

ANALYSIS REGARDING THE AXIOMS AND PARADIGMS OF COMMUNICATION IN SPORTS

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Abstract

"The notion of paradigm is correlated to the one of meaning. The purpose of any mental process is to contribute to the emergence of a meaning. The paradigm is a coherent ensemble of representations that serve as frame of reference for the research community in a scientific field. Through the paradigm, the external reality is transformed into internal, cognitive reality, into representation, and is developed due to the mental framework" (Georgescu M., 2007).

Each of us lives in societies that a priori impose norms of communication and behavior. Thus, the only method of gaining information is the cognitive processing, the instruments of study being excluded. Because of the subjectivity and impartiality of the researchers, who often tend to confuse the interior and the exterior, the subject and the object, the paradigm transforms into reality. What remains fundamental, however, is the fact that the paradigm must not be the central focus of the researcher's attention, because this is the only shield against the feeling of power of scientism.

Keywords: information, reality, behavior

Introduction

Communication, just like any other social field, has rules, principles, and axioms. The Palo Alto school of thought considers communication to be an ongoing and circular process that takes place continuously on multiple levels, through various means. V. Tran quotes Paul Watzlawick in his book, saying that "we are permanently bound by the rules of communication, but the rules themselves, the grammar of communication, are things that we do not know" (Tran, V., Stăngiucelu, I., 2003).

The Palo Alto school of thought concludes that everything is communication. "Communication is the new term that expresses man's relation with the world. Communication provides the rules for understanding everything in the world, because science, art, or everyday practices are nothing but sectors contained in the all-comprising communication. Communication shall reflect the entire game of reason and its activities." (Tran, V., Stăngiucelu, I., 2003)

2. Aim, hypothesis, and research methods

This paper sets out to analyze the communication axioms and paradigms, aiming to see how they are found in the sports communication process.

Considering its aim, this research started from the following working hypothesis

A knowledge of the communication axioms and paradigms could improve communication, both at an informational and at a relational level, during the training process of professional athletes, and also during the physical education lessons.

The main research method of this study was the documentation method, meaning the study of the professional literature, aiming to capture as many opinions of the communication specialists as possible regarding the axioms and paradigms of this process.

3. Results of the research

Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin, and Don Jackson wrote together "*Pragmatics of Human Communication*," containing several axioms of human communication, which will be presented and explained, as follows:

Axiom 1. "One cannot not communicate."

According to this axiom, the human beings are not able to not communicate, whether they want to or not. Even when people do not talk, they still transmit a nonverbal message. Communication is not always intentional. Consciously or unconsciously, people express something. "Verbal communication is just the tip of a giant iceberg that encompasses the entire behavior of an individual organically integrated in a whole comprising other types of behavior - tone, posture, context." (Tran, V., Stănguicelu, I., 2003)

Axiom 2. "Every communication has a content and relationship aspect such that the latter classifies the former and is therefore a metacommunication."

"According to the nature of the relation between communicators, the same information can be transmitted in a different tone, in various forms, obviously with different results. If the informational misunderstandings can be resolved through verification (confronting verified sources), the relational ones can easily and irremediably degenerate. An irritated or mocking tone, a defying look, could lead to an interruption in communication. The relation can be expressed verbally, but especially nonverbally and paraverbally. (Zamfir, V., M., 2012)

"An interesting relation is found between the two aspects of communication: the more a relationship is spontaneous and healthy, the more the relationship aspect of communication takes on a secondary role. On the contrary, the unhealthy relationship is characterized by an endless debate on the nature of relationship, and the content of communication ends by losing any importance." (Tran, V., Stănguicelu, I., 2003)

Axiom 3. "The nature of a relationship is contingent upon the punctuation of the communicational sequences between the communicants."

During the communication between two people, each of them tends to have an initiative, or they are interdependent.

Axiom 4. "Human communication involves both digital and analog modalities."

The human being has the ability to communicate both with gestures, and with words. For this reason, the author characterizes the analog modality as being the nonverbal communication, with a much larger spectrum than the digital communication, limited by words and language.

Axiom 5. "All communicational interchanges are either symmetrical or complementary, depending on whether they are based on equality or difference."

Thus, the communicators adopt a symmetrical position (horizontal communication) if they have the same status (teacher - teacher, president - president, employee - employee), or an asymmetrical one, based on differences, also known as vertical communication, meaning from one person of a lower status to one person of a higher status (employee - manager, teacher - student, teacher - principal, etc.).

Axiom 6. "Communication is irreversible."

Once the communication process has started, it cannot be interrupted. Once the message is transmitted, there is no chance to interrupt its course to the receptor. Once the message is emitted and received, it has a certain effect (noticeable or not) on the receiver.

