

WEEK 5

ORGANIZATIONAL COHERENCE THROUGH CULTURE AND POWER

- Culture
- Communication
- Power

Culture

a/Typical views on culture

Ball et al. for instance see culture to be 'the sum total of the beliefs, rules, techniques, institutions, and artefacts that characterize human populations'.

Human populations are thus clustered in cultural communities, that is, groupings or cultural units, characterized by the sum total of beliefs, rules, techniques, institutions and artifacts.

Culture

Formation: Such communities are formed through the:

- Establishment of an essential identity that is based on similarity and difference.
- Representation and expression of such similarity and difference.
- Construction of values, ideals of excellence, norms of behavior.

Culture

Thus of corporate cultures: Considering the total of beliefs, rules, techniques and artifacts of business organizations, such institutions display corporate culture.

Consequence: The institutionalization of corporate cultures sets distinctions between an “us” of the cultural community and a “them” that which lies outside of the community.

Culture

Cultural strategies: Making distinctions between “us” and “them” is the result of a number of cultural strategies adopted by the organization which mainly includes:

- A focus on “us”: imagining the community to have particular endowments which give it a sense of superiority – “we are the best” discourse.
- A focus on “them”: expressing the “other” as inferior by naturalizing, stereotyping and objectifying the “other” as competitor and arch-enemy

Culture

Corporate culture seems to be drawing exclusively on a structural-functionalist myth-ology.

This is a mechanistic view of culture as a precondition for success and which requires from managers to fix culture as a distinct entity, as a monoculture.

Culture

A top-down imposition of a desirable culture makes that collaboration and integration are contrived and the values to be shared are imposed from above.

Empirical findings tend to confirm this tendency and to conclude that corporate culture as a management tool has not been as impressive as one has been led to think.

Culture

b/Culture revisited:

Therefore, culture should be seen as a way of perceiving, thinking and doing.

This view, consistent with the relational approach, emphasizes the constitution of open, plural, and changing cultural units that interact with their environment; what characterizes cultures there is change and mobility.

Culture

Consequences: This view breaks away with approaches that see culture to be

- A monolith
- Fixed in time
- Essential for organizational effectiveness and efficiency

Of importance: if there are various ways of thinking there are various ways to express such thinking via language, and thus various ways of doing, thus of behaving.

Communication

But how is then communication and relationship-building possible since with various ways of thinking and doing there cannot be agreement?

Communication: Typically, communication is considered to be the exchange of messages between people for the purpose of achieving a commonly understood purpose or meaning

