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CONTROVERSY OVER THE STATUS OF THE COMMUNICATION TRANSMISSION MODELS

ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the status of the transmission approach to communication. The approach is derived from Claude Shannon's and Warren Weaver's mathematical theory of communication, and is primarily used for the analysis of telecommunications processes. Within the model a metaphorical conceptualisation of communication is adopted, as conveying (transmission) of information (thoughts, emotions) from the mind of a subject A to the mind of a subject B. Despite the great popularity of the transmission approach, it is subjected to multilateral criticism. Alternative approaches were formulated in which the transmission metaphor is exceeded, extended or even overcome (e.g., the constitutive, transactional, or the ritual approaches). This paper discusses such criticism. The doubts are raised primarily by the characteristic reductionism and the postulated exclusivity of the transmission approach. A question arises whether all the possible types of communication activities can be represented within the transmission approach as a transfer of information. In this context, the dispute between the supporters of the universalistic and the relativistic attitudes to the transmission metaphor is discussed. The polemic also concerns the psychologism elements which are present in the transmission models. Wittgenstein's criticism of psychologism conducted within the framework of his everyday language philosophy is of particular importance. The philosophy may be applied to the problem of interpersonal communication. In conclusion it is assumed that the transmission metaphor is important as a tool for the study of many, but not all the aspects of communication. Its importance also lies in the fact that it is the first scientific approach to communication. The exclusivity claims of the transmission model, however, have several limitations, inter alia, it hinders research on the history of communication practices, although the model itself is embedded in a specific historical context.

Keywords: communication; transmission; psychologism; metaphor; universalism.

1. INTRODUCTION

I consider some of the methodological aspects of the problem of defining interpersonal communication. I attempt here to reconstruct (at a glance) the dominant method of building communication models, to identify the potential controversy related to it, and to indicate the types of arguments which are being contested with regard to the transmission metaphor.

Since the turn of the forties and fifties of the twentieth century a number of theoretical models of interpersonal communication have been formulated and have become the subject of intense academic debate. The most common of these is undoubtedly the transmission approach,¹ which refers to a specific metaphorical conceptualisation, used both in everyday, colloquial communication practices, as well as the scientific reflection on the communication. According to Mikołaj Domaradzki:

“the metaphorical conceptualisation of language as a “wire” used for transmission of thought, implies the ability to “insert” meanings into words; by speaking and writing people “pack” their thoughts into words, thus the words include the thoughts, which can then be “transferred the interlocutor.” As a result, successful communication is based on “extracting” the correct meaning of the message-package, in which the sender “packed” (“dressed”) their thoughts” (Domaradzki 2012, 3).

The above quotation contains the most important formulations which may serve to express the everyday as well as the scientific knowledge about communication.

I want to point out several types of controversies related to the transmission approach. The first is the presence of the psychologist (mentalist) elements in it. Very often they are considered to be self-evident, non-negotiable, even axiomatic elements of the communication models. But at the same time they are met with criticism, especially from the representatives of the so-called constitutive, transactionist and ritual approaches to communication. Another issue causing disputes over the transmission models is the reduction of communication activities for the transfer of information. Such a reduction is the “legacy” that modern science of communication inherited from the pioneering study by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, which emerged from the formal sciences: mathematics, cybernetics and computer science. Currently, however, it is emphasized that the transfer of information is one of the very many, but not the only function of communication. The third and final issue which is going to be addressed here directly concerns the transmittance itself—the metaphor of transmission, which imposes a certain way of thinking and talking about it on both researchers and ordinary participants of communication. Is the transmission metaphor wrong?

¹ It is sometimes also referred to as “telegraphic” or “linear.”

Should it be rejected? Maybe rather exceeded and expanded? Is the description of communication in terms of transmission the only possible, i.e., universal way of its representation? And what kind of universalism is it, if we consider the dispute between the supporters of the universalistic and of the relativistic understanding of communication activities?

2. THE ORIGIN OF THE TRANSMISSION COMMUNICATION MODELS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

The roots of the transmission models date back to the very beginnings of scientific reflection on communication phenomena, to Shannon's and Weaver's works. This model, called the "mother of all models," was particularly important for the development of communication science in the twentieth century. It determined a large part of the communication theory and at the same time is probably it the most striking instance of a transmission model. As noted by Emanuel Kulczycki:

the technical-transmission approach to the communication process as a transfer of information/ideas/knowledge since the first half of the twentieth century has gained the attention of a wide range of researchers involved with almost every scientific discipline. The main reason for the success of the transmission models is, according to the researchers, their simplicity, generality, quantitative aspect and compliance with the everyday notion of the communication process (Kulczycki 2012, 2).

