**Jerzy W. Woźniak**
Lodz University of Technology
Faculty of Mechanical Engineering
Institute of Machine Tools and Machine Design Technology
Department of Management, Economic and Legal Sciences

# COMMUNICATION COMPETENCES OF MANAGERS IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

## Abstract

*Communication competences of a manager in the $21^{st}$ century have a significant effect on the creation of a competitive advantage of an organization. They compose an immanent part of behaviours of all persons in an organization responsible for producing the pro-effective culture. They create efficacy, that is effectiveness and efficiency in the realization of its basic aims targets. They affect proper functions of all essential structural units of organizations. Their implementation requires inter alia a heuristic approach to interpersonal communication processes in an organization. Therefore, they can be guided by the following principles:*

1. *principle of communication dualism – awareness of process ephemerality and multithreading,*
2. *principle of communication intelligence – adaptiveness of communication,*
3. *principle of taking into account situational and socio-cultural contexts,*
4. *principle of individual personality features of partners in the communication process,*
5. *principle of skilful usage and reading of verbal expressions and non-verbal signals,*
6. *principle of utilization of knowledge and experience adequately to the situation,*
7. *principle of high-level ethical behaviours,*
8. *and principle of self-control.*

''The care for the maintenance of a whole composed of different elements leads quickly to awareness of this truth that various elements happen to be important for the object of this care to a different degree. The degree of importance of a given element of the whole is relative to two things: to what extent the lack of this element or its damage will make it difficult for the whole

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to function, and what great difficulties will be presented by a replacement of this element in the case of its lack or a repair in the case of its damage."
Tadeusz Kotarbiński[1]

## 1. Introduction

Present socioeconomic transformations are characterized by a significant increase of the meaning of intangible assets of industrial organizations[2], i.e. all these assets where a simple economic classification is difficult to use and which are generally referred to as intellectual capital.[3] A basis forming this capital is the accumulative information in an organization, in other words the knowledge of managerial personnel and workers contributing to gaining a competitive edge as a result of synergy processes. This knowledge is interiorized information which workers committed to the organization gain through various forms and kinds of interpersonal communication. Especially in the organizational environment interpersonal communication with its various forms and kinds plays the leading part, because it is the most important element of correct performance of all functions in its activity. It appears at each stage of organizational operations beginning from giving an order and finishing with creating an organizational strategy. It is one of the most important factors triggering the engagement of workers and it is an immanent element of the whole – the organizational culture. Managerial personnel are in this instance one of the most important elements creating the pro-effectivity organizational culture through effective and efficient communication behaviours. Correct (effective and efficient) organizational operations on the market depend on their abilities and communication competences to a considerable extent.

## 2. Communication competences of a manager in a modern organization

Each organization is a specific, unique social system created by interpersonal communication to a great extent. Like every system, it has a more or less original organizational structure which reflects formal arrangements of communication networks and an informal communication system beyond any control which undergoes continuous transformations contrary to the former one. It is a unique

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[1] Kotarbiński T., *Traktat o dobrej robocie*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1982, s. 188.
[2] Kunert O., *Budowanie kompetencji innowacyjnych wyzwaniem rozwojowym polskich przedsiębiorstw*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Łódzkiej, Łódź 2008, s. 9.
[3] Edvinsson L., Malone M.S., *Kapitał intelektualny*, PWN, Warszawa 2001.

communication "blood circulatory" system in an organization and like this system, it is at times patent, i.e. efficient, and from time to time it has problems with delivering information to a place of destination, thus resulting in different kinds of organizational problems, which unfortunately is not affected by a formalized communication system being rather a formal base – a pattern of communication among workers where "a situational and interpersonal context" should be given by the latter arrangement.

