

TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION MODELS AS ADOPTED IN ENGLISH LITERATURE: A PRAGMATIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Since the time of Aristotle (c. 384 – 322 B.C) we have seen several ‘Models of ‘Technical Communication’ at display all over the world. I would focus upon only four significant models of ‘Technical Communication’ that created a huge sensation as predominant ‘soft skill’ among English Litterateurs* down the ages. The present study will draw our attention on two important aspects of Technical Communication Models as adopted in English Literature down the ages.

- Gradual evolution of the theory of TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION and its keen application inter alia in English literature as the softest of the ‘soft skills’ and
- Provision of built-in motivation from different aspects of the TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION as applied by the English litterateurs for fostering favorable Reader’s Response down the ages;

The present study also focuses on the fact that the last two models of Technical Communication of my discussion, namely, Shannon –Weaver Model and Lasswell Model, are indebted not only to the devolution of the Communication Theory under Electronics and Communication Engineering but also to interdisciplinary Subjects like Applied Linguistics, Comparative Literature and Communicative English. No wonder, these Models have been used consciously or unconsciously by the litterateurs of English literature to eke out favorable Reader’s Response.

KEYWORDS & PHRASES

- **Technical Communication:** Communication as a process or product, used for communication through different channels
- **Built-in Motivation:** Motivation that is pre-structured among the readers
- **Reader’s Response:** Literary Criticism of common readers as well as the experts in the field
- **English Literature:** Literary works of British and Non – British writers including Indian English, American English Australian English, South African and Caribbean English authors and litterateurs

INTRODUCTION

Models of ‘Technical Communication’ that are available in the field can be broadly classified into two groups as delineated below:

Linear Models: Linear Models view ‘Technical Communication’ as a unilinear i.e. -- one way process or at best bilinear i.e. -- two-way process. There is hardly any provision in these models to know the response of the receiver, especially in the case of Unilinear Model of Technical Communication.

- The best example of Unilinear Model is ‘sermon’ as has been projected by T. S. Eliot in **Murder in the Cathedral**, or traditional classroom Lecture as has been projected by Charles Dickens in **Hard Times** or Political Campaign as used by the Whigs and Tories in England as has been depicted by Charles Dickens in Pickwick Papers.
- Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales and Aesop’s Fables can be taken as examples of Bilinear Model because the audience were expected to express their feelings while listening in this model.

Spiral or Interactional Model: The Spiral model of ‘Technical Communication’ is also called ‘Interactional’ or ‘Cyclical Model’. The element of multi-dimensional feedback (as found in Video Conference or News-on-spot media coverage today) is an exclusive feature of the Spiral Model.

- Browning’s Pippa Passes and The Ring and the Book and Dramatic Monologues like ‘Porphyria’s Lover’ and ‘The Last Ride Together’ are the finest examples of Spiral model of ‘Technical Communication’
- Roland Barthes’ S/Z and Boudrillard’s Commentary on Disneyland are also good examples of Literary Criticism where Spiral model of ‘Technical Communication’ has been adopted

Feedback as Reader’s Response: Feedback in Technical Communication’ is meant to perform two important functions as Reader’s Response:

- We can measure and evaluate importance of the message received by the receiver (i.e. ‘Listener or Reader’) of the English literature; and
- We can plan for future model of ‘Technical Communication’ that would definitely lead to better understanding of English literature. Let us see the following diagram for better understanding:

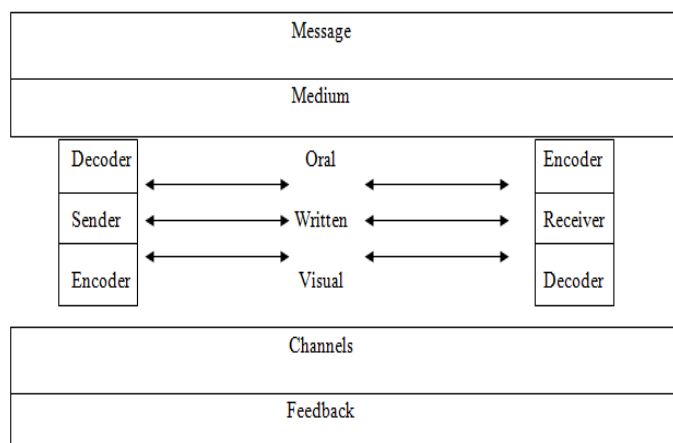


Diagram 1: Spiral or Interactional Model of Technical Communication

Analysis of Diagram 1

The following elements are essentially present in Spiral or Interactional Model of Technical Communication:

- Message, idea or stimulus
- Sender or transmitter or communicator
- Encoding

- Channel
- Medium
- Receiver
- Decoding
- Action or behaviour change
- Feedback

The models that would get emphasis in course of my discussion have been randomly chosen from both categories of 'Technical Communication' as shown below:

- Aristotle Model (Circa 4th century BC)
- Panini Model (Circa 5th century C.E)
- Shannon-Weaver Model (20th Century CE)
- Harold Lasswell Model (Latest Available)

The categories of the models of my discussion are not mentioned for two obvious reasons:

- To boost up the motivation of the learned readers and Research Scholars by keeping them seriously engaged with the present discourse ; and
- To go along with the tone of 'enquiry and research' for the success of this Journal

Let us start with the Aristotelian Model (named after famous Greek Philosopher called Aristotle) because I believe that the august readers and Research Scholars are already acquainted with this Greek Philosopher.

