

Chapter 1

1. How does Wood define communication, and with what consequences?

Wood defines communication as a (1) systemic process in which individuals interact with and through symbols to create and interpret meanings, (2) Process oriented, and (3) always involving interpreting meaning.

Consequences: (1) If you tweak the system, you fundamentally alter the future communication. (2) We have our own communication histories and vocabularies (complex and dynamic) It is a process, thus it is hard to tell whether it stops or starts. We cannot freeze communication at any one moment (3) symbols are arbitrary; not the same for everyone.

2. What are potential professional, personal, relational and cultural impacts of communication?

Personal: We gain personal identity through communication. Interaction with peers shapes our self-image. Children isolated for long periods of time had little sense of their identity as humans. Media affects self-image as well.

Relational: We build connections with people by revealing private identities, sharing history, resolving conflicts, relational maintenance. A primary distinction between couples that endure and those that collapse is effective communication. Professional: Success in most professions requires communication skills. Persuasive, effective arguments; presenting ideas and responding to others; specialized language in each setting. Cultural: Comm. Skills important for the health of our society. Express and evaluate ideas (presidential debates), interact with diverse groups, be critical of media presentations

3. What are the major areas of study in communication?

Performance: roles in which we perform and form identity; Interpersonal: how we speak to others in certain contexts; Intrapersonal: how we speak to ourselves; Organizational: patterns of comm. With work settings (morale, productivity, and commitment); Group/Team: working in small groups; Public: formal speaking; New Media: comm in association with new technologies

4. Why are symbols so important to the study of communication?

Human communication depends on symbols. Symbols are important because they are arbitrary, abstract, and ambiguous and not the same for everyone. They include all of language, including non verbal.

Chapter 3

5. How do polar opposites of determinism and free will matter to communication theory?

Determinism is the idea that conditions in life are predetermined (usually by biology or environment). Free will is the idea that the individual creates his own destiny. Communication Theory involves mostly the study of meaning-making. But the most basic of any theory is its ontological premise.

6. What is ontology? What is epistemology?

Ontology is the study of assumptions about human nature. The crux of the controversy is whether humans had free will, and if so, how much? Epistemology is the study of knowledge and how it is attained. Is knowledge based on the existence of phenomena or human perceptions?

7. What methods do communication researchers often use in their studies?

Communication researchers use objectivity, and are uninfluenced by biases and personal feelings or any other subjectivity. Reality to them is material and external to the human mind. It starts with a hypothesis (testable predictions) or a research question (specifies phenomena but no prediction). If the research is quantitative then they use statistics, surveys, and experiments. If qualitative, then textual analysis, ethnographies, and critical analysis are used. They assess research by validity, reliability, and significance.

8. What's the difference between qualitative and quantitative analysis?

Qualitative analysis is when researchers wish to understand the character of experience, particularly how people perceive and make sense of their communication experience. Quantitative analysis gather information that can be counted and then interprets data to make arguments on what the info reveals on communication behaviors.

Chapter 5

9. What are the assumptions and aims of symbolic interaction?

George Meade, Symbolic Interaction is how symbols form our identities (ontological). Mostly concerned with the mind and the self, neither of which we have at birth. According to Meade, our lives are deterministic. Meaning, the vocab of our culture determines how and what we become. A culture gets communicated by preferred terms. *Looking glass self*: Our perceptions of how others see us lenses us how we see ourselves.

10. What are the aims and assumptions of Narrative Paradigm?

Walter Fisher, Narrative Paradigm: Humans are natural storytellers. We make sense of our experiences in life by transforming them into narratives, stories (epistemological). It's how we perceive the world and communicate with others. The assumption is storytelling is an ongoing process, and one as natural as breathing. We are mostly persuaded by good stories.

11. Explain how narrative coherence and narrative fidelity work.

Fisher, Narrative Coherence: Degree to which a story makes sense and compares to other similar stories. (*ex: you may hear two sides of a story*) N. Fidelity: extent to which a story resonates with listeners' personal experiences and beliefs. We find stories believable when they are consistent with our pre-existing beliefs. This affects how we interpret meaning (*ex: he judge a character's actions as admirable/detestable by our pre-existing view on their actions*)

12. What are the parts of the Pentad, and what is it supposed to do if used appropriately?

Kenneth Burke, Dramatism: The act, what is done by a person (*insult, caress, etc*); the scene, the context in which interaction occurs (*physical location, cultural setting, historical era*); agent, the individual or group that performs and acts; agency, the means an agent uses to accomplish the act (*channels of comm, strategies, physical violence, etc*); and the purpose, the goal of the act. It can analyze and understand human symbolic activity.

Chapter 6

13. What are the aims and assumptions of Dramaturgy?

Goffman, Dramaturgy: likens everyday social interaction to a theatrical performance; thus setting or context is the stage, people are actors, and those who watch are the audience. Everyday we play a role that attempts to project a certain image to the audience. We do this by using frames, models that help us make sense of experience, and these are defined by culture (*ex: In US students are rewarded for participating, in China less participation*) Impression management: managing oneself to create an image within specific situations. The assumption is that we are aware that we are creating performances, but this is not necessarily the case. Ontologically, this assumes that we become who we are through performance. Epistemologically, it assumes we know what we know by being an "audience member".

14. Describe the relationships between performance and identity.

15. How do the concepts of frontstage and backstage work?