

CONCEPTUAL DELIMITATIONS OF DIRECT COMMUNICATION, MASS COMMUNICATION AND MASS MEDIA

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Abstract: *In this paper we have tried to define the notion of communication and delimit the concepts of direct communication, mediate communication and mass media communication. Unlike usual approach, we have brought to light the economic elements of the communication process. In this respect, we have tried to show that both linguistic structure and the subsequent definitions of the communication notion contain an ample economic feature. The means of communication have always been important, whether we speak of agrarian, industrial or informational society. In the first stage, companies that provided transport services had to handle the agricultural products which were supposed to be carried to the markets or consumers. In order to carry out these services efficiently, roads were built to enable merchandise transport. During industrial age, the necessity of transport still remained crucial, but there was a slight change in products. This time energy was the main product which needed transporting. Whether we speak of the transport of coal, oil, gas or electrical power, the industry dependence on energy and, implicitly, on energy transporters is indisputable. This situation led to the building of main pipe lines for energy transport. Nowadays, informational society needs information transport. Of course, goods and energy are still being transported today, but our society will hardly do without communication main lines. In order to meet the existing needs in this respect, we witness a development of the communication infrastructure. Contemporary progress is strongly connected to network communication development. Whether we refer to internet, fiber or wireless networks, all of them transport each and every second huge amounts of information. Society, conquered by communication, discovers each passing day new elements and creative approaches through which the communication process between people can be catalyzed and maximized. In all these attempts, the communication process is only the means to achieve higher goals. These interests cause an increase in performance of the communication system. Whether we speak of local, national or global interests, the key factors for mass control are ontologically related to the communication system. This field has been explored by researchers over centuries, but not enough, because today's background and challenges are more complex than yesterday's. In the present paper we are placing ourselves somewhere between the collection of past experience and future uncertainty, marked by the passion and duty to explore. In the communication field, we are in a similar position to medical research; when we discover a treatment, we realize that new types of viruses have appeared which require new solutions. The working ground of mass media is extremely moving. Whether we speak of technology, finance, competition, interests, demand and supply or all of them, the cycle of changes happens more and more rapidly, almost stunning. The above mentioned ideas have motivated us in approaching this topic, which we invite you to study.*

Keywords: *communication; mass communication; mass media.*

JEL classification: L82; D83.

1. Introduction

Communication is one of the main characteristics of human beings. All relationships between people involve a communication link, which can cover a huge diversity of forms and patterns. Society, conquered by communication, discovers each passing day new elements and creative approaches through which the communication process between people can be catalyzed and maximized. In all these attempts, the communication process is only the means to achieve higher goals. These interests cause an increase in performance of the communication system. Whether we speak of local, national or global interests, the key factors for mass control are ontologically related to the communication system. This field has been explored by researchers over centuries, but not enough, because today's background and challenges are more complex than yesterday's. Nowadays, we are placing ourselves somewhere between the collection of past experience and future uncertainty, marked by the passion and duty to explore. In the communication field, we are in a similar position to medical research; when we discover a treatment, we realize that new types of viruses have appeared which require new solutions. The working ground of mass media is extremely moving. Whether we speak of technology, finance, competition, interests, demand and supply or all of them, the cycle of changes happens more and more rapidly, almost stunning.

In the present paper we will try to define the notion of communication and delimit the concepts of direct communication, mediate communication and mass media communication. Unlike usual approach, we will bring to light the economic elements of the communication process. In this respect, we will try to show that both linguistic structure and the subsequent definitions of the communication notion contain an ample economic feature.