Managers should fulfil a double communication function in an organization. On the one hand, they should be the ones who perform managerial tasks as a result of their positions and titles held in an organization through just so and not otherwise constructed communication procedures and on the other hand, they should be leaders with personal authority that would enable them to establish informal relations with subordinates. The achievement of this kind of communication efficiency is a guarantee of effectiveness and efficiency in their actions. On the one hand, this is determined by three basic criteria characterizing a communication process, namely the principles of reciprocity, intentionality and reflexivity[4] and on the other hand, motivation, knowledge and skills of the sender and receiver.[5]

The correct communication amongst people is plausible only provided that specific reciprocity takes place which makes it possible for partners to exchange and interpret messages properly. Reciprocity should be merged with problems of motivation – an intention to communicate which is a rudimentary condition of a proper communication process. To make communication possible, you should want to achieve it with someone irrespective of whether you like or dislike this person. This is the main foundation of negotiation processes where the correct usage of communication rules is an absolute necessity.[6]

Intentionality in communication is in other words an assumption that every human communication process is to a smaller or greater extent a phenomenon based on the analysis of intention. A classical question referring to this feature of communication is as follows: *what did you mean by this?* It refers to the recognition of your speaker's intentions which are not always explained verbally and sometimes they require an attentive observation of non-verbal behaviours. Intentionality of communication is underlined by its dynamic character.[7] In this case the knowledge of subjects communicating with each other becomes a basic factor enabling the correct interpretation of delivered information.

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[4] Merten K., *Kommunikation*, s. 74-86.
[5] Morreale S.P., Spitzberg B.H., Barge J.K., *Komunikacja między ludźmi. Motywacja, wiedza i umiejętności*, PWN, Warszawa 2007, s. 65-88.
[6] Fisher R., Ury W., *Dochodząc do tak*, PWE, Warszawa 1991, s. 33.
[7] Merten K., op.cit., s. 77.

Reflexivity of communication is *conditio sine qua non* of all processes described by this name. Every interpretation of a notion of communication assumes its reflexivity. It is at times reflexivity which is postponed, delayed in time or only potential. This is, however, a basic foundation whereby communication is a process absolutely implying reflexivity.

A praxeological interpretation of communication competences of a manager puts a special stress on matters related to the conveyance of a message as information. T. Kotarbiński describes the following qualities facilitating information[8]:

- speed,
- accuracy – authenticity,
- proper specificity,
- talents of receivers,
- legibility,
- definitenessk,
- and understanding of information.

An excellent exemplification of presented praxeological rules of communication is a "just-in-time" approach as a management method in present organizations. In general, its foundation is a spatiotemporal perfection of a production process which is impossible to be carried out without a satisfactory use of the above-mentioned qualities – rules of the transfer of information. Any violation in the implementation of these rules leads to significant difficulties in an effective activity of an organization.[9]

The qualities presented hereinabove underlie effective and efficient communication, i.e. the process of passing a message. They characterize fundamental competences – skills of partners in this process[10]: "… with reference to the communication process it becomes reasonable to consider the term of competency in the aspect of skills and not as characteristics of such features of functioning of a subject (or also a subject himself/herself) which can be defined as competent". Communication competences of managers are, in other words, their specific skills, behaviours, predispositions and any other actions aimed at the effective implementation of managerial functions. It can be assumed that "a general model of communication competence refers to all elements of the

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[8] Kotarbiński T., op.cit., s. 205.

[9] Bartochowska D., *Building of Competencies of Maintenance Employees in Managerial Positions*, s. 133-149, in: *Competencies as constituent of success of modern company*, edited by: Kunert O., *Foundation for Competence Promotion*, Łódź 2011.

[10] Winkler R., *Komunikacja interkulturowa w organizacji*, [w:] Potocki A., Winkler R., Żbikowska A., *Komunikacja w organizacjach gospodarczych*, Difin, Warszawa 2011, s. 231.

process a person goes through to communicate competently".[11] The analysis of the communication process is in this instance a fundamental source basing on which we are in a position to recognize and characterize communication competences of participants.

## 3. A complex, heuristic model of the communication process

In most analyses the communication process in an organization is interpreted on the basis of a classical concept by C. Shannon and W. Weaver[12] and its psychosocial interpretation carried out by D. Katz and R. Kahn.[13] A basic interpretative foundation of communication in this meaning is its acknowledgement as a purely technical, linear process where all elements and causal relationships between them can be exactly specified. The communication model interpreted as above is as follows (Fig. 1).
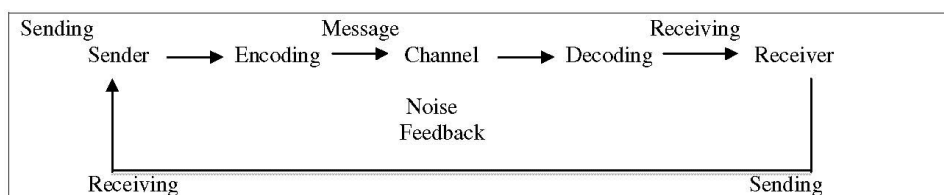


