

**CHAPTER 2: Communication in Advertising****Lesson 7: Communication models in Advertising****Learning Objectives**

- You will understand via this lesson the relevance of communication.
- This lesson will expose you to the communication with respect to the advertising field.
- Different models will attempt to show you the effectiveness of each in reaching out to the target market.

Well another chapter and we are moving ahead. You all know what communication is all about. Is it just about talking? Ok, tell me the difference between talking and speaking. The word communication comes from the Latin word communis, meaning common. When we communicate we try to establish a 'commonness' with someone, that is we try to share information, an idea or an attitude.

Man is a social animal and communication is essentially a social affair. 'No man is an island or an entire in himself', 'We cannot not communicate' are some of the common sayings in communication. Communication is what makes human relationships possible.

Speech, writings, gestures are some of the means of communication, or our means of social interaction. Comm can be in terms of conventions of dress, mannerism, institutions etc.

In communication there are various schools of thought. The process of communication has been explained through different models and theories as per the changing times. Aristotle was among the first to develop a communication model. According to Aristotle, in a communication event, there are three main elements, the speaker, the speech and the

audience. Subsequently, many other experts have developed other models.

Shannon and Weaver developed a model based on technical aspect of communication. They introduced the concept of 'noise' and the idea that meaning lies in people. Noise could be the culture, value etc of the society.

The Berlo's model brought 'encoder' 'decoder' elements in the communication process. Further Harold Laswell's model emphasised on the effect of communication and the response of the receiver. In the Wilbur Schramm model, the focus is on the signal from the two sides of the source and receiver. Further there are various theories such as the Bull's eye theory, spiral theory etc explaining the process of communication.

Communication is no longer viewed as simply a way to reach out to people. Comm is a field that has been growing in diverse directions, therefore it is to be studied not only at interpersonal, organisational levels, but also at various other levels such as the inter-cultural context.

Therefore to understand communication at any level we study any event, process or system under four main categories-Context, Technology, Representation and Social relation. These are the four analytical dimensions of communication. Each of them is co-determinant. These four dimensions can be studied as the broad framework of the communication process.

George T. Vardaman, of the College of Business Administration, University of Denver, USA, suggests following a simple formula in acronym TRIM. In this he suggests definition and planning the to whom, what, when and where of communications:

- Target or Mission or purpose of communication.
- Receiver to whom the message is directed at, based on his needs
- Impact or result that is desired.
- Method of media that must be employed to get the desired results.

The TRIM formula can give you very effective communications and presentation control, so that your time and efforts can be productively channeled and bring you results you want.

Putting ideas together is about organizing and developing your communication. The way you put together your ideas determines how you will give out the information and how well your target audiences will receive your message - with what impact and result. This is vital to the success of business communications. It is worthwhile to examine methods for putting ideas into a communicable form. For instance:

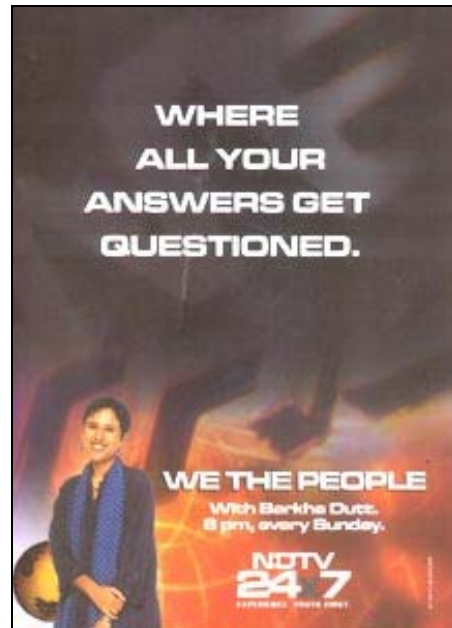
1. **Structuring ideas for the target group they are for.**
2. **Building logical sequences.**
3. **Building psychological sequences.**
4. **Developing core ideas from the lot.**
5. **Having proper introductions and conclusions.**

However, in any situation success of the communication will directly depend on the quality of the ideas and their development within the larger objectives.