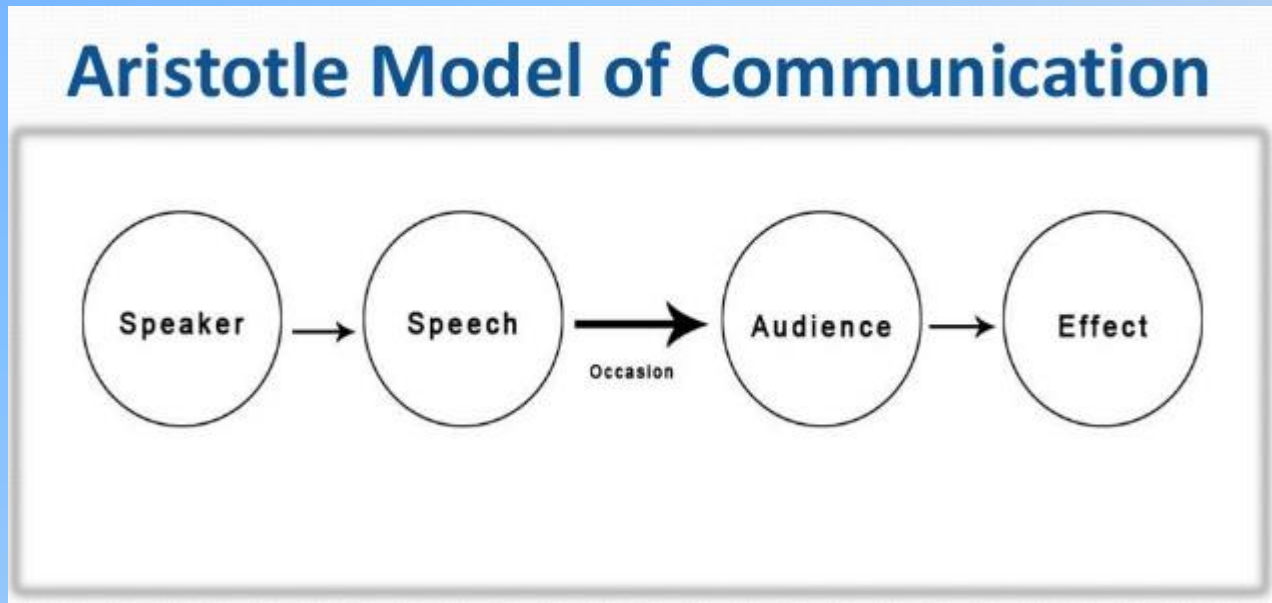
Communication

a/Types: Typically, means of communication include:

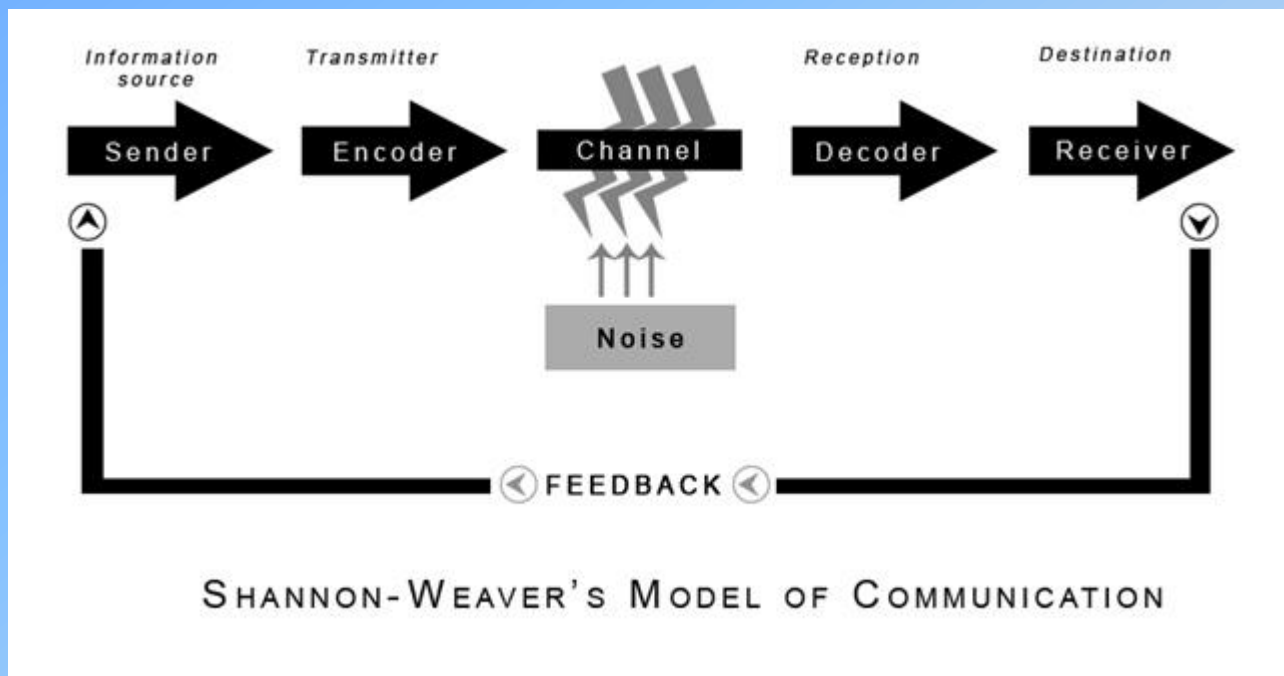
- Written communication
- Oral communication
- Non verbal communication
- Body language:
 - Proxemics
 - Paralanguage
 - Object language