Axiom 7. "Communication presupposes adjustment and accommodation processes."

The way in which the receptor decodes the information can be different from the way in which the emitter tries to transmit it. This can be due to differences between the communicators. These differences can refer to material, emotional factors, or life experience being different for each one, or language skills. These differences can influence the understanding of words with different meaning used by the communicators.

It must be noted that the Palo Alto school tries for the first time to give communication a logical form, a framework of rules that could serve as basis. These axioms, however, are disparate, because they are extracted from various social situations, from different types of communication.

"The notion of *paradigm* is correlated to the one of meaning. The purpose of any mental process is to contribute to the emergence of a meaning. The paradigm is a coherent ensemble of

representations that serve as frame of reference for the research community in a scientific field. Through the paradigm, the external reality is transformed into internal, cognitive reality, into representation, and is developed due to the mental framework" (Georgescu M., 2007).

The structural paradigm is a communication model that focuses mostly on the intrapsychic side, putting its mark on the personality, emphasizing its importance. The world is built according to the vital needs of each individual. Thus, the analysis of communication is limited to the analysis of the impulses of the subject that analyzes them, and make the individual react. Both the outer mental structure, and the deeper one determine manifestations in the subject.

In opposition with behaviorism - which held the individual's behavior as the only quantifiable element - this paradigm created by Sigmund Freud gives the subject depth and consistency, without excluding the individual's structure from the scientific discourse. Freud's psychoanalytic theory shows that the impulses of communication can be expressed through desires and through the expressive-repressive balance of each individual. The emitter - receiver relation is determined by the need of the emitter. From this point of view, behavior cannot be exclusively correlated with the external stimuli, because behavior is primarily in accord with the psyche and instincts. The behavior itself, and especially the communication method, represents "an effect of the deepness order, of the expressive-repressive balance" (Georgescu, M., 2007).

The transactional paradigm extends its interest toward relating, interaction, and ways to code/decode the messages. The essential elements are found within the message. Eric Berne formulated a theory adapted from the Freudian structure (id, ego and super-ego).

"Irreducibly, there are three ego states:

The Child ego (archeopsyche) - indicates the emotional stage of the personality, free of constrictions, centered on adapted - defensive - or rebel living. The message contains the desire in its direct expression, through which one can manipulate and control, and is supported by positive or negative emotions.

The Adult ego (neopsyche) - represents the rational aspect through which the individual estimates probabilities and decides according to the elements of reality. The messages generated by this ego state have an important resolute component, founded on analysis, comparison, negotiation, learning.

The Parent ego (exteropsyche) - structured according to the principle of duty, it can be associated with the imperative *must*, and it has a restrictive and a protective component. The message, the communication, are analyzed, decomposed, according to the three states, even if they do not 'produce' pure information, but are interdependent" (Georgescu, M., 2007).

The relational paradigm is based on the fact that the central element in socializing is relating. The predominant element is the relation between the individuals and the environment in which they develop. Communication is understood through interaction, thus, through relating. This is meant to transpose the individual in society, far from loneliness.

Communication is thus achieved through two modalities: analog and digital.

"The two-channel communication model comes from the history of computers: the first computers functioned with discrete and positive values (data *analog*), while the current, *digital* systems use the functional principle 'all or nothing'. In analog communication, represented by everything that is communicated nonverbally, there are direct relations (through analogy) with the designated objects (e.g., the crossed hands and legs transmit closure). Digital communication is the verbal one: when an object is named, an arbitrary relation with a word is stated. The relation is arbitrary because, for instance, there is no rule stating that the word "cat" is the only one right to designate, in English, that particular animal. This type of relation is a semantic convention behind which there is no image correlation (by analogy) between the word and the designated object (there is nothing "cat-like" in the word cat). In digital "all or nothing" communication, not knowing the relation between object and word produces the total loss of the message (if instead of the word "cat" one would use the inexistent word "isfig," the sentence "isfig drinks milk" would not make any specific sense, but a potential variety of significations). In a phylogenetic order, analog communication is in front of digital communication. The human being's installment in culture presupposed passing to the digital language, which allowed a rigorous exchange of information, impossible through nonverbal language."

Among these communication paradigms in the professional literature (ran, V., Stăngiucelu, I., 2003), there is the analysis of the study of communication using the concepts of the process school and the semiotic school, synthesized by John Fiske (Introduction to Communication Studies).

The process school highlights the way in which the communication channels are used, considering that used incorrectly they can influence the accuracy of the message. The process school, as its name says it, sees communication as an expression process, during which the emitters transmit their own states of mind, thoughts, feelings. If the message that the emitter wants to transmit is not received correctly, this is failed communication, from the point of view of the process school.