While communication can be better if you know your objective, greater effectiveness lies in hitting the right target audience in conjunction with their predominant communication needs. In this, there are five receiver types, which need to be understood and tackled:

1. Apathetic
2. Sophisticated
3. Hostile
4. Credent
5. Critical

You may have the most important message, delivered in the most creative manner, but if strikes the wrong chord in the audience the communication will fail. You must overcome receiver apathy, **draw attention and sustain interest.**



Some of the techniques used by professional communicators are:

1. Shock - startle, shake or surprise the audience.
2. Suspense - keeping them guessing.
3. Humor - in language or situation to overcome apathy.
4. Novelty - something new or innovative or creative.
5. Familiarity - keeping audience interest through something known.
6. An inside story - something to do with behind the scene activities.

Visual and other devices - in presentation, like demo, audiovisual, case-studies, and anecdotes.

In doing this one must at the same time be careful in selecting appropriate techniques, avoid talking down to the audience, be natural and avoid being condescending towards people. Try and monitor communications.

If it exposes weaknesses it is essential that corrective action be taken. Monitoring must be dependent on feedback received from the audience through formal and informal channels.

### **Context:**

Communication can take place in literally hundreds of different contexts. Therefore it is important to view communication from a contextual point of view. Context keeps on changing. It affects ideas, technology etc.

Media products at one level are products of complex organization, and at still another level they reflect the economic arrangements of media industries and other institutions. The work of individual communicator cannot be understood outside these organizational, industrial and institutional contexts.

### **Technology:**

In today's world, the very word communication brings to the mind technical and electronic means of communication, such as the telephone, television, computer etc. These are the means of communication through which the entire systems in the world are functioning, be it trade, business, education and even keeping in touch with friends and the family members. Articulation is dependent on the medium involved, or it can be said communication is dependent on a channel to transmit a message. Therefore technology largely determines communication.

### **Social Relations:**

Social relations comprise of the relationship and role of the players in the communication process. Communication can be said to be a process of information handling, including activities of production, dissemination, reception and storage- all within a social system. Social relations deals with how the changes in the relationship between the players come

to bring about an effect in the information process.

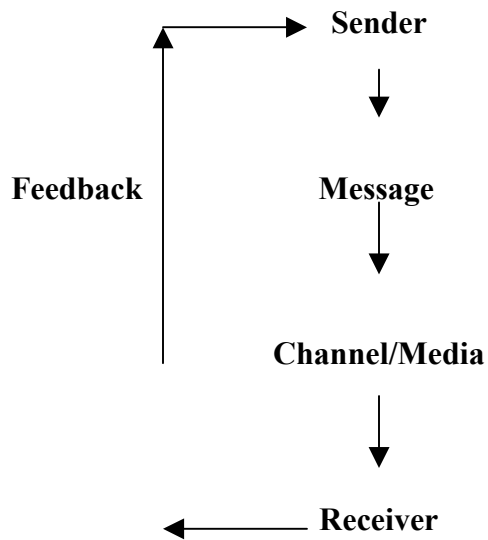
### **Representation:**

Representation is the projection of content. It is the image, idea or message that is conveyed through the communication. The way a fact is projected is representation. Media by means of representation can give meaning in a particular manner. Media representation is one of the means of achieving hegemony, which is achieving popular consent.

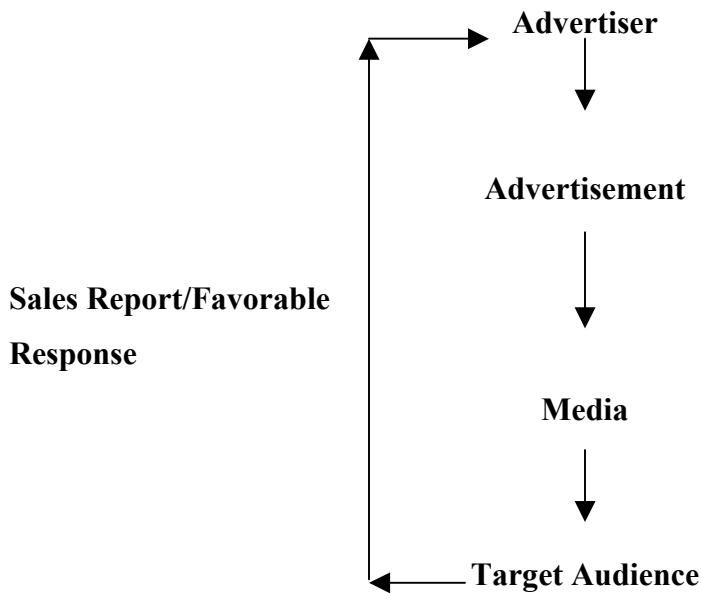
Each one of these factors affects the other, and in turn the entire communication process. Thus communication can be described as, 'The articulation of social relations between individuals in a society.'