Let us consider an assumption that due to the scale and the force of impact of the American researchers' proposals one might venture to speak of the "transmission paradigm" in the framework of scientific reflection on communication.

We must not forget about the foundation on which the paradigm has been constructed and on which it stands to this day. Regardless of whether the transmission model is adopted as the basis for research, or subjected to criticism and rejected, it should be taken into account that the whole paradigm is founded on a strong relationship with mathematics, cybernetics and computer science. At that time Shannon and Weaver worked for the telecommunications industry, and conducted research on the capacity of telephone lines, which prompted the development of the mathematical theory of communication. It is undoubtedly very useful as a tool for research of these kinds of communication which Shannon and Weaver were interested in, however, it is often subject to over-interpretation and becomes a victim of its own popularity (Mortensen 1972, 55–56). Before describing the possible criticism of the transmission communication model it is worth to recap its most important theses and present its principal assumptions.

In the famous article of 1948 Shannon wrote:

“The fundamental problem of communication is that of reproducing at one point either exactly or approximately a message selected at another point. Frequently the messages have meaning; that is they refer to or are correlated according to some system with certain physical or conceptual entities” (Shannon 1948, 379).

This proposal, evoked a year later in a work written jointly with Weaver, gives rise to a series of definitions of communication falling within the transmission paradigm. The most important are the propositions of the communication theory classics, including Carl Hovland (“I should like to define communication as the process by which an individual (the communicator) transmits stimuli (usually verbal symbols) to modify the behaviour of other individuals”) (Hovland 2007, 320), Theodore Newcombe (“Every communication act is viewed as a transmission of information, consisting of a discriminative stimuli, from a source to a recipient,” Newcombe 1966, 66), Bernard Berelson (“Communication: the transmission of information, ideas, emotions, skills, etc., by the use of symbols—words, pictures, figures, graphs, etc. It is the act or process of transmission that is usually called communication” Berelson 1964, 254), or John Hoben (“Communication is the verbal interchange of thought or idea” (Hoben 1954, 77)). According to Bruce Pearson, “communication implies the transmission of meaningful data from one organism to another” (Pearson 1977, 4). In addition to the cited authors, the most important representatives of the transmission model also include Harold Laswell, Denis McQuail, Paul Lazerfeld and Roman Jakobson.

On the basis of the source materials a generalized version of the transmission approach to communication can be provided which would include all its most important features. It would look as follows: It is assumed that communication is a transfer (transmission) of psychological (intellectual or emotional) content by the subject A (the sender) to the subject (or subjects) B (the recipient). The term “psychological content” usually means what you think or what you feel (mental act). The very transfer of psychological content (its transmission) is done through a given (external, perceived sensuously) medium. The medium assumes various forms, such as words (in the case of verbal communication), gestures (in the case of non-verbal communication), graphic signs etc.

Of course, this reconstruction is a simplified and generalized compilation of many positions, but I assume that it contains at least the most important features of the transmission communication models. It is also worth mentioning (this will be of significance for further arguments) that this way of thinking about communication roughly corresponds to the ordinary, commonsense ideas of what communication is. Scholars often consider the above transmission communication model as a kind of axiom, a foundation for any further consideration on communication. The universality of its occurrence and acceptance, however, should not be the only guarantee of the theoretical value and quality of this model.

3. THE DISPUTE OVER THE TRANSMISSION METAPHOR

A variety of objections, or at least doubts, are formulated against the transmission communication model mentioned in the previous section (Ollivier 2010; Carey 2008; Mortensen 1972. The following question is often asked: Are the classic transmission models not totally wrong, but rather have a too narrow range?

The statement that “communication is transfer of information and messages” is certainly not just wrong. However, it is insufficient (too narrow) to describe all of what we call communication. It seems that the issue is how to use the character of the quantifier: the above statement is probably true, as long as it is preceded by a small quantifier, but it would be wrong if it was preceded by a large quantifier. Communication is also, among other things, the transfer of information, news, etc. The same applies to the problem of the function of communication. There are many such functions, perhaps countless, some are more or less common, but it is impossible to identify just one, or even, say, three or six functions of communication.² The multiplicity of communication functions coincides with the multiplicity of social practices of the communicative actions’ nature. The theory of communication, therefore, does not apply to any one particular type of activity (e.g., based on the transfer of information), but to a whole range of different activities identified as communication.

