

Advance Course in Social Psychology

Lecture 28: Communication - Part I

Hello friends, welcome back to this discussion. In this module, I will discuss about not only about defining communication, but also I will discuss about what are the different patterns of communication, what is the process of communication, how a person engages in different type of communication process based on verbal and non-verbal patterns or cues of communication. There are several instances when a person responds to the situation while not using any language or speech, but at the same time the person is giving some non-verbal cues to the other person to transform or transfer the message. At the same time, I will also discuss about different aspects of communication in terms of formal and informal communication, rumors. In the end, I will also talk about different aspects of non-verbal communication based on eye contact, based on time constraints or time factor and most importantly haptics and proxemics. So, getting more into the detail of this discussion, let us first define that what is communication.

Social meaning we understand very easily, but what is the scientific definition of communication and how it is important aspect in any social interaction. So, communication can be defined as interchange of thoughts or information to foster mutual understanding and trust. As it is believed, very much believed that whenever two people who are not communicating with each other, it creates lot of information gaps and finally, it leads to conflict. This is so obvious, but if any two people are communicating on regular basis, then there is conducive and smooth transfer of information from one person to another and vice versa.

And with the sincerity of the transformation of message, it fosters mutual understanding between two people. So, there is transference of information and at the same time, there is understanding of the meaning that lies behind any message. So, we can say in other words that communication is transmission of information and is a continuous process. Two people who are working together, two people who are staying together, two people who are playing together definitely they indulge in the process of communication to understand and transmit information of one topic to the other person. Therefore, we can say that communication greatly helps in the development, formation, growth and change of attitudes, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

The more we are engaging in communication, the more we are sharing information, the more there is clarity of thoughts between people about any particular class, any particular age group, any particular social situation. This the more communication is there, more transformation or transmission of information is there and people tend to develop new or form new attitudes and develop or diminish the tendency to be prejudiced, biased or discriminated. At the same time, communication also fosters motivation by clarifying members or group of employees about their task, roles and timely feedback and reinforcement of the desired behavior stimulate motivation and thus require communication. For instance, even at work places, even any feedback mechanism that is being executed at the work places that also requires

communication be it verbal or written, but it requires communication which gives a timely feedback and information to the employees about their performance and how they can improve. The more they are receiving transparent information through a proper channel, definitely members get motivated, they get more clarity about their jobs and roles at what they have to perform and how they have to perform.

There is less communication gap between the employee and the employer and members or employees tend to face the challenges in a more conducive manner, but this is only possible when the employee and the employer are communicating on regular basis and this requires the essence of communication in every aspect. So, this is the definition and essence of communication. Most importantly, it is also a source of emotional expression and for the fulfillment of social need. Every man is a social animal and it is very difficult for any person to survive without any emotional expression to the other person. We all are human beings, we have that strong desire of sense of belongingness to be accepted to be acknowledged in any group situation and this is only possible when people engage in communication in form of any social interaction.

There can be expression of grievances, there can be expression of emotions and feelings. Communication provides appropriate information that individuals and groups need to make decisions by transmitting data in evaluating the alternative choice. The more communication is there, less are the gaps and more people have alternative choice to resolve any problem or any conflict. The less is communication, the more is the gap and there are less chances that any conflict can be resolved. So, communication is very important when we are talking about social psychology or even when we are talking about any group situation.

Next comes communication process. As I mentioned earlier that we will also discuss about not only defining communication, but how this process takes on. It is not that we are just communicating any message to the other person and the person will understand, but it involves a process of communication and the real message that lies behind every message because every message is not explicit. There has to be some connotations, there has to be some meaning, there has to be some form of message where a person can explicitly or even implicitly understand the message behind that communication. Therefore, social psychologists have explained a process of communication which indulges source, encoding, channel, receiver, decoding and the feedback.

Now in the whole process, two or more than two people are involved. One person is initiating a message to send to the other person and definitely there is a receiver, the second person. At least minimum two people are involved in the process of communication and how that message transforms through a process and how the receiver tends to decode or understand the real message behind that information or communication that is the most important thing. So, the main psychology behind this communication process is the real meaning or connotation that

denotes the real message and meaning. In the whole process of communication, the sender initiates a message by encoding a thought.

Now a thought has been created in the mind of the sender. Now that thought which is in the mind has to be transmitted to the other person. Now in that case, the sender will transform that message into a form. We are not that much capable to read anybody's mind but the thought has to be encoded in a physical form. This physical form can be in form of a written document.