**Advertising as a communication tool is an integral part of marketing.** We have already discussed about what communication entails. Now I would like to take you to the understanding of the process itself.

Essentially it is the transmission of message from the sender to the receiver. But you must understand that the receiver must understand the message, else the entire exercise will not be termed as a communication process. I am now diagrammatically presenting it to you.



This is precisely what happens in the case of an advertising message. The sender could be the media like your TV, radio, newspaper, etc and the receiver is you. You see the ad on channel V, well if you saw the ad then the sender was successful in reaching out to you. Diagrammatically this could be as follows,



## **Elements of Advertising/marketing Communication**

You will now be made to understand the various elements in the communication process.

**Advertiser:** It could be an individual or an organization that wants to communicate to the target audience. It could be about the communication about its products/services.

**Advertisement:** It is meant for information. It goes on to make the target audience be favorably inclined towards its products. It may ask people to act on the message. Both rational and emotional appeals could be used to do so.

**Media:** The channels of communication are the media. They convey the ad message to the target audience. Newspapers, magazines, TV, etc are the common or few of the media tools used. The media have their own strengths and weaknesses.

**Target audience:** The readers of the print media, or the listeners of radio or the viewers of TV make the audience. The product could be for the mass audience or for a targeted audience. Audience could be both users and nonusers of the product.

Now let us come down to certain models that primarily have their roots within the context of advertising. The basic principle you must understand relates to communication principle itself.

### **AIDA Model**

The design and development of advertising follows the AIDA formula. The effectiveness of advertising depends upon to what extent the advertising message is received and accepted by the target audience.

Research has identified that an advertisement to be effective has to

- (i) Attract **Attention**
- (ii) Secure **Interest**
- (iii) Build **Desire** for the product and finally
- (iv) Obtain **Action**.

All advertisements obviously do not succeed on these counts. This is one solitary reason behind the great divergence between the number of people exposed to the advertisement and those who ultimately take the purchase decisions. At this stage, however, other elements of the marketing mix, especially distribution become crucial.

Advertisement communicates an idea, a message or a belief. An advertisement would be effective only if the media audience accepts that message and is motivated to take the required action. Several models have been developed which have specifically identified the sequence of events, which must take place between receipt of the message and desired action.

***AIDA Model:*** A somewhat simplified model based on the identical principle of sequential stages of consumer action is known as AIDA model.

Advertising as a communication medium can in most cases effectively perform the first three functions. In the case of direct-action advertising, it also must translate the desire into action, unaided by any other promotional instruments. In the case of indirect-action advertising, however, the action can be aided at the time of purchase by two-way communication between the intending buyer and the sales staff.

Let us examine the attention, interest, desire and action components in more detail.

***Attention:*** The layout is the most important factor that directs attention to an advertisement. Typography and colors used in the layout can rivet us. The size of the advertisement also compels us to get attracted to it. Contrast by white space is a good attention-getter. Movement is a vital element for getting attention. Movement can be physical or emotional. The position of the advertisement also adds to its attention value. Celebrities in the advertisement, dramatization; model selection, illustration all this contribute to attention.

**Interest:** *Ad seen* does not mean *ad read*. Mostly people see the illustrations and do not read the copy. Here illustrations have to work hard. They should, together with headlines must provoke further reading. The selection of the illustrations and its integration to life are thus very important. Even copy format is important for interest creation. A humorous copy works some people on by a scientific copy, and some. Here there is a dilemma for a copywriter. He has to satisfy maximum number of people so he has to search for a common denominator of interest.

**Desire:** The basic purpose of advertising is to create a desire for the product or service being advertised. It is a function of appeals used for the motivation of people. Vivid description or copy always helps. Buying motives, physiological as well as psychological, make people purchase products. The copy of the advertisement must kindle these motives. There are certain barriers here - certain reservations in the mind of customers. We have to overcome them. We have to convince by giving evidence, testimonials, endorsements, and facts and figures. On arousal, people become prone to buy the product.

