

The Link Between Communication And Conflict: A Review Of Four Paradigms

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Abstract

Conflict is a universal condition within human groups. It manifests itself in economic distinctions (not differences), social change, cultural formation, psychological development and political organization, and then becomes evident through groupings of conflicting groups; Who can have or be perceived as such, and goals that are incompatible with one another. Conflict is also dynamic, can increase or decrease, and is composed by a complex crossover between attitude (mental) and behavior (real), which can then construct its own reality or reality that can be different from the actual reality. So far, conflicts are often considered to occur due to communication failures, and thus there is an assumption that communication is a powerful remedy in overcoming conflicts. But in reality it is not that simple. This paper will examine why communication cannot be considered as the single most effective conflict resolution, using the 4 paradigms of communication approach.

Keywords: *conflict, communication, communication paradigm*

INTRODUCTION

In general, the definition of conflict can refer to a set of circumstances, where the parties involved then believe that they have different goals. This of course must be distinguished from other matches or competitions that are sports or entertainment, which have corridors or rules followed by the parties involved in it. Conflict, on the other hand, has no fixed rules, and the parties involved often resort to violence or other means to get what they want. But an important point to note comes from early theorists such as Morton Deutsch, who distinguished between destructive and *constructive* conflicts, and later proposed that destructive conflicts should be avoided, while the latter conflict is precisely an important aspect and a necessity for human creativity (Schein, 2016).

So far, there is a term that is quite famous, namely that conflicts arise due to miscommunication in the communication process that occurs. But this is not entirely true. In a study published in 1966, Krauss and Deutsch conducted a study on *bargaining* experiences, where subjects were given the opportunity to communicate with each other. The exchange problems experienced by the subjects are relatively easy to solve, however, providing participants with a means by which they can hinder the progress of the opposing party then causes the problem to become much more complicated, and usually results in worse outcomes for both parties (Abbas et al., 2023).

The means of such diversion caused the focus of participants to shift, from initially trying to work together to solve a simple coordination problem, to how to find individual strategies that benefit themselves (A. N. Rachman, 2023). Providing verbal communication channels for them is not beneficial, in some cases it makes the problem worse. The results of this study undermine the naïve assumption of communication as a universal solution to conflict.

Communication is often considered a "miracle cure" to eliminate a problem. Taking into account the genuine desire to defuse conflict, it is true that communication can facilitate efforts to achieve these goals (C. A. N. Rachman et al., 2023). However, although we can influence (or be influenced) by others through communication, the influence is not as great as we imagine (Putri et al., 2022). The end result of communication is an understanding between the parties involved, but henceforth communication can have little result in influencing the state of a problem, or to direct the outcome of a conflict caused by differences in goals that cannot be met (*irreconcilable*). Therefore, it is more realistic to view communication as a neutral instrument that can be used both ways, both to convey threats and to offer reconciliation, to propose unreasonable or reasonable reasons, and to escalate tensions or de-escalate them (Herison et al., 2022). Good communication cannot guarantee that a conflict can be resolved or eliminated, but poor communication certainly increases the likelihood of a conflict spreading (Latiep et al., 2022).

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research method on the theme "The Relationship Between Communication and Conflict: A Review from 4 Paradigms" involves an in-depth approach to understanding how communication affects conflict in various contexts. The four paradigms—functionalism, interpretivism, critical theory, and post-structuralism—offer different lenses for examining the dynamics of communication and conflict. Functionalism views communication as a tool for achieving consensus and social functions, while interpretivism emphasizes understanding individual subjective meanings and experiences (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Critical theory focuses on how power and domination in communication affect conflict, whereas post-structuralism challenges conventional understandings and explores how identities and realities are constructed through language (Benu et al., 2020). Through case studies, in-depth interviews, and discourse analysis, this research delves into how communication plays a role in creating, exacerbating, or resolving conflicts. By understanding these perspectives, the study aims to provide insights into effective communication strategies for managing and resolving conflicts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Now, before we begin to discuss the complex relationship between conflict and communication, it is important to first explain what communication is. The concept of communication is an important focus in fields as diverse as biology, computer science, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, semiotics, electrical engineering and ethology, each with its own unique understanding of communication. With its use so diverse and contextual, it is natural that sociologist Thomas Luckman observed it as "a thing used to mean all things to everyone".

