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*Assignment : Compare and contrast models of communication*

This essay will consider five models of communication – Linear, Circular, Argyles, Hargies and Hartleys. An assumption is made of the reader that he/she is familiar with the diagrammatic structure of the five models of communication. Each model will be described and analysed. The similarities and dissimilarities of each model will be considered in turn. The models of communication in this text will represent one individual to another but not individual to group or group -to-group communication. We will begin by looking at what is model.

A model is a scaled down representation or a simplified version of the real thing.  
Hartley (1999) page 31

A model of communication is a scaled down representation that has the important characteristics and components of the real thing. This allows us to understand, analyse and describe communication in a structured form. Hartley (1999) page 32

What follows next are five models of communication.

The Linear model of communication is a method of passing information from one individual to another through a channel where noise may be present. The information flows in one direction only. As a result the receiver cannot respond to the transmitter. E.g. Instructions on a dictaphone. Hartley (1999) page 23

This method puts a great emphasis on the transmitters ability to convey the information in a logical manner whereby misinterpretation is minimal. This in turn puts equal emphasis on the listeners ability to understand the conveyed information. This model is the only one to feature noise and as a result noise is not considered a disadvantage. Hartley (1999) page 18

This models main disadvantage is not having feedback. As a result communication is one-way only. Hartley (1999) page 23

The Circular model of communication is a method of passing information from one individual to another through a medium. The information flows in a circular direction. As a result the receiver can respond to the transmitter. E.g. A telephone conversation. This model puts less emphasis on the transmitter ability to convey the information because the receiver is able to respond to the transmitter until understanding is reached. Hartley (1999) page 18

This model main advantage is feedback. As a result communication is two-way. Hartley (1999) page 23

The most striking similarity of both the Linear and Circular model of communication is the fact that individuals are not FACE-TO-FACE. There is always a medium between them.

To a lesser degree the one individual is seen as being active and the other being passive, both the transmitter and receiver respectively in both models.

Argyle's social skills model of communication is a method of passing information from one individual to another. The information takes the form of a goal or an objective. E.g. Person A has a business proposition and needs person B involvement. In order to convey this goal or objective the individual takes into account his/her own thoughts and observation of the other person. E.g. person A sees person B to be a risk taker. Hartley (1999) page 46

The individual then decides on a plan or course of action. E.g. Person A makes an appointment and plans what he/she will say to person B.

The individual puts the plan or course into action. E.g. Person A explains the business proposition to person B.

The individual will observe the reaction and behaviour of the other person and act and adapt accordingly. Person A observes a look of excitement on person B face and he/she will expand on the proposition in more detail. Hartley (1999) page 47

This method of communication deals with the interaction of two individuals that are face-to-face. One individual has a goal or objective. The feedback is in the form of the other person reactions, verbal and non-verbal (facial expression, gaze, gesture, etc). A lot of emphasis is on one individual's perception of the other. If the other person is perceived wrongly the conversation will be misinterpreted. Hartley (1999) page 48

The main disadvantage of the model is the assumption that the other individual has no goals or objectives of their own.

The most striking feature of this model includes the fact that individuals are FACE-TO-FACE, individuals communicate non-verbally and an individual's idea of perception.

Similar to previous models one individual is seen as active and the other is passive in this communication model. The individuals are not seen as equal.

Hargie's social skills model of communication is an updated version of Argyle's social skills model of communication. This model includes the fact that both individuals have their own goals and objectives, which may differ from each other. E.g. an interviewer's goal is to see if the interviewee is right for the job and the interviewee is trying to impress the interviewer. They both have their own perception of one another. And feedback is based on the reactions and behaviour of both individuals. This model both individuals have equal emphasis on communication. And both are influenced by each other's thoughts and emotions. Hartley (1999) page 51 & 52  
This model has all the same features as Argyle's model and all the weaknesses have been addressed.

What sets this model apart from the above models is the fact that both individuals are seen as being equal. Hartley (1999) page 48

Hartley's model of communication adds important characteristics to the components of Hargie's social skills model of communication. In this model social context is introduced between one individual and another. Also both individuals have their own social identity and perception. And both individuals are aware of each other's identity and perception. Hartley (1999) page 34

In this model communication is dependant on the context of time and place. How each individual sees his/her role in society and how they see each other. It also dictates reaction and behaviour of individuals. And how individuals express themselves to each other. E.g. Headmaster communicating with a student -

Headmaster has an air of authority, student perceives this and behave accordingly in the context of their environment, college. Hartley (1999) page 36

This model has the following characteristics: always between one individual and another individual, always face to face, i.e. observe facial expression and body language, always two way with feedback, meaning and social roles and relationships. These characteristics are known as interpersonal communication skills.

To conclude, all the models can be split into their appropriate forms. The first two models are mediated forms of communication between two individuals that are not face-to-face. The last three models are communication between two individuals that are face-to-face. As we progress from one model to another the communication structure improves.

The Hartleys model of communication is considered the ideal model of communication between two individuals because it has all the important characteristic and components for interpersonal communication.

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