**Action:** The logical end of the desire aroused is to buy the product.

1. Products are associated with company.
2. The message is repeated.
3. Certain immediate action appeals are used.

There are six steps or movements towards the purchase of a product or service. The first two, awareness to knowledge, fall in the cognitive sphere of related behavioral dimension. It deals with the realm of thoughts. Advertising here provides essential information and facts. These advertisements are announcements, descriptive slogans, jingles, and sky writing and teaser campaigns.

The next two steps in the movement towards purchase are liking and preference. These have been linked with the affective sphere, which is the realm of emotions wherein the

advertising changes attitudes and feelings. Advertisements falling in this category are: competitive advertisements, argumentative advertisements, advertisements with a strong rational message and image advertisements with status and glamour appeals.

The final two steps in the movement towards purchase are conviction and purchase. This is related to behavioral realm of motives. Here the advertisements stimulate or direct desires. Advertisements falling in this slot are: POP, retail store advertisements, *last chance* offers, price reduction appeals, testimonials, and prize scheme advertisements.

This is called Hierarchy of Effect (HOE) model.

*Three models of message design and development:* They are 1. AIDA model, 2. HOE: Hierarchy of Effects model, and 3. Communication model of Advertising.

<b>Stages</b>	<b>AIDA Model</b>	<b>HOE Model</b>	<b>Communication Model</b>
<b>Cognitive (Thoughts)</b>	<b>Attention</b> ↓	<b>Awareness</b> ↓ <b>Knowledge</b> ↓	<b>Exposure</b> ↓ <b>Reception</b> ↓ <b>Cognitive Response</b> ↓
<b>Affective (Feeling)</b>	<b>Interest</b> ↓ <b>Desire</b> ↓	<b>Liking</b> ↓ <b>Preference</b> ↓ <b>Conviction</b> ↓	<b>Attitude</b> ↓ <b>Intention</b> ↓
<b>Behavior</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Purchase</b>	<b>Behavior</b>

**DAGMAR**

**Approach**

Dagmar Approach is the task of measuring ad effectiveness will not be daunting if we clearly spell out the advertising goals. Russel H. Colley (1961) pioneered an approach known by the acronym DAGMAR – Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results, where to establish an explicit link between ad goals and ad results, Colley distinguished 52 advertising goals that might be used with respect to a single advertisement, a year’s campaign for a product or a company’s entire advertising

philosophy.

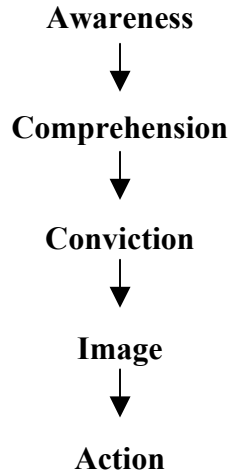
These goals may pertain to sales, image, attitude, and awareness. Some of the goals are:

- Persuade a prospect to visit a show room and ask for a demonstration.
- Build up the morale of the company's sales force.
- Facilitate sales by correcting false impression, misinformation and other obstacles.
- Announce a special reason for buying now's (price, discount, premium and so on).
- Make the brand identity known and easily recognizable.
- Provide information or implant attitude regarding benefits and superior features of brand.

According to DAGMAR approach, the communication task of the brand is to gain **(a) awareness, (b) comprehension, (c) Conviction, (d) image and (e) action.**

Advertising goals should be consistent with these communication tasks. Later performance on these counts and projected goals is compared. For example, a company setting a goal of 15 per cent increase in sales advertises and achieves this objective. Its ad then is successful and effective.

It presupposes the understanding of the dynamics of consumer behavior without these goals cannot be set. Besides, a thorough acquaintance of market environment is called for. DAGMAR is a planning and control tool. It may guide the creation of advertising. However, as will be appreciated, the basic inputs of DAGMAR are not so easily to formulate and may also inhibit creativity.



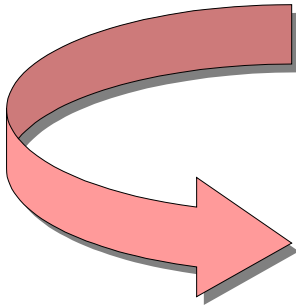
**Lavidge and Steiner** propounds the second model. This gives much importance to the cognitive evaluations. With an increase in competition and an enhancement in discerning abilities of potential buyers and users, information would play a greater role. The persuasive power of advertising could in itself be a function of the information content. This model takes the competition in to account. This competition arises between brands of a product and between substitutive product categories also as perceived by prospects constituting the target audience. The stage of liking following those of awareness and knowledge may refer to the advertising, thus emphasizing the creative aspects. Preference for the product or the brand may be the combined effect of product characteristics and their relevance to the target audience and of advertising.