In the first part, we are going to present the linguistic structure starting from the etymology of the word „communication“. In the second part, we will outline a few approaches to direct communication concept. In this section we will describe a starting model (Lasswel's), specific to any kind of communication. Then we will mention a model which reflects human complexity: Berlo's model. In the third part of the paper, we will try to approach mass communication, defining and illustrating this type of communication. In this section we will describe Shannon and Weaver's model, which emphasizes the jamming aspect of the communication process. This type of communication, force involve factors to use technological equipments witch have the purpose to intermedate the communication process. Acquisition of the equipments, maintenance, and the operation personal needed, create the premise of an important economic component, without witch communication is impossible. In the last part, we will review briefly the way mass media concept has been defined. We will focus on details relating to the economic aspect of this concept. During mankind development, the communication process passes through a transition from direct communication to technologically mediated communication and than to mass-media communication. These three different types of communication are differentiated by the economic contribution. In the case of direct communication, the economic contribution is almost insignificant. In technologically mediated communication, the economic contribution is substantially larger but in mass-media communication, economic contribution is capital.

2. Communication

The communication between people, as well as the means by which it is carried out, has got a strong economic feature because it uses resources and generates material benefits for the parties involved in this process.

Etymologically, the word „communication“ is of Latin origin and has the meaning of „to make common, to be in relationship with“. Dicționarul Explicativ al Limbii Române defines the verb „to communicate“ from the French word „communiquer“: (1) To make known, to pass on the news; to inform, to notify, to tell. 2) To be connected with, to be in contact/touch with, to speak, to carry on a conversation with.

The meaning shown by the dictionary reveals, on one hand, the connection which exists between the parties involved in the process and, on the other hand, the content of the information transfer.

Although there is wider material regarding the research of the communication process, in the present paper we will limit our study to direct and mediated communication. We are in favor of this division because the objectives of our research relate to the economic aspects generated by mediate communication.

3. Direct communication

„Communication is something which enables the building of a relationship between people, between objects or between people and objects. It designates either the action of communicating, or the result of this action. What is communicated can have either a material nature (documents, data), or an immaterial one (ideas, feelings). This transmission and exchange is done mainly by means of signs and sounds, requiring the presence of a transmitter and a receiver.“ (Bertrand 1999:18)

The meaning that is suggested by Remy Rieffel brings into discussion direct communication. This type of communication implies a transfer of information from one person to the other without an intermediary. Direct communication can be non-verbal, that is the message is conveyed through mimics, gestures or tactile contact. We can also have direct communication when in the communication process we transmit verbal messages.

3.1. Lasswel's model

This model presents, in a simplified manner, the communication process, intended to answer five questions: Who? What does he/she say? By what means? To whom? To what effects? The model is rooted in the concepts promoted by behaviourist school, namely the stimulus-answer principle. In Lasswel's model, communication is seen as the route of a stimulus (information) which causes a reply (the receiver's reaction).



Figure 1

Source: Werene J. Scerin, James W. Tankard, jr., Perspectives on mass communication.

„Lasswell's model was criticized because it seems to imply the presence of a deliberate communicator and message. It was said about this model that it is

oversimplified, but, just like any other good model, it focused on the essential aspects of communication.“ (Secerin, Tanksrd 2004:54) This model remains in actuality because it caches the most important elements of the direct communication process.

3.2. Berlo's SMCR model

This model, which appeared in 1960 in the United States, points out the psychological nature of communication; it emphasizes different components, attitudes and intentions and specifies the conditions of an efficient transmission. „Berlo sees communication as a dynamic and continuous process between two people who can separately and simultaneously be both transmitter and receiver. However, his model presents communication as a linear and sequential process and we cannot see any retroaction between receiver and source. Also, no dynamic relationship is established among the different elements which build up the model.“ (Lohise 202:73)