Common to these diverse concepts is the idea of information transfer, how information coming from one part of the system is then formulated into a message that is transmitted to another part of the system. As a result, information located at one locus becomes replicated in another. In social communication itself, information refers to what is called an idea, or more scientifically referred to as a mental representation. In its most basic form, social communication can be thought of as a process by which ideas held in one's mind are then conveyed to others. This is an interesting understanding, although it fails to capture the richness and detail of social communication that involves far more aspects than just the transfer of ideas. By considering this, we can use at least 4 paradigms in looking at the relationship between communication and conflict, namely:

A. Encoding-decoding paradigm

The clearest communication can be found in this paradigm, where communication is defined as the transfer of information with the use of code. The code itself is a system that maps a set of signals into a set of senses. In the simplest code systems, this mapping is one-on-one, where for each signal there is only one sense, and vice versa

(for example Morse code). Most communication in nonhuman species is based on this principle.

B. Intentionalist paradigm

This paradigm views that communication is not as simple as transferring information using code. In social communication, the same message/information can be understood as something different, in different conditions or situations. This fact underlies the need to distinguish between the literal meaning of a message, and what the message actually means. The existence of utterance or implied messages which are a common feature in human daily conversation² is a tangible manifestation of how amazing the ability of humans to understand the meaning to be conveyed in a message. However, the process by which a listener constructs the intent of an implied expression or message is complex and remains a matter of debate among psycholinguists. A large part of the process itself depends on the existence of knowledge that is shared between the speaker and the addressee, or called common ground. The most basic common ground type that communicators rely on is knowledge of the language they use. Most of the common ground, which is based on language, uses derivatives of the complex matriculation of shared cultural knowledge. The absence of this knowledge can result in erroneous interpretations. This point is particularly relevant to the use of language in conflict situations, especially when the conflict stems from differences in goals, values, and ideologies. At the point where differences are caused by this lack of shared knowledge, communication will have an impact. Understanding the importance of common ground in terms of interpretation of the intent of an expression leads to one of the setbacks of relying too much on intentionalist notions of communication. The addressee or person to whom the message is addressed cannot draw what is meant by the message if the understanding is outside the scope of shared knowledge. Furthermore, because what is common ground for speakers will vary from those of the addressee, speakers will be obligated to produce only those that the addressee believes can be understood.

C. Paradigm of perspective-taking

This paradigm assumes that individuals see the world from different points of view, and therefore the experience of individuals to some degree depends on their point of view. Therefore, the message must be formulated with that in mind. This is what is meant by the Principle of Audience Design. The late Roger Brown said that coding or the process of translating code requires the author's point of view that can be realistically imagined. However, despite the popular opinion that the perspective of the listener or the person to whom the message is addressed needs to be taken into consideration, it is not always clear how to implement this principle. It is difficult to accurately know the perspective of others, and it is even more difficult when individuals are very different from one another. In conflict situations, more problematic than the absence of common ground is the misperception of the common ground, where communicators make incorrect or erroneous assumptions about what

their partner knows. A communicator's estimation of what others know, believe, or perceive as valuable tends to be biased, and is more likely to rest on what the communicator understands. Because of this, knowledge is needed that exceeds what the individual understands when wanting to understand or determine the true purpose of a message. Misperception is common in conflict situations for 2 reasons; The first is because of the large number of different perspectives that the communicator must accommodate so that it can turn into another source of conflict, and then because conflict tends to make perceived distinctions or perceived differences more prominent, and therefore increase the tendency to group those involved as members of in-groups or out-groups.

This difference is also seen in the language used by people in such situations. Semin and colleagues coined the term linguistic intergroup bias as one manifestation, namely that individuals tend to systematically describe the actions of members of different in-groups and out-groups. For negatively associated actions, the behavior of out-group members tends to be characterized more generally, while the behavior of in-group members is described more concretely. Conversely, for actions with positive associations, the behavior of out-group members is described specifically per action, while the behavior of in-groups is characterized more generally. One consequence of linguistic intergroup bias is that stereotypes are more resistant, because behaviors that align with negative stereotypes of out-groups tend to be classified as general properties (applicable across the group). Thus, increasing the fluidity of stereotypes in conflict situations will drastically complicate the process by making the auditor's "point of view realistically imagined", and therefore will reduce the effectiveness of the communication process.