The semiotic school differs from the process school in that the main concern are not the communication channels, but the transmitted significations. It studies more the way in which the message is reproduced by people to produce meanings. In case of a communication misunderstanding, it is not considered a failure, but more of an emphasis of the cultural differences between the emitter and the receptor.

Another difference between the two schools of thought is that the process school believes the message is primordial, and takes into consideration if there is an intentional communication, while the semiotic school sees the message as an ensemble of signs.

The process school contained icons of communication studies, experts whose works are still cited today. Some of these were Shannon & Weaver, Gerbner, Laswell, Newcomb, and last but not least, Westley and MacLean. Each of them created a model of communication that will be presented in what follows.

Shannon & Weaver's communication model is linear, consisting of an information source, a transmitter, a signal, a noise, a receiver, and an information destination.

Ioan Drăgan (Paradigme ale comunicării de masă - "Paradigms of mass communication") writes that this theory answers two questions:

- What is the fastest and safest way to send information?
- How can one ensure an exact match between the received and the emitted information?

The first question is answered by the effectiveness of communication, especially during World War II.

Regarding the matching of information, the experts study the accuracy with which the message is sent using symbols, the precision of the symbols transmitted according to the desired meaning, and how much the behavior of the receptor is modified, according to the wishes of the emitter.

The second icon of the process school of thought is Gerbner, who also designed a communication model, a bit more complex than Shannon & Weaver's.

This model brings innovations to the communication studies, integrating elements such as perception, state of the receptor after perceiving the event, means of communication.

According to V. Tran (2003), this model recounts the perception process horizontally. At the origin of the communication process there is the perception of an event. When the event is perceived, the one perceiving it will create a link between the event and his/her own creative and cognitive experience, a reaction taking place that can be expressed through various means.

The vertical axis of communication controls the relationship between the one who perceives and the message. This axis comprises every means used in the creation, transmission and distribution of messages. These means allow the transformation of a reaction into a perceivable message.

Laswell created a conceptual framework for the messages of mass communication and especially the media. Through this model, one can easily analyze the control of the messages, the contents of the messages, but also the means of communication, the audience, and the effects of the communication process.

This model is based on answering the following questions:

- Who?
- Says what?
- In Which Channel?
- To Whom?
- With What Effect?

This framework sees communication as strictly sending messages, of which the effects are more important than their significance.

For Newcomb's communication model, communication is simple.

"This model suggests, not explicitly, that people need information. In a democracy, information is usually seen as a right, but people do not realize that information is first and foremost a necessity. Without it, people can't feel a part of the society. We must have the right information about our social

environment in order to know how to react to it, and to identify in our reaction factors that we can share with the members of the group, subculture or culture that we are part of." (Tran, V., Stăngiucelu, I., 2003)

The models of the *semiotic* school of thought, elaborated by Peirce, Ogden and Richards, or Saussure, do not emphasize the communication channels and means, but the significance of the message. Peirce's model shows that "a sign refers to something else than itself (the object) and is understood by somebody: this is the effect that it produces in the mind of the receiver (interpretant).

According to Peirce, there are three types of signs. The *icon*, a sign based on a similarity with the real object, the *index*, a sign that has a real relation but no similarity with reality, functioning as a reference, and the *symbol*, which is strictly determined by an interpretation, without having a physical relation or similarity with the object. This is more of a representative and is generally known.

Ogden and Richards' communication model corresponds to Peirce's model, but introduces another element, the causality.

Conclusions and Discussions

All of the above aspects support the fact that communication is the term expressing the human being's relation to the world. Athletic activity cannot be taken out of this context, especially considering that it has been proven what role it plays in socializing and not only. In their attempts to explain why people - especially children - start practicing sports, most researchers said that "need" and "motivation" can be considered necessary conditions, but they are not enough to explain the phenomenon.

The importance of integration of the sociological and psychological factors in the socialization theory and in research was highlighted by Brustard, "the study of socialization and motivation in sports must go hand in hand" (Brustard, R., J., 1993).

The result of the researches and studies indicates multiple motivations for the children's involvement in sports, among which mostly "learning and improving their skills", "taste for competition", "company of friends", "physical fitness", "fun", "desire to confront the challenges of the competition" and to "experience success". All of these are however dependent on the way in which children receive information, but especially the way in which they understand messages transmitted on different channels.

Thus, differences in message perception were recorded on genders. In most studies, the motivations related to "accomplishment" and "competition" seem to be more important for boys. On the other hand, for girls the social motivations are more important.

After the analysis of all these aspects, it can be said that the secret of success for children and youths is a mixture of social affiliation with competition elements, in various dosage and forms, within an environment that is stimulating for learning, with travels that increase the team cohesion and bring more fun to the athletic experience.

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