Fig. 1. A communication process model
*Source: own study based on: Stoner J.A.F., Freeman R.E., Gilbert D.R. Jr.,*
*Kierowanie, PWE Warszawa 2001, s. 509.*

The model presented above (univocally referring to the prototype by C. Shannon and W. Weaver) determines very conventionally the most essential stages of the communication process as a diagram. It does not take into account e.g. a cultural specificity of a given environment and its influence on the communication process and individual predispositions of partners who can form a communication act favourably or unfavourably to a great extent. Especially in organizations, communication behaviours of people working there can be often found only within them. They are characterized mainly with specific verbal phrases, e.g. technical terms and non-verbal messages related to activities carried out in such places. An organization is a place where the so-called 'professional languages' are created. They are understood only by people who know the definite notional symbols and the specific nature of a given occupation Therefore, the analysis of the communication process in an organization should

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[11] Compare: Morreale S.P., Spitzberg B.H., Barge J.K., op.cit., s. 88.
[12] Shannon C.E., Weaver W., *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, University of Illinois Press, Urban 1949, s. 5.
[13] Katza D., Kahna R., *Społeczna psychologia organizacji,* PWN, Warszawa 1979.

take into account the whole spectre of problems which include but are not limited to the matters of culture, motivation, individuality and personalities of workers as well as situational factors changing through time. Assuming that communication processes in an organization are an element of prevailing interpersonal behaviours of persons forming and working there, it seems to be necessary to extend the idea of interpretative problems of communication amongst people.[14]

The complex model of the communication process in an organization, first of all in the heuristic manner and so far as it is possible in the presentation of a continually evolving spatial process, should explain and specify basic features of human communication. It should be perceived as a process happening in the definite environment – specific space-time in which all 'vectors' are equally responsible for its correct course and time becomes a basic dimension defining its framework and ephemerality.[15] Remembering this specific feature of the communication process we should be aware that no model will fully reflect all of its characteristics, because its features are governed by the ancient Greek theatre, namely the rules of three unities, i.e. of time, place and action. Taking into account this fact we should bear in mind that every model which we will develop will not meet the requirement of the holistic paradigm. Instead, it will be a specific example of current knowledge on a given topic. First of all, this model should take into account the impact of the environment on the communication process and the characteristics of personalities of participants. (Fig. 2).

An interpretative basis of the process as approached herein is the foundation that every act of communication begins from the qualification of its aim which is contained in the following basic analytical questions: what is the reason for beginning a conversation, what its content will be, how messages will be delivered, whether there are any favourable circumstances to deliver messages successfully and whether a partner will accept activities connected with the intention to establish communication. Similar questions are often asked especially in an organization where structured forms of communication are of great importance and at the same time they limit the freedom of entering into a conversation. Formal communication requirements in an organization force participants of this process to abide by strict and agreed procedures which, in the majority of cases, are the internal environmental standard, i.e. the specific communication context. For example, a conversation between a teacher and

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[14] Woźniak J.W., *Communication skills of managers*, s. 47-74, in: *Competencies as constituent of success of modern company*, edited by: Kunert O., *Foundation for Competence Promotion*, Łódź 2011.

[15] Woźniak J.W., *Selected Aspects of the Communication Process in the Modern Society*, s. 49-60, in: *The importance of company competence in the strategy of innovative development in the European Union*, edited by: Kunert O., *Foundation for Competence Promotion*, Łódź 2009.

a pupil at school, at college, or in an enterprise requires the use of suitable polite forms (Mr X [Professor X], Mr X [Director X], Mr X [Manager X] etc.) and standard communication behaviours (who has to begin a conversation, who and when can shake hands as the first one, what the order of delivery of information is, etc.). These environmental rules underlie most communication processes in organizations and specific groups. Any behaviours discordant with these rules result not only in disapproval shown by a partner of the conversation, but they invoke organizational sanctions. Thereby, it is advisable to take into account the characteristics of the environment and sender's personal qualities in the organizational model of communication.