Communication

b/Models

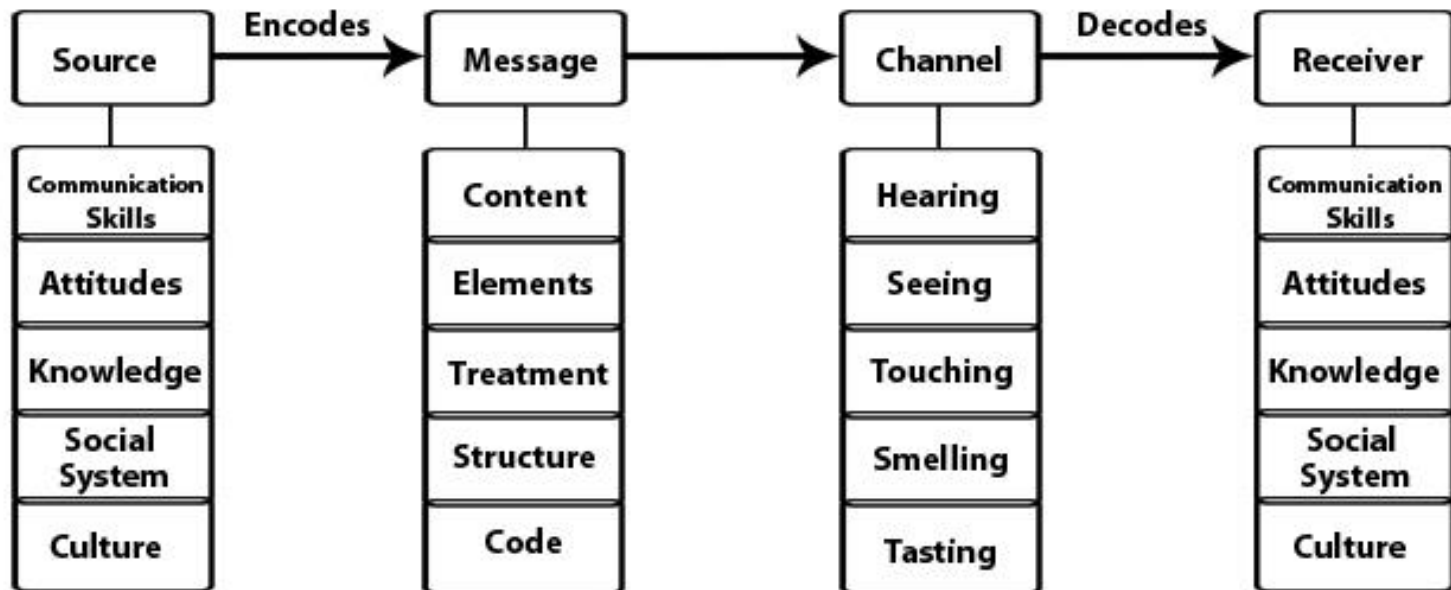


Communication



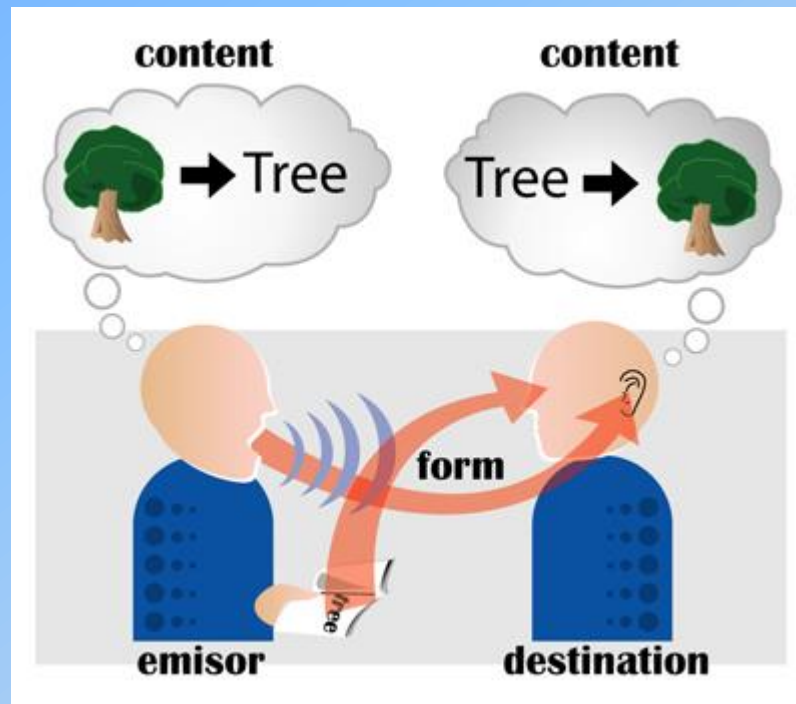
Communication

Berlos's SMCR Model of communication



Communication

Bottom-line, communication resembles this:



Is it so?

Communication

c/Critique

1. The transmission model places undue emphasis on what is exchanged rather than what meanings are exchanged
2. The model considers communication as an exchange of words and sentences whose meaning is assumed to be known beforehand whereas communication is about the active construction of meaning rather than the use of ready made linguistic templates.

Communication

Consequence: Communication should be seen as the attempt to find or establish a commonality; it is about a 'mise en commun'.

Communication therefore occurs only when the organization and its stakeholders have something in common – be it the business purpose – and this is not only known but also understood as such.

Communication

It also acknowledges that if such a result is an ideal, in practice language will not render communication effective.

So what is the answer to this: *But how is then communication and relationship-building possible with various ways of thinking?*

The mise-en-commun is a permanent effort and at times struggle. Being aware of this should point the right direction as to what efforts communicative perfection entails!

Power

If the mise-en-commun involves effort, it is then a function of power.

Power is typically seen as an ability that is associated with an effect or the action that a person carries out because of the actions of another person.

Power

b/Sources of power

<u>Expert Power</u>	Power of information or knowledge which may come through professional development and formal education, possessing specific information, or extended experience.