**Rogers** propounded the third model, which is known as **Innovation –Adoption** Model. This model has relevance to new product introductions and particularly useful for adoption of non-commercial services or practices in developing countries. The stages of evaluation and trail before adoption (or purchase) are considered significant in the design of advertising program. The decision in favor of making an evaluation is likely to be influenced by information available from various sources including advertising. Evaluation constitutes a major step towards the adoption of the product or service.

I do hope you have gone over the various models and are trying to understand the relevance of them in the context of advertising. It is basically how you register an advertisement after seeing it and the course of action as in the purchase that takes place.

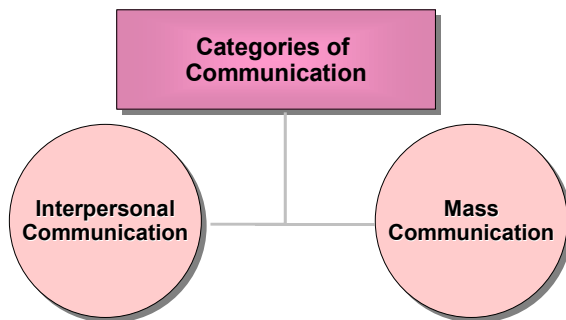


## Communication

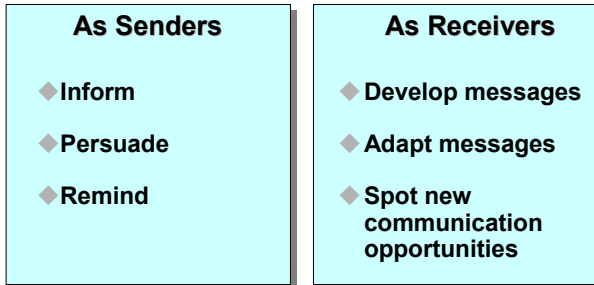


The process by which we exchange or share meanings through a common set of symbols.

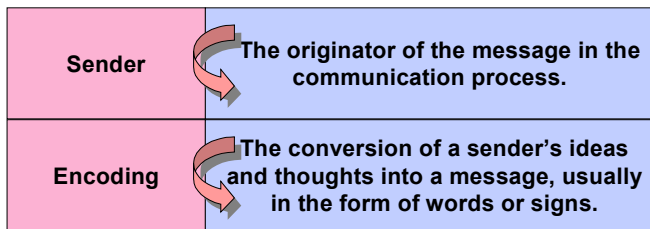
## Marketing Communication



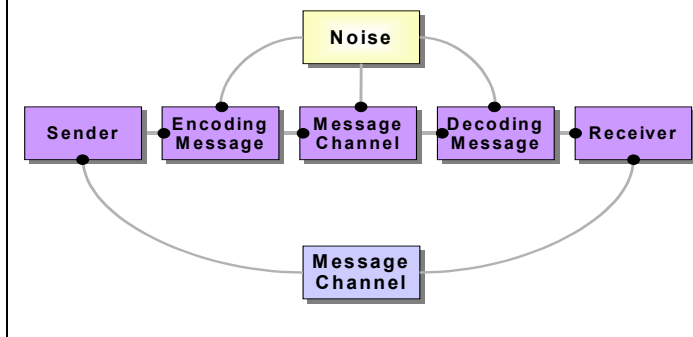
## The Communication Process



## The Sender and Encoding



## The Communication Process



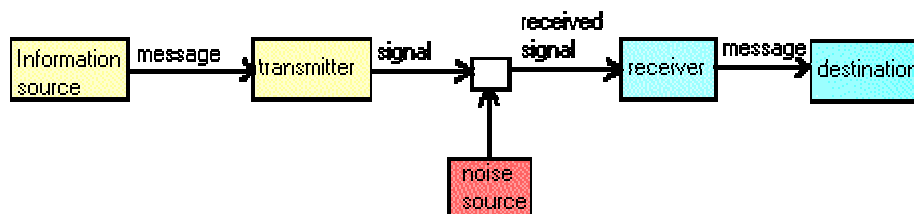
- **"The truth isn't the truth until people believe you, and they can't believe you if they don't know what you're saying, and they can't know what you're saying if they don't listen to you, and they won't listen to you if you're not interesting, and you won't be interesting unless you say things imaginatively, originally, freshly."**
  - William Bernbach, quoted in Bill Bernbach said . . . (1989), DDB Needham Worldwide.
- **"It is insight into human nature that is the key to the communicator's skill. For whereas the writer is concerned with what he puts into his writings, the communicator is concerned with what the reader gets out of it. He therefore becomes a student of how people read or listen."**
  - William Bernbach, quoted in Bill Bernbach said . . . (1989), DDB Needham Worldwide.