The general model of the communication process in an organization presented above (Fig. 2) takes into account two interpretation trends which have an essential effect on the process. The first one refers to E. Hall's idea of communication where it is assumed that *"What has changed, developed and what is characteristic of humans and gives them their identity irrespective where they were born is their culture, the total communication framework: words, actions, postures, gestures, tones of voice, facial expressions, the way one handles time, space, and materials, the way one works, makes love, and defends oneself. All these things and yet many others create certain communication systems having meanings understandable exclusively for these who know the historic, social and cultural context of behaviours"*.[16] In other words, in this trend it is assumed that communication amongst people is possible only as the communication of cultures. Human behaviours are interpreted in this case as a historic, social and cultural whole. There is a compact interdependence between culture and the man – on the one hand culture creates the man whereas on the other hand the man creates culture.[17] Thus, in compliance with the above assumptions a communication model in an organization should take into account the characteristics of the sender's and receiver's social and cultural environments. For example, environmental differences between the languages used by the sender and receiver may be the reason for serious misunderstandings in the interpretation of delivered messages. People using the so called 'limited code' (e.g. having some difficulties with understanding of abstract expressions) are not always in a position to understand their partners correctly who use a fully developed code, characterized with great proficiency in the usage of ambiguous and abstract expressions.[18] For instance, production line workers in their conversations with a specialist from the accounts department may have problems with understanding his/her technical phrases, whereas unskilled workers will not

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[16] Hall E., *Poza kulturą*, PWN, Warszawa 1984, s. 82.
[17] Ibidem, s. 54.
[18] Por.: Bernstein B., *Odtwarzanie kultury*, PIW, Warszawa 1990, s. 271.

be able – without earlier preparation – to interpret correctly the diagram of the wiring or water supply and sewage systems.
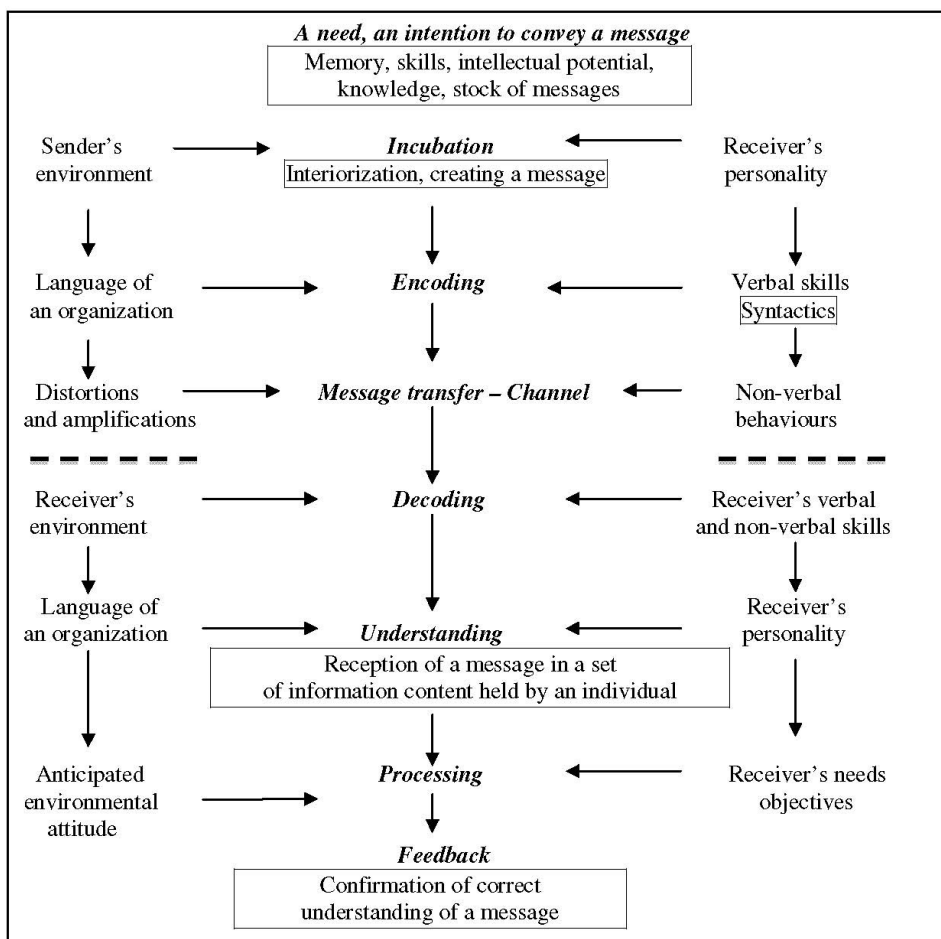


| A need, an intention to convey a message |
| Memory, skills, intellectual potential, knowledge, stock of messages |