<u>Referent Power</u>	The nature and strength of a relationship between two or more people (i.e., a senior member of a group whose words carry great weight in the group discussion).
<u>Legitimate Power</u>	This results from the formal role a person holds, usually because he or she has the responsibility and authority to exert some degree of power; however, legitimate power is fragile.
<u>Coercive Power</u>	Influences individuals or groups through imposing or threatening punitive sanctions or removing rewards or benefits, which results in behavior change but also great costs to relationships.
<u>Reward Power</u>	influences behavior through the ability to deliver positive outcomes and desired resources.

Power

b/Centered approaches

The existence of sources and means of power are used to determine the behavior of another person. Such traditional approaches assume a center where such power is concentrated.

Typically there are two such centering tendencies:

tendency	Main critic
Economic: owning capital	Marx
Legal: assuming authority positions	Weber

Power

c/De-entered approaches

Foucauldian Power

- Traditional power - monolithic, hierarchical, clearly visible, embodied in the law, is written, and is negative (based in prohibition).
- Foucauldian
 - localized - physical organization of space shapes the knowledge and power that are possible and that can be harnessed.
 - omni-present - rather than something invoked only at specific times power is always in play.
 - dialectically related to knowledge - power draws from existing knowledge, relies on it, shapes it; knowledge influences the type and location of effective power.
 - Again: power/knowledge