### **Shannon-Weaver Model**

If you have looked through the examples of typical everyday forms of communication, you will have noticed that some of the examples refer to less immediate methods of communication than face-to-face interaction, e.g. using the radio, newspapers or the telephone. In these cases, technology is introduced.

When, for instance, the telephone is used, you speak, the phone turns the sound waves into electrical impulses and those electrical impulses are turned back into sound waves by the phone at the other end of the line.

**Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver produced a general model of communication:**



This is now known after them as the Shannon-Weaver Model. Although they were principally concerned with communication *technology*, their model has become one which is frequently introduced to students of human communication early in their study.

However, despite the fact that it is frequently used early in the study of human communication, I think it's worth bearing in mind that information theory, or statistical communication theory was initially developed to separate noise from information-carrying signals. That involved breaking down an information system into sub-systems so as to evaluate the efficiency of various communication channels and codes. You might ask yourself how viable the transfer of Shannon's insights from information theory to human communication is likely to be. The concepts of information theory and cybernetics are essentially mathematical and are intended to be applied to technical problems under clearly defined conditions. After you've read this section, which, I think, is a reasonable attempt to loosely apply Shannon's ideas to human communication, ask yourself whether you feel enlightened.

The Shannon-Weaver Model (1947) proposes that all communication must include 6 elements:

- **Source**
- **Encoder**
- **Message**
- **Channel**
- **Decoder**
- **Receiver**

These six elements are shown graphically in the model. As Shannon was researching in the field of information theory, his model was initially very technology-oriented. The model was produced in 1949, a year after Lasswell's and you will immediately see the similarity to the Lasswell Formula.

The emphasis here is very much on the transmission and reception of information. 'Information' is understood rather differently from the way you and I would normally use the term, as well. This model is often referred to as an 'information model' of communication. (But you don't need to worry about that if you're just starting.)

Apart from its obvious technological bias, a drawback from our point of view is the model's obvious linearity. It looks at communication as a one-way process. That is remedied by the addition of the feedback loop.

A further drawback with this kind of model is that the message is seen as relatively unproblematic. It's fine for discussing the transformation of 'information', which might be, say &Hui9%/? PLM, but, when we try to apply the model to communication, problems arise with the assumption that meanings are somehow *contained within* the message.

### **Shannon-Weaver: The Source**

All human communication has some **source** (*information source* in Shannon's terminology), some person or group of persons with a given purpose, a reason for engaging in communication.

### **Shannon-Weaver: The Encoder**

When you communicate, you have a particular purpose in mind:

- You want to show that you are a friendly person.
- You want to give them some information
- You want to get them to do something
- You want to persuade them of your point of view

and so on. You, as the source, have to express your purpose in the form of a message. That message has to be formulated in some kind of **code**. How do the source's purposes get translated into a code? This requires an **encoder**. The communication encoder is responsible for taking the ideas of the source and putting them in code, expressing the

source's purpose in the form of a message. It's fairly easy to think in terms of source and encoder when you are talking on the phone (*transmitter* in Shannon's terminology). You are the source of the message and the 'phone is the encoder which does the job of turning your sounds into electrical impulses. The distinction is not quite so obvious when you think of yourself communicating face-to-face.

In person-to-person communication, the encoding process is performed by the motor skills of the source - vocal mechanisms (lip and tongue movements, the vocal cords, the lungs, face muscles etc.), muscles in the hand and so on. Some people's encoding systems are not as efficient as others'. So, for example, a disabled person might not be able to control movement of their limbs and so find it difficult to encode the intended non-verbal messages or they may communicate unintended messages. A person who has suffered throat cancer may have had their vocal cords removed. They can encode their messages verbally using an artificial aid, but much of the non-verbal messages most of us send via pitch, intonation, volume and so on cannot be encoded.