Sender's environment → **Incubation** ← Receiver's personality
Interiorization, creating a message

Language of an organization → **Encoding** ← Verbal skills / Syntactics

Distortions and amplifications → **Message transfer – Channel** ← Non-verbal behaviours

Receiver's environment → **Decoding** ← Receiver's verbal and non-verbal skills

Language of an organization → **Understanding** ← Receiver's personality
Reception of a message in a set of information content held by an individual

Anticipated environmental attitude → **Processing** ← Receiver's needs objectives

**Feedback**
Confirmation of correct understanding of a message

Fig. 2. A complex model of a communication process in an organization
*Source: own research.*[19]

The other interpretation trend refers to personality features and intellectual abilities of partners in the communication process. It is mainly linked to E. Goffman's idea who believes that *"an individual appears in the presence of*

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[19] Compare: Woźniak J., *Problemy zarządzania komunikacją interpersonalną w orga-nizacji*, [w:] *Globalizacja i integracja gospodarcza a procesy restrukturyzacji i rozwoju przedsiębiorstw*, red. Borowiecki R. i Jaki A., Akademia Ekonomiczna w Krakowie Katedra Ekonomiki i Organizacji Przedsiębiorstw, Warszawa – Kraków 2003, s. 318.

*others and organizes a show for an audience*"[20]. The individual will have to act so that he intentionally or unintentionally expresses himself, and the audience in "the theatre of everyday life" will, in turn, have to be impressed in some way by him. He comes to play specific roles imposed by life. And thanks to socialization which consists in learning some 'routines' characteristic of a given role, he is able to play every part where he becomes a co-participant.[21] Personality is a specific bunch of social parts, temperament, biological conditions and social predispositions of the man: "*Personality is what a man really is*".[22] Every interpersonal communication is a specific reflection of not only the store of information of a man but also of human personalities.

In every communication act we deal with at least two partners whose personalities are characterized with a definite intellectual level. Accordingly, their abilities in respect of perception of verbal and non-verbal information can be considerably diverse. Therefore, in every interpersonal communication act personal qualities of partners should be taken into account and adjusted to their perceptive abilities. Egoism, altruism, self-confidence, obstinacy and resoluteness, ambitions, stress tolerance or assertive attitudes are only some of the features which have a significant effect on our communication behaviours. The frame of mind can also become a factor disturbing communication. Other elements making communication difficult especially in an organization are specific disturbances connected with architectural, spatial and physical conditions of the work environment. Under such circumstances it turns out that during the interchange of information the use of feedback facilitates significantly communication, i.e. the manageability which K. Merten describes as follows: "*Reflexivity seems to be this criterion facilitating the communication process which is contained in all other communication criteria*".[23] Reflexivity makes it possible for partners to interpret delivered messages correctly and it is displayed both in verbal and non-verbal behaviours. In extremely formalized and structured organizations reflexivity is sometimes limited – in connection with formal requirements – to non-verbal forms (e.g. in the army). It turns out, however, that even under such circumstances, partners are able to interpret messages correctly by means of non-verbal techniques and to realize the rule of reflexivity.

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[20] Goffman E., *Człowiek w teatrze życia codziennego*, PIW, Warszawa 1981, s. 54.

[21] Ibidem, s. 118.

[22] Compare: Allport G., *Personality: A psychological interpretation*, Rinehart and Winston, Holt, New York 1937; Strelau J., *Temperament – Personality – Activity*, Academie Press, 1983; Parsons T., *Theories of Society*, The Free Press of Glencoe, New York 1961.

[23] Merten K., op.cit., 1972, s. 88.

The need for information is another essential element having an impact on the communication process in an organization.[24] It is often disregarded especially by those who because of their positions in an organization possess such information. In most cases an informed worker works more efficiently, because information is one of the factors increasing self-esteem of a subordinate. The fact that the employee was informed means positive appraisal of his work and the role he performs in the organization. The need of information also refers to individuals managing the organization. In this case it is a requisite element in the managerial decision making. However, it turns out that there are still managers who are not aware of their information needs: *"Managers responsible for repeatable strategic decisions as a result of their positions were not only unable to identify information as the basis for making a specific decision and the development of an analysed strategic programme, but also to identify information needs consequential from making other types of repeatable strategic decisions".*[25] Awareness of the essential part of the information in the decision making process and, accordingly, in creating a competitive edge, seems to be something in this context what contemporary managers do not always bear in mind.