It can be in form of words, speech, symbols, even graphics or visuals. When that message is being encoded or translated into form, then it is being transferred or transmitted to the other person. When this message is being encoded into a form, then the other person is capable to respond to that message. As soon as the message is converted into its physical form or the product, then it reaches to the other person. That message can be a speech, it can be a written document, it can be any gesture, it can be any symbol, word, graphics or visuals.

Now once this message is being transformed, then it is being channelized in a form. That means which way the message will travel, how the transmitting of message will take place. It is not that it will fly from one point to another. There has to be a channel of communication that that encoded message is being channelized through a proper way and it is a medium basically. The channel is the medium through which the message travels.

Now it can be any technology which involves putting the message in that technology and then it travels to the receiver. So the sender selects it determining the use of formal or informal channel. Now this channel can involve any use of technology or even the process of authority in form of communication that whether it is formal then it will go through a proper channel from one authority to the another and finally to the receiver or it can be informal that any person can call any person and can directly approach that person to transmit the message to the receiver. So the receiver is the person to whom the message is directed and must first translate the symbols into an understandable form. If any document is also a visual, graphic or any speech or any written document then the receiver must possess the ability to read or understand the message of the sender.

So this step is the decoding of the message. That means the real meaning that lies in the message so the sender has to be capable enough to decode that message to break or to decode that message in a way that the real meaning can be easily retrieved from that message. So as soon as the message is received by the receiver by the person and it is being decoded the whole process of communication is almost over and it reaches the feedback loop. If I go to the previous slide source, encoding, channel, receiver and decoding as soon as the message has been understood by the receiver then finally the receiver basically sends or closed that communication based on feedback loop. Whether this indicates that loop that whether the

message has been appropriately received by the receiver and at the same time the original message has been understood in the message.

So this is the feedback loop. So it determines whether understanding has been achieved or not. As I mentioned the receiver should possess the ability to decode or understand the real message in that information and it has been well accepted and received by the receiver. Thus communication can be defined as a interchange of thoughts and information to bring about mutual understanding and confidence among two groups. Now imagine if I go to the slide back that even the message has been decoded by the receiver but may be the person fails to understand the meaning of the message then that communication process is not over based on the feedback.

The receiver will definitely based on the feedback will convey to the sender that the message has been received but was not successfully decoded. This creates a communication gap between the sender and the receiver. So as soon as the decoding process is over the real communication will come to an end based on feedback. If feedback is positive based on acceptance and understanding of the meaning of the message then the communication is considered to be complete. Next comes that what different kind of messages can be transformed or transmitted through different medias.

So social psychologists have identified three types of mediums verbal, written and visual. So based on the verbal there can be different mediums to convey or transmit the message to the other person. It can be in person speech, phone conversation, it can be voice over internet protocol such as Facebook or WhatsApp, radio, podcast, voicemail message and intercom. These are all the mediums through which communication can be initiated and it most of the time it also involves the significant role of technology in the current era. The written communication is based on emails, text, instant message, report, article or essay it can be letter, it can be memo, it can be blog or tweet.

Now again it is completely based on conveying the message or any idea in different forms. We can write the message in different forms. So these are the mediums of communication and the other is visual. These mediums of communication involves drawing, paintings, photographs, graphic designs, body language which is most important aspect of communication, graphs, font types, semaphore which is very important which involves visual signaling usually by means of flags or lights and architecture. So all these three mediums written, verbal and visual these involve different kind of mediums to communicate with the other person or to the external world.

Next comes two types of communication, verbal and nonverbal communication. Verbal communication as a term implies the use of words to convey message to the other person or to a group of members. This requires oral and written communication which is very much

explicit what you say, what you write and the person is directly receiving the message that is verbal communication. We are using language which has some hidden message and has some cultural connotations as well. Therefore, we can say that verbal communication is the use of words to convey a message.

Some forms of verbal communication are written and oral communication. Verbal communication involves the use of language which is the most important source of communication definitely when we are talking about verbal communication the most lucid form or conducive form is language when we use to convey the message and it can be in two forms. As I said that what we speak, what we write it has different connotations, it has different meanings based on sound that is the accent we have that is the diction, the pronunciation and at the same time the meaning it carries. So verbal communication can be of two forms it is phonetics and semantics. Phonetics involves the speech it is a study of speech sound and how they are produced and the perception of speech, the diction, the intensity, the force with which we use to communicate the message to the other person that is the scope of phonetics in verbal communication.