Shannon was not particularly concerned with the communication of meanings. In fact, it is Wilbur **Schramm**'s model of 1954, which places greater emphasis on the processes of encoding and decoding. The inclusion of the encoding and decoding processes is very helpful to us since it draws our attention to the possibility of a mismatch between the operation of the encoding and decoding devices, which can cause **semantic noise** to be set up. With good reason, the source of the message may wonder whether the picture in the receiver's head will bear any resemblance to what's in his/her own. Schramm went on to introduce the notion of a 'field of experience', which shows a much greater awareness of the subtleties involved in human-to-human communication, drawing our attention to the numerous shared socio-cultural factors which are necessary for successful communication to take place.

Shannon-Weaver: The Message

The message of course is what communication is all about. Whatever is communicated is the message. Denis McQuail (1975) in his book *Communication* writes that the simplest way of regarding human communication is 'to consider it as the sending from one person to another of meaningful messages'.

The Shannon-Weaver Model, in common with many others separates the message from other components of the process of communication. In reality, though, you can only reasonably examine the message within the context of all the other interlinked elements. Whenever we are in contact with other people we and they are involved in sending and receiving messages. The crucial question for Communication Studies is: to what extent does the message received correspond to the message transmitted? That's where all the other factors in the communication process come into play.

Shannon-Weaver: The Channel

You tap on a membrane suspended above a steadily flowing jet of water. The air under the membrane causes slight deflections in the jet of water. A laser is aimed at a receiver. The jet of water flows through the laser beam, deflecting it from its target. Every time the movement of the air deflects the water jet, the laser beam hits its target. The laser receiver is connected to a computer, which takes each 'hit' and turns it into a 1 and each miss and turns it into a 0. The computer sends these etc. etc.....

You get the idea: the air waves, the jet of water and so on are all channels. The words **channel** and **medium** are often used interchangeably, if slightly inaccurately. The choice (a pretty stupid one above) of the appropriate channel is a vitally important choice in communication. It's obvious that you don't use the visual channel to communicate with the blind or the auditory channel with the deaf, but there are subtler considerations to be taken into account as well. A colleague of mine was clearly much more responsive to visual communication than I. To elucidate his arguments he would inevitably grab a pencil and a piece of paper and sketch out complex diagrams of his arguments. Though they may have helped him to clarify his ideas, they merely served to confuse me, who would have preferred a verbal exposition. It's curious that in the college where I work many students

who are dyslexic or have other learning difficulties end up studying information technology in so-called flexible learning centers. Bearing in mind the statement above that "the choice of the appropriate channel is a vitally important choice in communication", it's less than obvious how a student who has difficulty reading and writing can have their needs met by a learning model which boils down in essence to 'read this; it will tell you what to write'.

Shannon-Weaver: Physical noise

Shannon is generally considered to have been primarily concerned with physical (or 'mechanical' or 'engineering') noise in the channel, i.e. unexplained variation in a communication channel or random error in the transmission of information. Everyday examples of physical noise are:

- A loud motorbike roaring while you are trying to hold a conversation.
- Your little brother standing in front of the TV set
- Mist on the inside of the windscreen
- Smudges on a printed page
- Snow on a TV set

It might seem odd to use the word noise in this way, unless perhaps you're a hi-fi buff, in which case you'll be familiar with looking up the claimed 'signal-to-noise ratio' for the various bits of equipment you buy. In this technical sense, 'noise' is not necessarily audible. Thus a TV technician might speak of a 'noisy picture'. Generally speaking, in this kind of everyday communication, we're fairly good at avoiding physical noise: we shout when the motorbike goes past; you clout your little brother; cars have demisters.

However, it is possible for a message to be distorted by *channel overload*. Channel overload is not due to any noise source, but rather to the channel capacity being exceeded. You may come across that at a party where you are holding a conversation amidst lots of others going on around you or, perhaps, in a Communication lesson where everyone has split into small groups for discussion or simulations. Shannon and Weaver were primarily involved with the investigation of technological communication. Their model is perhaps more accurately referred to as a model of *information* theory (rather than communication

theory). Consequently, their main concern was with the kind of physical (or mechanical) noise discussed above.