Equating communication with the transfer of information is an expression of reductionist tendencies, characteristic of the transmission paradigm. Are the communication models, constructed on the basis of mathematical and cybernetic theories, reducing the concept of communication to data transfer based on feedback, an adequate tool for research in the social sciences and humanities? Without much doubt, it can be concluded that they are effective especially when the object of communication scholars’ interest are, e.g., mass media, telecommunications, quantitative studies of the media, etc. In such a case, transmission models are useful because they are created just for the purpose of analysis of phenomena of this type.

The aforementioned reductionism, probably “harmless” to, e.g., the quantitative research of the press, would be difficult to accept for the humanities, as it gives the notion of communication an ahistorical character. A radical reduction of communication to data transfer is often combined with the postulate of restrictedness and the totality (exclusivity) of the transmission metaphor. Since it is assumed that communication is always and everywhere based on the transfer of mental content from the mind of a person A to the mind of a person B, then it is simultaneously recognized that communication practices have not and will not undergo any historical transformations; it is recognized that regard-

² Such a claim can be justified by referring to similar claims of Wittgenstein and Austin on the function of language.

less of place and time interpersonal communication has been carried out in the same way, and the only way to conceptualise it (both commonsensically and theoretically) is the transmission metaphor itself.

The polemics with the radical form of the transmission paradigm can therefore be justified by, e.g., the need to implement the postulate of considering communication to be a historical phenomenon, e.g., within the social history of communication (Burke 2003, 1). For instance, it involves trying to determine whether the transmission metaphor is the only type of thought pattern serving as a point of reference for the way we think and talk about communication. Although one could argue with the exclusivity of the transmission metaphor, it would be difficult to completely reject the assumption of metaphorical conceptualisation of social phenomena, including communication. Even a moderately relativistic position which grants the communication practitioners the value of historicity, is combined with the recognition that the various types of conceptualisation (e.g., everyday ideas) of communication underwent historical transformations. The transmission metaphor appeared at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the midst of the transforming communication conceptualisations.

The everyday (commonsensual) experience, shared with other members of society, related to engaging in and implementing social communication practice teaches us to use the metaphor of the transmission. Wittgenstein wrote, “a particular image of language imprisons us,” the image of what we call communication. The Nietzschean “violence of metaphor” makes it impossible to transcend the image of the world which dictates a given pattern of thinking and speaking. Apart from the image of the world there is no area of “pure communicative facts,” no “communication itself” nor any of its “essence.” We are constantly in the field of “human facts,” which also include ways to describe a variety of phenomena, describe mainly by talking about them. The “violence of metaphor” is a part of the basic characteristics of the socio-cultural reality. There is no alternative to the metaphor:³ both when (in a practical setting) we are talking about something to someone, as well as when—in the theoretical approach—we reflect on communication scientifically.

In relation to the above statement the following question arises: are we (both as researchers, as well as ordinary language users) “forced” to use certain metaphors at all, or are we “forced” to use only this one particular metaphor of transmission? In other words, speaking of communication have we only one metaphor (the transmission metaphor) at our disposal or could more their types

³ The only possible kind of alternative to the metaphor is another way of phrasing it, e.g., as “world view” (*Zwischenwelt der Sprache*), “symbolic form,” “conceptual framework” etc. The position discussed here is widespread in contemporary philosophy, especially in neohumboldtianism (Ernst Cassirer, Leo Weisgerber), in constructivism (Niklas Luhmann, Nelson Goodman) and in the views of Martin Heidegger (the concept of “world-view”). Regardless of the kantian (and neokantian) provenance of this position, it was popularized the most by Friedrich Nietzsche.

be envisaged? The ongoing dispute on this question includes two standpoints: universalist and relativist.

A representative of the universalist approach to metaphors in communication would probably say that it is not possible to “go beyond” the metaphorical conceptualisation, that the use of metaphor is universal, i.e. panhuman, species-wide, super-cultural. This statement could be considered as an expression of the general form of universalism, while its narrow, more radical form would be expressed in the belief that in regard to communication only one particular metaphor is panhuman and super-cultural—the transmission metaphor (Reddy 1993).