It is sometimes very high the pitch is very high, pitch is very low which gives the indication of an individual to be calm and composed in a very difficult situation or it can be very high or haphazard which indicates that a person is feeling anxiety or experiencing some haphazardness in his own behavior. So this is phonetics the speech, the speech sound and how they are produced the diction and the other is semantics. It involves the meanings of words and phrases in different languages as people use in different cultures. Same word but people from different cultures have different meanings. So this is semantics, semantic as the term implies the meaning of words and phrases.

Apart from this the distinction of the language is used in communication can be made on the basis of two aspects that is denotative and connotative. What it denotes explicitly and directly? For example, I have and everybody have understand the denotative meaning of car. It is a four-wheeler vehicle and at the same time if I say to my friend that when I reach the venue you will see me in a green car. It denotes the message in a very clear manner that I will be in a green car.

This is denotation. Denotative meaning bears a close relationship to concept formation. We have a clear understanding of the concept that what is a car, what is a piano, what is a portable firearm and who is a policeman. It is simple clarity in an individual's thought process because the concept is clear about any object or event. This is denotative meaning. So denotative meaning bears a close relationship to concept formation and this constitutes to define things precisely and are not confused with other things.

As I mentioned I will be in a green car. The receiver will not have any confusion that I will be in a green car at the venue, green car in a particular model. This defines the concept and the thought process is clear. This is denotative meaning. In a similar way there is no trouble in understanding the statement and more importantly it clarifies the concept in terms of a piano.

What is a piano? Any person will not confuse it with guitar. A policeman, a gut, a portable firearm or the blueberry is very blue. So this denotes about concept formation that we develop through communication through language usage. The other is connotative meaning which is more significant and important to understand in terms of the meaning or wide array of meaning that it contains in the message. Now this meaning can be positive and it can be negative as well.

For instance this suggests a feeling or the main idea that blue is a color but at the same time it also describes the feeling of sadness. For instance she is feeling blue. Since blue is a color but at the same time the phrasal meaning, the connotative meaning means sadness. So the person who is feeling sad has a connotative meaning for his mood that she is feeling blue, she is feeling sad or rules are to be broken. So rules are to be broken when any decision which is not in consonance with the employee they tend to have this kind of negative feeling to break that barrier and get the things done.

The rules are to be broken. So this is a connotative meaning although rules means discipline. It has to be implicated in a very severe fashion but sometimes people tend to breach that rule or breach that promise then it has a different connotation. So connotative meaning refers to the wide array of positive and negative associations the most words naturally carry with them. Now positive connotations can be that suppose we are evaluating the other person with some positive phrases or positive feelings then it can be that any person who is ambitious we can give positive connotations to that person's characteristics that he or she is a go getter or who is very lively and youthful. This is how we are giving any positive association to an individual's emotional response.

The other is negative connotation. It can be assessment of the same person giving connotative associations that he is overachiever, he is overambitious and being overambitious the person sometimes becomes very childish. Now same person but two connotations are there positive and negative. These are the connotative meanings in form of communication that is verbal communication. A person is speaking using language a particular language to associate his meaning to the other person.

So these are positive and negative connotations. On the other side connotative meaning also have some associative meaning. Associative meaning here means that we associate a particular quality to that object or person. For instance it can be in semantics associative meaning refers to the particular qualities or characteristics beyond the denotative meaning that people commonly think of correctly or incorrectly in relation to a word or phrase. It is basically an

expressive or stylistic meaning. For instance different people have different expression or style of understanding the things.

They have some different kind of associations. For example needle. If I present a needle to few subjects in the lab what kind of association they will have with that meaning based on the language. So if needle is presented before them one subject would say pain, another would say prick, another would say illness, other would say threat or drug or it can be knitting or hard to find specially in haystack. So one needle has so many associative connotations that we can have different kind of expressions of people in form of language, phonetics and semantics. So this is a significance of connotations when you are talking about verbal communication.

Another can be piano. One would say a musical note, another would say a song and people can relate specific songs with specific lyrics to piano. So this is stylistic or associative meaning we give verbally to any particular object or event in the situation. At the same time another example can be of policeman. Policeman I present a picture of a policeman even a simple picture of a constable and four subjects are there in the lab they have different connotative associations to that picture of a policeman. One would say upright, other would say law, other would say robbery, helpful or authoritative and quick because we expect policemen to take quick actions and decisions.

So we have a very different connotations for one particular object event through verbal communication. So it involves concept formation, it involves semantics, it involves phonetics, it involves denotation and it also involves connotations in form of positive, negative and associative meaning. This is how verbal communication carries so much of significance when we are talking about communication based on verbal communication. This is the psychological significance when we are talking about verbal communication.

So we have discussed about verbal communication. In the next discussion I will talk about non-verbal communication. Thank you so much. Thank you.