The complex communication model in an organization presented above is an attempt to provide a holistic approach to this problem and, at the same time, to identify key communication competences of those who take part in this process, i.e. of senders and receivers. The sender, as a competent originator of the process is responsible for the preparation and delivery of a message, so that the receiver could interpret and rearrange it quickly and correctly and to send reflexive information. Therefore, sender's basic tasks – competences include as follows:

- awareness of the necessity to engage in the act of communication,
- possession of knowledge about the object of communication,
- initiating the act of communication,
- identifying the range of information provided for transmission,
- syntactic adaptation (grammar forms) of one's language to lingual preferences of the receiver;
- identifying the hierarchy of information,
- choice of place and form of delivery of a message,
- controlling one's emotions,
- controlling one's expressions,
- overcoming the distrust of the receiver,
- and controlling the course of communication.

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[24] Compare: Penc J., *Komunikacja i negocjowanie w organizacjach*, Difin S.A., Warszawa 2010, s. 96-109.

[25] Sopińska A., *Podstawa informacyjna zarządzania strategicznego w polskich przedsię-biorstwach*, [w:] *Organizacja i Kierowanie* nr 2/2000, s. 78.

It must be noted here that the sender being the originator of the communication process is responsible for its correct course, the elimination of distortions and making possible for the receiver to utilize the feedback effect.

Generally speaking, the basic assignment of every sender in the communication process in an organization is the elaboration of the specific kind of a communication community, i.e. convergences in the interpretation of a given situation. E. Goffman writes: *"A definition of the situation projected by an individual is an integral part of the projection made and maintained by the close cooperation of more than one participant"*.[26] Success in the communication process is possible when the actor's and spectator's definitions of a situation are compatible.[27]

A receiver in the communication process should first of all have the following skills – competency behaviours:

- show an open communication attitude,
- listen actively,
- interpret the information on an ongoing basis,
- classify it properly,
- explain potential inaccuracies which occur during the transmission,
- observe sender's non-verbal behaviours,
- watch sender's emotions,
- control own emotions,
- overcome any potential distrust towards the sender,
- define a situation correctly,
- and seek conceptual isomorphism (compliance in the interpretation of information).

The interpersonal communication process will run correctly only and exclusively when the sender and receiver show mutual interest in its continuation and participate in it aiming to give it a shape and form that would be interesting for them. If one of them does not show any interest in the information provided by the other one, the efficiency of the communication act is small. This also happens although there is a situation where the sender and receiver use a similar or even identical code of notions. Without any mutual interest the efficiency of the process will be minimum. Similar results will occur when the receiver incorrectly interprets a situational context or sender's gestures reflecting his/her emotional attitude. The misinterpretation of non-verbal transmission often leads to a wrong reception of information.

An essential act in the communication process especially in organizations which is decisive for a final effect, is encoding, i.e. the way a message is

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[26] Goffman E., op.cit., s. 124.
[27] Ibidem, s. 41.

formulated by the sender to make codes with their corresponding symbols and images become correctly interpreted by the receiver. The use of an inadequate code by a manager giving an order has not only consequences of the verbal nature, but it also results in disturbances in the operations of a given structural unit of an organization.[28] Therefore, some theoreticians of communication, including E. Hall, B. Bernstein, and many others assume that encoding is the most important act in the communication process, and the knowledge of definite codes and rules of their usage by the sender and receiver is *conditio sine qua none* of its efficiency. One of precursors of this kind of interpretation of the communication management process is B. Bernstein, already mentioned hereinabove, who defines the notion of a code as follows[29]: *"A code is assimilated in a hidden manner as a regulative rule which selects and integrates essential meanings, forms of their realization, the creation of contexts"*.

In other words, the correct selection of a code is combined with suitable matching of meaning and words (information), with the use of correct rules of their usage (e.g. grammar forms) and with taking into account a definite situational context, i.e. specific features of a situation and the characteristics of the receiver.