D. Dialogue paradigm

So far, previous paradigms have always viewed communication as merely an individualistic process, that is, a product contributed by what Susan Brennan calls an "autonomous information process". The speaker and the addressee behave with respect for each other, but they act as individual entities. Communication is seen as consisting of a set of episodes that are discursively related, but still independent. In some cases, this definition may be appropriate, such as in the communication between the author and the reader of his writing, or to the broadcaster and his audience. But this definition seems to miss the essence of communication that occurs in most humans in their daily lives. Participants involved in conversational processes and similar forms of interactive communication are more inclined to behave like participants in a form of cooperative activity. Herbert Clark and Susan Brennan say that "It takes two people working together to play a duet, shake hands, play chess, waltz, teach, or make love. To succeed, the two of them have to coordinate both the content and process of what they are doing... Communication... is a collective activity of the first order.

The dialogue paradigm then brings a difference, focusing on the nature of collaboration in communication activities. The most striking difference between these

paradigms can be said to lie in where they place meaning. In the encoding/decoding paradigm, meaning is a property of the message, while in the intentionalist paradigm, meaning resides at the will of the speaker or speaker. As for the perspective-taking paradigm, meaning is derived from the point of view of the addressee or the intended recipient of the message. The dialogue paradigm then considers communication as a common achievement of its participants, who have collaborated to achieve a set of communication goals. The meaning of this paradigm is "socially situated", derived from the specific circumstances of the interaction, and the meaning of utterance or implied expression can be understood only in the context of that state. Because participants are invested in understanding and being understood by each other, communicators and communicants must take pains to ensure that they have a similar conception of the meaning of each message before they move on to the next.

The Contribution of Each Paradigm

Each of the paradigms mentioned above has proposed several principles that should be followed by effective communicants. The encoding/decoding paradigm, for example, emphasizes the importance of managing the ratio of signal and interference. In Information Theory, noise has a specific technical meaning, but here it can be understood as anything that adds an unwanted signal to the message to be received. This noise certainly has a destructive / disruptive effect, and its impact on the communication process can be very detrimental because it will force the recipient of the message to 'fill in' the information distorted by the noise. Given the antagonistic interpersonal orientation that is common in conflict situations, this process of replenishing information tends to make a conflict worse, rather than better. One example of how noise can appear in a communication process is the involvement of a third party (or more) in the delivery of the message emitted. These parties can cause the message to be distorted before it reaches the recipient of the message which is the real destination. To avoid this, it is sometimes necessary to avoid discussion or dialogue about subjects that are 'vulnerable' in environments where misunderstandings are prone to occur. Redundancy is also useful, because although emphasizing the same idea in different forms does not necessarily guarantee acceptance of the idea, it will increase the likelihood of understanding the idea to be conveyed correctly and contextually.

Furthermore, the intentionalist paradigm emphasizes the danger when participants misinterpret each other's communication goals. Understand that the meaning of what a person says consists of understanding the communicant's purpose behind it. This means not just knowing the meaning of the words used, but what the communicant wants to convey through those words. In conflict situations, this misinterpretation often occurs in general because individuals tend to interpret speech consistently, according to their own behavior. Solomon Asch shows how the same message will be interpreted differently depending on who the utterance is attributed to. The statement (I hold that a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing, and as

necessary in the political world as storms are in the physical) will be different in meaning when attached to Nicolai Lenin for example, than when attached to Thomas Jefferson (who was the original author). The meaning of the word 'rebellion' can be interpreted in more ways than one. Therefore, participants' knowledge of the sender of the message is an important determinant of their meaning of the word, as well as the communicative purpose of the sender.

Matters can then be further complicated when the parties involved in the conflict use different languages to communicate. Translators often have to provide literal translations that are used to contextually explain what should be understood in figurative messages. This adds a strain to our ability to formulate the nuances of a message. In addition, correctly recognizing a message behind a non-literal expression often requires cultural knowledge that goes beyond language skills alone. For example, understand what President Ronald Reagan said when he said "Go ahead! Make my day" requires reference knowledge of at least one Clint Eastwood film when he utters those words. Or another example is when president Soekarno said "Go to hell with your aid", which can only be understood by looking at the historical context in which he uttered it. It takes considerable cognitive effort to understand the purpose of the sender's communication, but it is an absolutely necessary effort if each party involved wants to understand each other. The absence of this will cause the communication process to easily fall into a circle of misunderstanding and denial.