The relativistic position also takes two forms in this case. A radical (but also naive) relativist finds that there is an alternative to the use of a metaphor (this or that), because “everything is relative, nothing is universal.” The radical, however, should still provide a proposal for such an alternative, non-metaphorical form of speech (thinking) about communication. Whereas a moderate relativist (and such position is adopted in this argumentation) would agree with a moderate universalist about the fact that you can not “go beyond” the metaphor, and that we are specifically condemned to use certain patterns of thinking.⁴ However, the moderate relativist (as opposed to a radical universalist) allows for a possibility that there is a wide variety of patterns, many different metaphors (except the transmission metaphors), which are relative and changeable, and thus dependent on the conditions of time (history) and social culture.

A moderate relativist, who is willing to compromise, would say (sharing the views of a moderate universalist) that we are not able to look at phenomena of communication (as well as all other social phenomena) *sub specie aeterni*, and to treat it as “pure fact.” He would treat this type of claim as a fantasy⁵. Nevertheless he would allow for a multiplicity and variability of thinking and speaking patterns. This means that for the moderate relativist it is not possible to go beyond metaphors (ways of thinking, speaking) at all, however, it is possible to change, in a way to move from one metaphor (valid in a given community, within a specified period of time) to another; it is not possible to go beyond the image of the world constructed by the community, but it is possible to move from one such image to another. It also means that the problematic transmission metaphor is not the only one possible metaphorical conceptualisation of communication, but one of many.

The dispute between relativism and universalism, outlined above, can be solved by referring to the difference between language and speech, in the classical sense of Ferdinand de Saussure. A moderate relativist agrees with the fact

⁴ Whether such schemes are only biologically determined or also, and perhaps primarily, culturally is a separate issue. However, it, being a different argument, exceeds the scope of this article.

⁵ This would be a claim formulated by, e.g., Husserl and the neopositivists about the twentieth-century philosophy.

that on the “level of language” we are dealing with a universal structure. Perhaps he would even agree that this universal structure is determined by universal, common cognitive structures. He will argue instead with the postulate of “transmission monopoly,” recognizing that although in terms of a quantitative approach the transmission paradigm holds a very important position in communication science its popularity alone does not warrant justification for its postulated exclusivity. The moderate relativist, however, is not interested in this permanent, universal level of language structure, but in the variable level of speech. When he examines communication he is not interested in it at the level of structure (although there is no reason to denying the universal structure of communication, language and cognition), but at the level of social practices.

At this level indeed we may seek “historicity” of communication—communication as communication practices, not universal “structures”. Relativity and variability over time are supposed to be attributes of the types of practices. In other words, even if it were possible to prove the existence of universal communication structures (contingent of a universal cognitive structure), there would be no contraindications for research in, e.g., a history of communication practices, a kind of “history of the idea of communication.” And on adopting such assumptions, Peter Burke outlined four arguments concerning historical description of communication practices:

“Different social groups use different varieties of language. The same people employ different varieties of language in different situations. Language reflects the society (or culture) in which it is spoken. Language shapes the society in which it is spoken” (Burke 2003, 3–4).

Within this type of research the following assumption appears: communication practices, both at the levels of the ordinary as well as theoretical, are historical in nature, and therefore variable and relative. More specifically, historicity thus understood concerns metaphorical conceptualisations (while recognizing the impossibility of going beyond the metaphor).

4. PSYCHOLOGISM IN THE TRANSMISSION MODELS OF COMMUNICATION

Adopting the transmission metaphor results in a number of theoretical consequences set implicate in the transmission communication models. In many ways, they go beyond the initial assumptions adopted by Shannon and Weaver, therefore, sometimes they assume the form of “silent guidelines,” taken as a self-evident, almost axiomatic part of these models. One such consequence is the presence of psychologist (mentalist) elements in transmission studies. They are visible in the above-referenced definitions of communication, especially in the works of Berelson, Hoben and Pearson. In the Polish literature the psy-

chologist element is particularly clear in the definition of communication presented by Walery Pisarek:

“Transferring mental content, both intellectual and emotional (...) by an individual (or individuals) A to an individual (or individuals) B is called communicating or informing. The initial determination of what is transferred as ‘mental content,’ or as ‘what you think or what you feel’ (...) implies that communication (or information) (...) occurs only between people. However, if “mental content” is replaced by a broader category of ‘information,’ the transmitting and receiving subject does not have to be a man” (Pisarek 2008, 17).