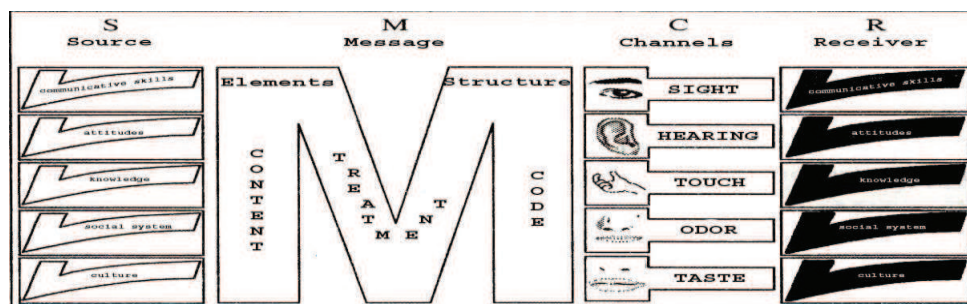


Figure 2

Source: Jean Lohisse, Communication from mechanic transmission to interaction

Berlo's model pictures the complexity of human personality, indicating in this diagram that the source, the message, the channels and the receiver are organically correlated.

The people involved in economic activities will always be interested in the study of human complexity as well as the individual features. In negotiation steps, economic interests demand a solid training of the communication process. Managerial functions can not be separated from the communication process. The exploitation of direct communication in all it's complexity, demand resource finding, contracts negotiation and brand building. Most of the time, the purpose is an economic one and direct communication is needed to accomplish that purpose.

4. Mass communication

Mass communication is an economic, social and political reality. Communication mediated by the media industry is part of every day life both in family and business and also in state administration. In this context, there is a wide interest for the mass communication study; that is why many authors have attempted to define this process. Thus, Gerbener, in 1967, in the article „The study of mass communication“, defined communication as being „the social interaction through messages.“ (Gerbener 1967:2) Perhaps the most quoted definition remains the following: „Mass communication includes the institutions and techniques by which specialized groups

use technical means (press, radio, film, etc.) in order to convey a symbolic content to various, heterogeneous and strongly dispersed audiences. (Janowity, 1968)

This definition emphasizes the idea that, in the mass communication process, „the transmitter“ belongs to a specialized group, an enterprise which, besides communication, has other functions, too. Actually, communication represents only that part of the product which is delivered to the consumer public, that is to the media market. „The receiver“ is individual, although the press institution transmits messages to people with similar interests and expectations. In this situation, „the channel“ doesn't reside in the social relationship, but is managed by intricate technical processes. These are set in function by technologists, who spread the message on a large scale. The communication system has a social component related to expectations and legislation. „In mass communication, the message is not an unique and transitory phenomenon, but a symbolic structure, often of high complexity, produced in mass proportions and repeating itself endlessly.“ (McQuail, Windahl, 2010:13)

5. Technologically mediated communication

In this type of communication, the transmitter and receiver are interfered by an instrument which mediates communication. Once the technology developed, more precisely once the telegraph, the telephone, the computers and the internet appeared, we are the witnesses of the mediated communication process. Even though this type of communication has a lot of deficiencies, it seems that the advantages are bigger than the costs. Without the economic element, the mediated communication process is not possible. Claude Shannon was one of the first researchers on the mediated communication. „Among all the contributions to the present increase of interest in models, that of Shannon's is the most important. Based on the technical part of communication, Shannon's mathematical formulations motivated most of the subsequent research.“ (Johnson 1961:13)

The model he designed was the result of the research done in mediate communication in Bell Telephone laboratories. The questions this model is trying to answer are the following: How many of the signals broadcast by a transmitter are disturbed by jamming, so that in the end they are altogether cancelled? What kind of channel can broadcast the greatest number of messages? „Communication is characterized here as a linear and one-way process. The model establishes five functions which must be fulfilled and identifies a dysfunctional factor: jamming.“ (McQuail 2010:22)

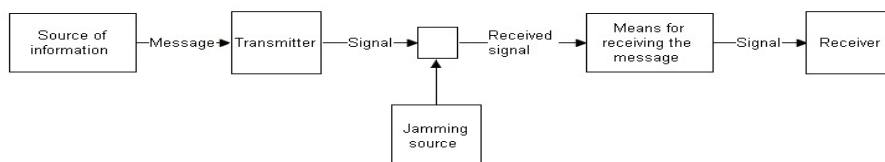


Figure 3
Source: Denis Mcquail, Communication models

The element which Shannon and Weaver's model points out is the emphasis on jamming in the communication circuit. Only by investments in communication equipments we can eliminate interference and achieve a quality communication. Through these investments we will have products which satisfy the market demand. This way we enter in the economic process of technologically mediated communication. This type of communication increases commercial exchanges as well as the number of the people involved in the process so that all the involved factors have costs and economic benefits.