Of course, participants still have the power to make this easier (or harder) to achieve. The recipient of the message can try to find out the purpose of communication behind the words spoken by the sender of the message, and vice versa the sender of the message can find out how to express themselves so that the message conveyed can be received by the recipient of the message according to what they want. This is a principle derived from the perspective-taking paradigm. Indifference to this principle can be fatal to the communication process. For example, the use of words related to things that are considered taboo or insensitive, such as using the word niggard when there are Afro-Americans, or the use of other words that reflect stereotypes of certain people or groups, can cause problems and misunderstandings, especially in situations where the understanding and understanding of the recipient of the message is limited.

A serious complication of taking a perspective on a conflict stems from what is known as the multiple audience problem. It is common for communication to be designed to convey multiple messages to diverse audiences simultaneously, and this seems to be the case often in conflict situations. However, the number of different (and often contradictory) perspectives that communicators have to consider can actually make public or open negotiations difficult. Therefore, it is often recommended for participants involved in conflict resolution to reduce the number of people involved when their message is delivered. Of course, the other person's perspective cannot always be known with certainty. It is better for both parties to increase their efforts in knowing what is or is not on common ground, and to make efforts to expand their content if necessary. Mutual cooperative efforts to ensure coordination regarding the meaning of messages are the essence of a dialogical approach to communication.

Participants involved in repetitive and acrimonious conflicts may find it difficult to achieve a certain degree of sensitivity to others, so this effort is absolutely necessary. It may seem troublesome, but without it, there will be no effective communication.

So far, the focus has been on the inherent complexity of communication, and how incorrect use of this communication can lead to widespread or widespread conflict. But we also know that some conflicts can at least be resolved peacefully, where mortal enemies can become allies, and what appears to be an unresolved conflict can be isolated so that the parties involved can then agree to disagree). Next, we will look at some principles that can be developed (but not guaranteed) to enhance the corrective (ameliorative) effect of communication. But first, we must start from the starting point that communication is not a magic cure for all problems, and the absence of a sincere desire to resolve conflicts will affect the incompatibility between the parties involved. This is important to emphasize, because communication often has a variety of functions, and parties involved in a conflict usually view conflict resolution with some opposition. This is especially true when the conflict is a group, rather than an individual. In such cases, communication aimed at resolving the conflict may fail, or may even make the conflict worse.

With a sincere intention to resolve conflicts, careful communication can help achieve the desired results. Here the critical point is the substance of communication, namely the quality of the proposals and counter-proposals that each party submits. It is naïve to expect that a solution offered will be accepted simply because of "good communication", regardless of whether the solution is beneficial to the party offered. However, regardless of its content, the shape of a message can sometimes have an impact that is often unintentional. This flexibility is what makes communication a highly adaptive tool, allowing for more effective ways to achieve a goal. For example, differences in the choice of words can make a command easier to accept and execute. Here it requires the accuracy of participants in arranging words so that they can be accepted and understood contextually. The commands "close the door!", "please, can you close the door", and "it's so cold here, it seems better if the door is closed", each has differences in the arrangement and choice of words, but all have the same substance, namely an attempt to get the recipient of the message to do something. Here, although the substance of the message is the same, certain commands will obtain more effective results than others, depending on the context in which they are used. We can think of this utterance or implied expression as similar to physical action, where the things we say are intended to accomplish or obtain a certain goal, only not as direct as physical action, but communicatively.

As illustrated above, an action statement can be achieved with a variety of expressions. "Close the door" and "Can you close the door" are both representations of an order to close the door, but they differ in certain ways." Can you close the door" is an act of indirect speech (where the literal message and the intended message are different), while "Close the door" is the act of direct speech or direct statement that represents the message clearly. In general, the first statement is seen as more polite than the second, perhaps because the two commandments have different implications

for the status or difference in power between the giver of the command and the giver of the order. Therefore, it is important for communicators to pay more attention to other information that can be channeled through the form of their messages.