This quotation shows how the transmission approach is combined with the adoption of a perspective which is identified in contemporary philosophy as psychologism (mentalism). In order to comment on the position and the role that psychologism plays in communication theories I will refer to its basic form, which is the subject of an important dispute which took place among the philosophers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The classic psychologism in its fullest and most common form is presented primarily in the work of Franz Brentano, John S. Mill and their disciples and followers: Wilhelm Wundt, Hans Cornelius, Theodor Lipps,⁶ Friedrich Beneke. The very term “psychologism” was introduced by Johann Erdmann in 1866 and has dominated many areas of the humanities, mostly German, until the first decades of the twentieth century.

Psychologism is usually defined as the position, according to which a given theoretical problem is reducible to psychological concepts or it can be explained (solved) using psychological terms. While the term “mentalism” usually refers to a psychologist view, according to which the objects established within a given scientific theory are mental (psychological) in their character, or are dependent on the mental (psychological) acts. Psychologism and mentalism met with severe criticism from, e.g., phenomenology (Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Roman Ingarden), formal logic (Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell) and ordinary language philosophy (Ludwig Wittgenstein).

The primary objection to psychologism was (and is) the accusation of reductionism, also in terms of methodology (especially in the context of the ongoing, parallel dispute of naturalists with anti-naturalists on methodological autonomy of the social sciences and humanities). The most powerful attack on psychologism was launched by Ludwig Wittgenstein, on the grounds of his “late” colloquial language philosophy.

In the final period of its activity (the forties of the twentieth century), Wittgenstein focused on tracking down the illusions and prejudices (including the

⁶ Eventually Lipps admitted in 1902 that the antipsychologist arguments of Edmund Husserl were right.

philosophical ones), which we succumb to using colloquial language. One of such illusions is, in his opinion, the belief in the correlation between an act of speaking and a certain accompanying mental state (mental act):

“Wittgenstein also intimates doubt about the idea that when I speak, I must first think in some inner symbolism, linguistic or mental, and than transpose my thoughts into utterances of a different, public symbolism” (Glock 1996, 360).

The illusion is caused by a specific mode of imagining ourselves, which we are forced to by the language at our disposal. It could be said that the task which Wittgenstein performs, is resisting the colloquial metaphor, fighting against “violent metaphors” which lead us philosophically astray: “A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it inexorably” (Wittgenstein 1997, 48). According to Wittgenstein, neither thinking nor understanding of something have to be interpreted solely in psychological terms. They also do not have to be seen as immanent phenomena, taking place in the “private” mental space. He also proposes a very pragmatic approach to thinking (or understanding) as the only external forms of action:

“It is misleading to talk of thinking as of a “mental activity”. We may say that thinking is essentially the activity of operating with signs. This activity is performed by the hand, when we think by writing; by the mouth and larynx, when we think by speaking (...). If than you say that in such cases the mind thinks, I would only draw your attention to the fact that you are using a metaphor, that here the mind is an agent in a different sense from that in which the hand can be said to be the agent in writing” (Wittgenstein 1998, 6).

Recalling the numerous examples of “language games” Wittgenstein suggests that the description of an activity based on, e.g., the issuance and exercise of command may be reduced to a description of expressing words (using signs) and of the reaction to them, where the activities are the result of the “rules of the game” adopted by the sender and the recipient. Such a description has not necessarily to (or indeed must not) contain a description of the alleged mental acts accompanying such activities.

Wittgenstein is credited with the most significant observation concerning the multitude of “language games”, adopted later by, e.g., John L. Austin: it is impossible to identify any one function of language, but there are infinitely many (or at least a lot) of different types. Accepting that the only function of language is for example “naming things,” or assuming that a preceding mental act is a necessary condition for the activity of speaking, would be expressions of unnecessary reductionism. The same can easily be applied to communication—as long as you accept that Wittgenstein’s “language games” are equivalent to what

we call communication activities. And if it is so, then communication researchers should note that they are indebted to representatives of colloquial language philosophy for certain important guidelines which can at least play the role of postulates and become a subject of discussion. These guidelines are directly related to the transmission approach to communication.

