thought that the source sends to the target audience through a channel is called a message. In the communication process, messages are created and coded by the source and sent to the target audience through a channel. In the message creation phase, socio-cultural characteristics, such as age, gender, and income-education status of the target audience should be taken into account (Işık, 2019: 13). "We negotiate the meaning we derive from interpersonal communication by sending and receiving verbal and non-verbal messages. Whom we speak to, what we choose to speak about, what we do as we interact, the words we use, the sound of our voices, our posture, our facial expressions, our touch, and even our smell constitute the message or the content of our

communication. Everything we do as a sender or a receiver has a potential message value for the person with whom we are interacting or for someone observing the interaction (Interpersonal Communication: A First Look, n.d: 8)."

Feedback

In the process of interpersonal communication, the reaction and messages given in the context of what the source says are called feedback. Here, there is a displacement of the source and the receiver. The source rearranges the message and generates a new message. While the receiver creates feedback, he becomes the source, and the source becomes the receiver. Feedback can be verbal and non-verbal, positive-negative, immediate, or delayed. Positive feedback implies approval, whereas negative feedback is a sign of ineffectiveness. A yes or no answer to a question is verbal feedback, while nodding is a non-verbal feedback.

Feedforward

Feedforward is when the source sends information about the message before sending the original message. With the feedforward, we have an idea about the future messages. The preface at the beginning of a book is an example to feedforward. This subject was firstly addressed by Malinowski (1923) in his work "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages" as the term phatic communication to express previously submitted information.

Noise

In interpersonal communication, any element that prevents understanding of the message can be called noise. Loud noise is an example of physical noise, and impaired vision is an example to physiological noise. Psychological noise includes prejudices and preconceptions, and information overload or underload is the intellectual noise. Last but not least, language and dialectical differences can be called as semantic noise.

Context

The setting in which the act of communicating takes place is context. According to Erdoğan (2011: 49), communication is the necessary condition for the realization of all ongoing human relationships; it happens in real time and place, and it can only be perceived correctly in the context in which it occurs. Context includes all the factors that determine the nature of communication. Therefore, the context of communication describes a unity that consists of many contexts. That is, contexts are not independent of each other; all of the contexts determine the nature of that communication and relationship. All

the current and past factors constitute the context of the communication and the nature of the relationship. Context is the historical, social, cultural, economical, and psychological content of the communication.

5. Discussion

It is seen in the literature that interpersonal communication is analyzed in various contexts and variables. Kukko et al. (2020) conducted a research using the quantitative descriptive research method. The data were collected from 149 health care students to describe the perceptions of these students' interpersonal communication competence. The results show that simulations used in the research affected participants' interpersonal communication competences positively.

Martin & MacDonald (2020) investigated the communication strategies applied by individual scientists and environmental and non-governmental organizations on Twitter and Instagram. The results demonstrate that the application of interpersonal communication strategies encourage non-conversational engagement in terms of the number of comments and unique individuals involved in conversations.

Li et al. (2020) probed negative deviation effect in interpersonal communication. They explored whether there is a negative deviation effect in the estimate of the impression people left on others in short interpersonal communication, and they investigated the potential psychological mechanisms on that effect. The results revealed that a negative deviation effect existed not just because people are too focused on their own-negative thoughts in conversational performance but rather because people had a psychological defence towards others in their first communication.

First et al. (2020) had a structural equation model tested the direct and indirect relationships of a variety of proximity variables including COVID-19 exposure, media use (traditional and social), and interpersonal communication on stress and depression with a U.S. sample of 1,545 adults. Results showed that COVID-19 exposure had a direct effect on stress and an indirect effect on stress and depression through media use (traditional and social) and interpersonal communication.

Dewi et al. (2020) analyzed the role of interpersonal communication in moderating the influence of work competence and work stress on employee performance. A closed questionnaire was used with 103 employees. According to the results of the study, competency variable had a significant effect on employee performance, and interpersonal communication variable did not moderate the influence of work competence on employee performance.

Brown et al. (2020) investigated whether interpersonal communication skills are predictive of occupational therapy students' resilience or not. The participants of the study were 135 undergraduate occupational therapy students, who completed Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale. As a result of the study, interpersonal communication was found to be a significant predictor of resilience in occupational therapy students.

Afriyanti et al. (2019) used a cross-sectional design with a purposive sampling technique for 126 participants in their research to find out correlations between drug use, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and interpersonal communication on sexual risk behaviour. Data were collected by five-part questionnaire. The results showed that significant correlation between interpersonal communication behaviour patterns and sexual risk behaviour.

6. Conclusion

It is safe to say as Berger states, "interpersonal communication theory and research have shown explosive growth and along multiple dimensions since the field's inception during the post World War II period. The interpersonal communication domain's scope of interest has not only broadened immensely since these early days, researchers working in such seemingly unrelated areas of communication science as mass communication, organizational communication, and communication technology have drawn heavily on conceptual frameworks and research advanced by interpersonal communication scholars. Moreover, interpersonal communication processes have become significant research foci in several applied areas (Berger, 2014: 4)." Interpersonal communication research is based on the assumption that the nature of interaction between social actors derives from their mutual perceptions of words and actions. Interpersonal communication, thus, entails all behaviour-verbal and non-verbal-that takes place during interaction. The key element in interpersonal communication is interpersonal relationship and the central focus of study in interpersonal relationship is the nature and quality of interaction between participants. Interaction is a process that develops over time and entails practices, such as turn-taking, interruptions, topic shifts, disclosures, and confirmations. The quality of interaction in a given situation may be enhanced or hampered by variables, such as complementarity (a reciprocal interaction in which the actions and words of one interactant suit or help to complete those of the other) divergence (whereby interaction orientates toward separate directions), convergence (whereby interaction orientates toward coming together), and compensation (whereby interaction involves interactants filling in gaps or making up for the failings of the others) (Oyeleye, 2005: 385). Interpersonal relationship is the exchange of information, emotions,

meanings, thoughts, and ideas. It consists of verbal and non-verbal communication. Sender-receiver, coding-encoding, channel, message, feedback, feedforward, noise, and context are the elements of interpersonal communication. As it can be seen in the literature, it has been a popular and multidisciplinary study area, which includes psychology, sociology, medicine, anthropology, social psychology, and psychiatry.

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