CONCLUSION

There is no definitive formula for making communication a constructive force in resolving conflicts, but there are principles for communicating effectively in conflict situations. Some of these principles have been mentioned above, but need to be elaborated again to emphasize their importance, namely:

- 1) Reduce noise. This interference is anything that can interfere with the clear distribution of a message. The greater the ratio of message signals to interference, the closer the similarity between the message sent and the message received, and vice versa. Perhaps one of the best ways to increase this ratio is to increase repeatability or *redundancy*. Furthermore, to limit the occurrence of misunderstandings in the message conveyed is to convey the same idea in various ways.
- 2) When speaking, always consider the audience's point of view. Because the potential for misunderstanding is high, and this misunderstanding tends to lead to negativity, it is very important for the speaker to limit the meaning that can be included by the listener in the message he wants to convey. One way is to consider how the listeners will understand the words to be conveyed. Do not use "what I mean by this", but rather use "what the interlocutor is likely to understand". Thus, it is often necessary for the communicator to inform (or remind) his listeners about the way the message is interpreted.
- 3) When listening (a message), try to understand the meaning that your interlocutor intended. Just as the sender of the message must take pains to be aware of the possibility of message construction that will be carried out by the listener of the message, the listeners must also be aware of alternative constructions that may occur in a message.
- 4) Be an active listener. The *encoding-decoding* approach places the listener in the role of passive receiver whose job is to process the meaning of the message conveyed. But actually the role of the listener is not limited to that. An active listener will ask questions, try to clarify ambiguous statements, and take pains to make sure that he and the sender of the message have the same understanding of the message.
- 5) Avoid *over-generalizing* and *over-simplification*. Daniel Katz classifies the causes of conflict into 3 things, namely economic conflicts, values, and power. But in its development, these three things can intertwine so that it will be difficult to identify the initial cause. Especially when the conflict expands and drags outside parties to get involved in it. Therefore, avoid generalizing too much to a conflict. As with the process of communication, so conflict is contextual and unique. Don't jump to the conclusion that one conflict is the same as another. Also, avoid oversimplifying

attitudes by assuming that the cause of the conflict is certain. It must be considered the conditions of the parties involved in the conflict, as well as their points of view so that the meeting point in seeing the conflict (and its causes) becomes comprehensive or comprehensive.

- 6) Avoid being neutral. Although communication is a neutral instrument, its users must show partiality. Neutrality is dangerous in a conflict, because it tends to lead to *ignorance*, especially for those who are not involved. This will affect *peer pressure* or public pressure which can be a determining factor, especially when the party that has a stronger foundation in a conflict has no strength or is weaker than the opposing party. Of course, partisanship is not caused by likes or dislikes or certain interests, but is based on universal values that are the benchmark for morals and ethics.
- 7) Promote good manners or ethics. Body attitudes, gestures, and all other non-verbal behaviors can affect a communication process. Therefore, extensive knowledge is needed about what is *common ground* in the parties involved in a conflict, so that all non-verbal behavior created does not hinder the communication process that takes place.
- 8) Promoting scientific and open dialectic principles in looking at the context of the problem to avoid subjective defense of one of the parties involved in the conflict.

This recommendation seems to be asking the parties to the conflict to be cooperative, and that is indeed the goal. Communication is basically a process of cooperation. As explained through the perspective of dialogue, the parties must collaborate to create meaning, and one of the reasons why communication between parties to conflict often fails is because one party is unable to collaborate to the same degree as the other party. This is what then causes communication will only be a continuation of verbal conflict.

However, it is true that communication can be the first step, and the development of communication channels can be a stepping stone for achieving a final solution. For this reason, it is necessary to unite the parties to the conflict, one of which is by including elements of "common enemies". Throughout human development, the concept of *common foe* has been used very often to gain support, legitimize something, or to unite groups. This is most likely related to the paradoxical nature of humans which is the natural inheritance of human evolution as a condition for their survival. But in communication itself, rather than a particular party or faction, the common enemy here is "misunderstanding". Working together to eliminate this common enemy can be the first step in reducing their differences and leading them to the path of true reconciliation. Communication is also useful in showing the paradigm they use in viewing the conflict. Good intentions to resolve a conflict can be reflected in how they communicate. Finding common ground between the parties involved in the conflict, and championing things that benefit all parties is key to reconciling a conflict, and also to finding ways so that the conflict does not recur or spread widely. Thus, the conflict

that occurs can be directed to become a constructive conflict that is positive, rather than a destructive conflict that is negative.

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