First, referring to Wittgenstein's position, it may be concluded that the "transfer (transmission) of information, feelings, thoughts, etc.," is probably one, but not the only possible function of communication. This means that the exclusivity of the transmission metaphor may turn out to be a procedure equally susceptible to criticism as are attempts to reduce the function of language to naming objects. Communication may be described as (also) an activity of transferring a thought to someone, but not only in this way. According to Mikołaj Domaradzki:

"In most cases, communication is (...) metaphorically conceptualised as a kind of 'conveying' ('transmission,' 'transfer,' etc.) (reified accordingly) of thoughts: senders 'pack' their thoughts into words, and recipients 'extract' the meaning out of these 'packages.' However, communication is not only such 'mental object exchange' " (Domaradzki 2012, 4).

Domaradzki cites the example of an alternative metaphor of communication: it does not have to be a metaphor of "conveying something to someone," but "illuminating," "enlightening" someone, and the philological analyses indicate that the versatility of such a metaphor is not smaller than of the transmission metaphor.

The second guideline concerns directly the problem of the presence of psychologism elements in the transmission approach. Multilateral, sharp criticism from philosophers representing various trends and schools compels us to treat psychologism at least cautiously. The assumption that communication may be reduced to the transfer of thoughts, emotions, states of mind, is perhaps dictated to us, as Wittgenstein suspected, by certain "traps" which are laid for us by the way we speak, but does not necessarily mean that such an assumption must be indiscriminately regarded as an axiom in the theory of communication. Moreover, a number of positions in the field of social sciences and humanities, which participate in the scientific reflection on communication, clearly polemicise with psychologism. Emanuel Kulczycki writes:

"... the reduction of the process of constructing the message-meaning to an individual psyche is not acceptable from the perspective of culturalism or the broadly understood anti-psychologism. Creating meanings, symbols, does not occur through an individual decision, but in a social interaction" (Kulczycki 2012, 31).

These guidelines should not be regarded as a dogma which would replace the earlier ones. It is worth to include them in the framework of critical reflec-

tion on communication. Presenting such guidelines is not intended to overcome or reject the transmission approach, but only to extend and exceed it.

5. CONCLUSION

The transmission approach to communication—like all the approaches—is a kind of metaphorical conceptualisation, which has been designed by researchers in a particular historical and social context and in relation to specific (sometimes implicitly accepted) theoretical assumptions, as well as in relation to other disciplines of science. This means that—contrary to occasionally formulated postulates—it is not absolute nor exclusionary. As a further consequence another conclusion arises, namely, that the range of the applicability of the transmission models in the study of communication is indeed broad but not unlimited. This hypothesis, which summarizes the earlier arguments, requires a more comprehensive justification which would go beyond capacity of any single article. Which is why I shall only point out some contributions towards such a justification.

First of all, we ought to emphasise the significance of the circumstances and the context of Shannon and Weaver's mathematical communication theory which inspired and largely determined the subsequent theories and models of transmission. Developed in response to specific needs (telecommunications), it has often been transferred to a field of completely different research problems. An example of it is the repeated reference to Shannon's concept for the purpose of research on the so-called non-verbal communication, while the basic assumptions of the concept do not actually offer such a possibility.

In addition to the real effectiveness of the transmission approach in analysing what they were actually created to analyse, their meaning and importance lies in the fact that they are (in the classic form as proposed by Shannon) the first example of a scientific account of communication phenomena. In other words, in the late forties and fifties of the twentieth century the science of communication was being developed, and its first achievement was the transmission metaphor put in scientific terms (based on mathematics and cybernetics). I assume here that all the earlier examples of reflection on communication were pre-scientific in nature and should be viewed merely as early contributions.

Theoretical reflection on communication, however, did not end at the time the first transmission model was created. In the twentieth century, a number of expansions and improvements were proposed, there were also competitive accounts, trying to exceed and even overcome the dominance of the transmission metaphor. The value of the claim, which states that "communication consists in transfer/transmission of information, thoughts, emotions, etc." should be determined in two ways. First, the importance of such a claim, representative to the transmission approach, lies in the fact that it has obtained the form of the first

scientific theory of communication, though the form was not yet final. Secondly, it can be applied to specific areas of what is called the interpersonal communication, although not all, and not in equal measure.

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