Although physical noise and how to avoid it is certainly a major concern of scholars of communication, the Shannon and Weaver model turns out to be particularly suggestive in the study of human communication because of its introduction of a decoding device and an encoding device. The possibility of a mismatch between the two devices raises a number of interesting questions. In technological communication: I give you a PC disk and you stick it into a Mac - the Mac can't decode it; I give you an American NTSC video tape and you stick it into a European PAL video recorder - the recorder won't decode it. Transfer this notion of a mismatch between the encoding and decoding devices to the study of human communication and you're looking at what is normally referred to as **semantic noise**. That concept then leads us on to the study of social class, cultural background, experience, attitudes, beliefs and a whole range of other factors, which can introduce noise into communication.

### **Shannon-Weaver: Semantic noise**

Semantic noise is not as easy to deal with as physical noise. It might not be an exaggeration to say that the very essence of the study of human communication is to find ways of avoiding semantic noise. Semantic noise is difficult to define. It may be related to people's knowledge level, their communication skills, their experience, their prejudices and so on.

Examples of semantic noise would include:

● **Distraction:** You are physically very attracted to the person who is talking to you. As a result, your attention is directed to their deep blue eyes rather than what they are saying. There is no physical noise which prevents the message from reaching you. You hear it, but you don't decode it. Equally, your attention could be distracted by the other person's peculiar tics and so on. Or think of when you watched the TV news: the reporter was standing outside No.10 Downing Street, but behind him the policeman outside the door was picking his nose. As soon as the report's over you realize you haven't a clue what it was about.

- **Differences in the use of the code:** The other person is waffling on in Aramaic about fishes and loaves. You don't understand. There is nothing which physically prevents the elements of the message from reaching you, you simply can't understand it.
- **Emphasising the wrong part of the message:** Maybe you can think of an advertising campaign which has been so successful with some new style or gimmick that everyone is talking about it. However, no one has actually noticed what product is being advertised.
- **Attitude towards the sender:** You're talking to someone a lot older than you. On the basis of their age, you make a lot of assumptions about the kind of code appropriate to them - and the conversation goes wrong because they were the wrong assumptions.
- **Attitude towards the message:** I may have a very positive attitude to the Aramaic-speaking bearded chap in the flowing robes. But, despite that, I'd be unlikely to find him very persuasive even if he were talking to me in English about his fishes and his loaves. He believes in transcendent beings and I don't.

### **Shannon-Weaver: The Decoder**

Just as a source needs an encoder to translate her purposes into a message, so the receiver needs a **decoder** to retranslate. If you take a look at our discussion of the receiver, you'll see that we considered how, for example, a blind person would not have the equipment to receive whatever non-verbal messages you send in the visual channel.

The notion of a decoder reminds us that it is quite possible for a person to have all the equipment required to *receive* the messages you send (all five senses, any necessary technology and so on) and yet be unable to *decode* your messages.

An obvious example would be:

You can see it. You probably guess that it's a language, maybe even that it's Arabic. You probably don't understand it, though. In fact, it is Arabic and it does mean (but nothing very interesting). You cannot decode my message, encoded to you in that short sentence, by you. You have the appropriate receiving equipment, but no decoder. You don't understand the code.

## **Shannon-Weaver: The Receiver**

For communication to occur, there must be somebody at the other end of the channel. This person or persons can be called the **receiver**. To put it in Shannon's terms, information transmitters and receivers must be similar systems. If they are not, communication cannot occur. (Actually Shannon used the term *destination*, reserving the term *receiver* for what we have called *decoder*. However, I think the terminology I have been using is more common in the broader understanding of 'communication theory' as distinct from Shannon's information theory.)

## **Shannon-Weaver: Feedback**

Feedback is a vital part of communication. When we are talking to someone over the phone, if they don't give us the occasional 'mmmm', 'aaah', 'yes, I see' and so on, it can be very disconcerting. . This lack of feedback explains why most of us don't like ansaphones. In face-to-face communication, we get feedback in the visual channel as well - head nods, smiles, frowns, changes in posture and orientation, gaze and so on. Advertisers need feedback, which they get in the form of market research from institutions. How else would they know if their ads are on the right track? Broadcasters need feedback, which they get from agency ratings. Politicians need feedback, which they get from public opinion polls and so on.

Perhaps one of the main reasons for the model's popularity amongst communication theorists in the 'humanities' has been that it provides them with a ready-made jargon that ordinary mortals are not likely to be familiar with, as well as conferring on the subject a kind of pseudo-scientific respectability.