The context of communication is determined by definite social relations where, according to B. Bernstein, two communication rules prevail[30]:

a) *interaction rule: it guides the choice, organization and rhythm of communication – oral, written or visual, and also the position, attitude and clothes of participants,*

b) *location rule: it governs a position in its physical sense and a form of its realization, this is a range of objects and their features, their mutual relations and a space where they are found.*

These rules define essential conditions of the realization of communication acts in smaller structural units of an organization and they set basic features of a context, enabling senders and receivers to use correct interpersonal behaviours. The first rule of the rules is related to determining basic conditions of the realization of the communication process and hence to the choice of the manner, forms, sequence and time of the transfer of information. The second rule, instead, refers to the choice or description (recognition) of the place where communication takes place and determining mutual relations between objects and individuals as communicators. It is also responsible for the qualification of spatial and technical circumstances of the communication process. Both of these rules, being mutually complementary to each other, make it possible for senders

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[28] Hall E., op.cit., s. 95.
[29] Berstein B., op.cit., s. 222.
[30] Ibidem, s. 246.

and receivers to plan and execute a communication act correctly. They are a precondition for the correct choice and use of a code, definition of a situation and wording of a message.

The location rule is even more important in organizations than the interaction rule because it establishes strict formal requirements related to the situation and place where communication occurs. Formal requirements of the definite situation and the place determine significantly the interaction rule. In this case technical and spatial conditions are determined by the organizational structure of the institution, reflecting formal dependences of particular partners in the communication process. It is the organizations where the man works that create a definite style of communication – an attentive observer of everyday life is able to recognize differences in the communication styles of a professional soldier and civilian. The location rule is in this instance a principal factor structurally determining communication behaviours of individuals connected with a specific organization.

In the communication process encoded information has a form of a message, i.e. using the classical nomenclature, of a verbal or non-verbal signal delivered by a receiver by means of a carrier across a definite channel. A message in this meaning is characterized with a variety of physical forms which are often mutually complementary to one another. For instance, it can be a spoken or written statement or only a meaningful gesture. Generally, its form is a product resultant of a code, situational context and channel capacity. Signals, their carriers and channels have various forms in organizations according to a situation, place and their meanings. For example, a message will have a completely different form in the communication between two friendly workers occupying similar positions than in the situation when the receiver and sender have diametrically different positions in the hierarchy of a given organization. These forms of communication will often be accompanied by other carriers and channels. Friendly colleagues will more often use natural carriers during their communication (a free, informal statement) and informal transmission channels. Instead, a director formulating an official instruction will more often use a written form of communication and formal information channels. In this context we should notice that information channels in an organization are of significant importance and they directly affect the operations of an organization.

Decoding of a message, i.e. deciphering, interpreting symbols, signs and images delivered by means of a definite channel by the sender, is part of basic acts realized by the receiver. The message encoding and decoding procedure is a characteristic feature of organizations, groups and individuals[31]: "*Individuals, groups and organizations have a certain general feature which should be deemed as a main determinant of communication: the encoding process. Every system*

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[31] Katz D., Kahn R.L., op.cit., s. 352.

*which receives information, whether it is an individual, or organization, has its characteristic encoding process that means a limited set of the coding category through which some received information is assimilated"*. In this context it is said that the efficiency of the act of communication depends pro rata on the receiver's efficiency in decoding information and this means that[32]: *"The more decoding by the receiver matches an intentional message of the sender, the more efficient communication is"*. However, the correct recognition of sender's signals is insufficient.

Accurate decoding of information is only one of the requisites necessary for correct realization of the interpersonal communication process. Its efficiency will be higher if partners are more interested in one another – they will listen and observe one another, recognize correctly a given situational context and satisfy all other conditions related to communication. Otherwise efficiency will decrease when more interferences or distractions occur if partners fail to meet the above conditions.