6. Defining the mass media concept

The concept of mass media has been taken over in Romanian current speech only after 1990, when the supply of newspapers, radio and TV stations extended. Although this term is currently used, it is neither easily expressed nor familiar to our culture, therefore it is little understood. The term „mass media“, deeply rooted in American specialized culture and literature, has been brought together with the development of Romanian media institutions. Actually, we are dealing with a term made up of two parts: the English word „mass“, meaning „the mass of consumers“ and the Latin word „medium“ with its plural form „media“, meaning „means“. It's a concept which points to the support on which messages are fixed. „If the first element of this structure is clear, the second one proves to be a source of conceptual and linguistic ambiguities“ (Coman 1999:19). Obviously, this word symbiosis from different languages and cultures leaves a lot of room for further discussions.

Yves Lavoine analyzes a few different possible interpretations of this term. The concept of „media“ refers simultaneously to several things:

- a technique or a set of message generating techniques and designing of manageable supports – which involves a certain time of transport;
- an instantaneous message transmission to a terminal (screen, receiver) via a specific channel (Hertzian waves, cable);
- a set of messages generated with the help of these techniques;
- a set of organizations which create or treat these messages.“ (Lavoine 1997:34-35)

From an economic perspective, this concept is very rich, comprising both the production aspect, „the designing of messages“ and the distribution aspect, „the message transmission“. At the same time, the word „media“ includes the technological set, that is the technical and managerial aspects. In the extended sense, presented by Lavoine, the term „media“ seems to comprise as in a capsule the richness of economic information which accurately depicts the media industry.

The authors of the Mass media Dictionary show that „the concept *media* refers simultaneously to a certain technique, a way of using the technique, an established public, some specific institutions and certain types or forms of expression.“ (Balle 1997:149)

According to this definition, the concept of „media“ includes several economic elements. The „technical aspect and the way of using the technique“ suggests the idea of organization, a crucial element of the managerial process within the enterprise economy. This element involves the necessity of purchasing technical equipments both by the institution which generates media content and by the people interested in receiving these messages. So, a chain of producers and beneficiaries

is present in this system, which contributes to commercial exchange and afflux of capital.

As far as the „established public“ is concerned, we have in mind the potential beneficiaries of the services provided by the press institutions, in other words the target market. Another market related aspect is suggested by the public, who will buy the required devices in order to receive the messages in accordance with the channel by which they are broadcast. Here we refer to radios, TV sets, computers, tablets, smart phones, etc. This market is in full progress and is diversifying; the demand is growing and the supply is more and more adapted to the market requirements.

The „institutions“ the above definition refers to direct our attention to the industrial nature of media institutions. „All the system is set into motion by an industrial logic and is based on the freedom of speech and freedom of information exactly in the way they are influenced and protected by political regimes and in the way they are understood both by generators and distributors of information and culture and their public.“ (Radu, Preoteasa 2012:10)

7. The economic extend of communication

Direct communication is a base element in the interpersonal economic coherency. Direct communication is a human characteristic whereby man is distinguishable from the animals, as Aristotel stated: “As long as the voice does not serve but to express joy and pain, it belongs also to other animals...speech serve in expressing useful and useless thoughts, therefore, just and unjust. Compared to other animals, a characteristic of the man is the sense of good and wrong, the sense of just and unjust and the sense of other moral concepts. The family and the citadel are born through these senses.” (Aristotel cited by Gheorghe Popescu 2009:39) A family or a citadel is created with the help of economic activity of production or by economic exchanges. When we refer to the family, we have economic overtones starting from the wedding. These economic overtones are managed by relationship and communication. A home, raising children, education and the daily life are targets we can reach to, only by economic means. In terms of the citadel, things are mostly the same only to a larger scale, depending on the size of the citadel. Communication plays an important role through this process. Without communication, the economic losses are huge. In some cases, appropriate communication can bring to profits or loosing.