Different kinds of noise are factors which in spite of the fulfilment of all required interpersonal conditions by partners in the communication process can weaken its efficiency. They are included in the specific kind of technical communication disturbances consequential not from individual personality features of partners, but from the physical environment, wherein the communication process takes place. According to the classical concept developed by C. Shannon and W. Weaver, noise is defined as technical disturbances occurring in a definite channel during the transmission of information. Thus, noise includes but is not limited to different sounds reaching out to partners and technical noise occurring practically in any transmission media (e.g. telephone, computer) used by them for communication purposes. These kinds of noise often appear in industrial companies in which e.g. the noise level, poor lighting, acoustics or loud conversations of other persons limit possibilities of interpersonal communication of workers to a considerable degree. In modern organizations, in spite of state-of-the-art technological solutions which aim at the elimination of communication noise we come across new kinds of noise connected mostly with the communication process between the man and the machine. The reason why they occur is maladjustment of machines to physical and intellectual requirements of the man. It is not the user's fault that the best computer 'hangs up' or malfunctions. Machines are unable to comprehend our behaviours or instructions and their more and more complicated programmes designed to simplify their cooperation with the man prove to be deceptive. These kinds of noise become a significant problem, because they refer to a wider and wider range of activities of the man. Computerization of all spheres of the human life leads to the civilization development on the one hand, whereas on the other

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[32] Stoner J.A.F., Wankel Ch. *Kierowanie*, PWE, Warszawa 1992, s. 435.

hand it becomes a threat to the man. Machines controlling already many spheres of the human life 'hang up' depriving the man of light, water, electricity etc. Noise occurring between the man and the machine becomes dangerous and the threat of information terrorism becomes real. Hijacked computers of military organizations or dissemination of viruses destroying programs via the Internet, are only some examples to present the essence of the above problem.[33]

## 4. Communication competences of a manager in the 21st century

Managers in the 21st century are individuals whose communication competences underlie the creation of intangible assets of enterprises which are found to be the most important in the process of creating a competitive advantage. The characteristics of these assets include among other things the possibility to update them quickly, copy and develop them without large expenditure and adapt them to current expectations and requirements of a production process in an organization.[34] They are created by specific individuals under specific circumstances and this is why they can be very easily communicated to selected receivers and quickly interiorized and used.

In the present world the creation of a competitive advantage of an organization is first of all subordinate to high communication efficiency of the managerial staff. This is attained by developing definite skills – the competences which are an immanent part of behaviours of all people in an organization and, first of all, managers. Competences of present managers are governed by the following principles:

1. principle of communication dualism – awareness of process variability,
2. principle of communication intelligence – adaptiveness of communication,
3. principle of taking into account situational and socio-cultural contexts,
4. principle of individual personality features of partners in the communication process,
5. principle of skilful usage and reading of verbal expressions and non-verbal signals,
6. principle of utilization of knowledge and experience adequately to the situation,
7. principle of high-level ethical behaviours,
8. and principle of self-control.

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[33] Woźniak J.W., *Selected Aspects of the Communication Process in the Modern Society*, s. 49-60, in: *The importance of company competence in the strategy of innovative development in the European Union*, edited by: Kunert O., *Foundation for Competence Promotion*, Łódź 2009.
[34] Kunert O., op.cit., s. 136.

Considering the problems of communication process management within an organization a general rule formulated D. Katz and R.L. Kahn should be bore in mind[35]: *"Communication needs to be seen not as process occurring between any sender of messages and any potential recipient, but in relation to the social system in which it occurs..."*. Assuming the functional point of view of an organization, we must remember that every communication activity of the manager is connected with the realization of concrete assignments in the system. This behaviour is always subordinate to a definite situational context and a specific social sphere of a definite organizational unit on the one hand and to the external socio-cultural environment, on the other hand, as being a condition indirectly determining internal communication behaviours of participants of the communication process on the other hand. Communication skills of all participants in the communication process in an organization are a product resultant of many various personal and social features of particular subjects of the information exchange process. They are the original features of each member of an organization which during processes occurring therein is subject to permanent long-term transformations. They are also features which for instance make it possible to distinguish a good manager from a poor one and they may cause that the one who did not cope in a given situation will behave perfectly under other circumstances. This specific dualism of communication skills of people in an organization seems to be one of basic paradigms of the communication process in an organization. Another statement which seems to be as important as the above one is the ascertainment that a contemporary manager should display something which can be identified as communication intelligence, i.e. the ability to adapt to unforeseeable and variable communication circumstances. Personalities of partners in the communication process and their verbal and non-verbal abilities cause that this process occurs according to intentions and the usage of well-chosen expressions and phrases adequate to the situation as well as the use of earlier experiences contributes to high efficiency of this process. Self-control and behaviours conforming to high ethical standards determine the most important paradigm of the competency of the contemporary manager. The engagement of workers and management through confidence is possible only and exclusively when high ethical standards are maintained.

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[35] Katz D., Kahn R.L, op.cit., s. 348.

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