Unlike direct communication, mediated communication has more economic elements. In this case, communication assumes equipments which need production, marketing and exploitation costs. If we stick to the cellar phone and to the tablet, industry developed on this segment had responded to the market demand. The demand is generated by the behavior of the communication equipment consumer. This demand has extended to the market of voice and data telephony services. These kinds of companies gain high profits through phone subscription. The market demand has brought to establishing national and multinational companies which have the purpose to product and merchandise the instruments that mediate interpersonal communication. This way, the distance is reduced and the communication process is facilitated. In the same time, mediated communication process is an economic accelerant.

Mass-media communication has much more economic substance than direct communication or mediated communication. Mass-media industry occupies an important space in the public and economic life. Mass-media economy is part of every country's economic system because of the investments that are needed for establishing the media company's and by rolling business from media area. Picard gives the following definition of mass-media economy: "The way mass-media operators try to fulfill the information need as well as the entertainment desire of the audience, of the advertisers and of the society using the resources they have. Mass-media economy studies the factors that influence the production of mass-media goods and services and the way in which these products are allocated to consumers." (Picard 1987:7) Media institution is an economic entity. In Romania, any media business is running with the help of a commercial company. This way, media industry interrelates with other components of the economic system. „Media economics provides a means to understand the activities and functions of media companies as economic institutions. Only by understanding individual media companies as business entities can one fully appreciate their conduct within society. An understanding of media economics strengthens our understanding of the role and function of mass media in society. At a theoretical level, media economics complements existing mass communication theory by adding important dimensions regarding the structure, conduct, and performance of media firms and industries; the interplay of economics, policy, and regulation; and audience behaviors and preferences." (Albarran 2004:305)

8. Conclusions

The means of communication have always been important, whether we speak of agrarian, industrial or informational society. In the first stage, companies that provided transport services had to handle the agricultural products which were supposed to be carried to the markets or consumers. In order to carry out these services efficiently, roads were built to enable merchandise transport. During industrial age, the necessity of transport still remained crucial, but there was a slight change in products. This time energy was the main product which needed transporting. Whether we speak of the transport of coal, oil, gas or electrical power, the industry dependence on energy and, implicitly, on energy transporters is indisputable. This situation led to the building of main pipe lines for energy transport. Nowadays, informational society needs information transport. Of course, goods and energy are still being transported today, but our society will hardly do without communication main lines. In order to meet the existing needs in this respect, we witness a development of the communication infrastructure. Contemporary progress is strongly connected to network communication development. Whether we refer to internet, fiber or wireless networks, all of them transport each and every second huge amounts of information.

In the present paper we have tried to define the notion of communication and delimit the concepts of direct communication, mediate communication and mass media communication. Unlike usual approach, we have brought to light the economic elements of the communication process. In this respect, we have tried to show that both linguistic structure and the subsequent definitions of the communication notion contain an ample economic feature.

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Communication among people can be achieved on the basis of direct and indirect relationships. As far as direct relationships are concerned, personal communication takes place when people are in immediate proximity of each other and in the communication process they interact and influence one another. Nowadays, mass media is both a producer and a distributor of information in a communication based society.

From an historic point of vew, during mankind development, the communication process passes through a transition from direct communication to technologically mediated communication and than to mass-media communication. These three different types of communication are differentiated by the economic contribution. In the case of direct communication, the economic contribution is almost insignificant. In technologically mediated communication, the economic contribution is substantially larger but in mass-media communication, economic contribution is capital. Having this context in mind, we wonder if economic interests are more important than the cultural interests, politic interest or any other kind of interests.

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