ARISTOTLE MODEL OF TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

Aristotelian Model is the first model of Technical Communication process is found in Chapter VI of **Poetics**. Aristotle introduced the idea of communication with reference to 'technai' i.e. technique that the successful characters of a Greek Play would follow to create a lasting impression upon the audience. Aristotle Model seems to be very simple and elementary one. According to Aristotle, 'De communis' i.e. the communication process has three main elements. These are namely the speaker, the speech and 'list ere' i.e. the audience.

Let us see the diagram below for better understanding:

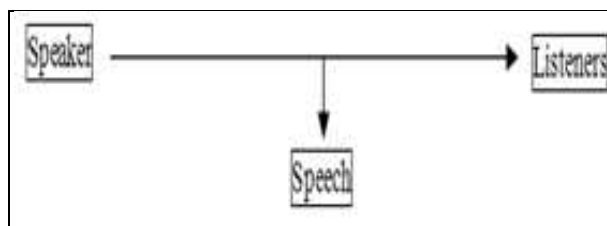


Diagram 2: Aristotle Model of Technical Communication

Analysis of Diagram 2

If we follow a standard Anthropological Journal on growth and structure of human language and manage enough time to go through any book dealing with growth and structure of Indo-European languages, understanding of the scope of Aristotelian Model would be quite easy. No Wonder, Aristotle model refers to Oral - Aural communication, the basic communication network, built by the ancient civilizations of the world before the invention of any standard 'scripts'. Shakespearean Plays during the Elizabethan Age are open salute to Aristotelian model of Technical Communication as recorded in the sixteenth century English literature. Moreover, primary focus of Aristotle model is on the art of public speaking and oratory that politicians are still devoted to master all over the world.

Application of Aristotelian Model

We find the application of Aristotelian Model in all Greek Dramas where Oracle plays an important role as in **Oedipus Rex**. In Shakespearean Plays the actors were trained in the art of speech - making and listening so that they could create a permanent impression upon the audience. Shakespeare played an important role himself in Ben Jonson's play **'Every Man in His Humour'** and projected the concept of a model actor during the Elizabethan Age of English literature. This trend of applying Aristotelian Model in Dramaturgy was followed by Etherege & Wycherley during the heyday of the Restoration Comedies. Even Jeremy Collier who made 'Othellos' (i.e. Play actors) leave their occupation by his 'ranting' against moral degradation of 'Restoration Dramatists' admitted the efficacy and influence of Aristotelian Model on English stage.

Panini Model of Technical Communication

Panini, a renowned Sanskrit Grammarian of India during the Gupta Age wrote a famous book on Sanskrit Grammar called *Astadheyi* – (a book having eight chapters). According to him Technical Communication network uses Mukhabhasa i.e. spoken words and Lipibhasa i.e. encoded or written words. Let us see the following diagram based on Panini Model of Technical Communication.

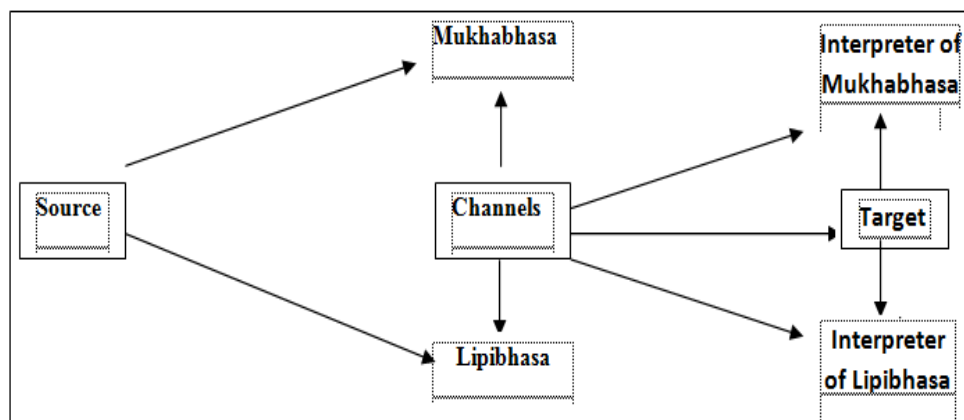


Diagram 3: Panini Model of Technical Communication

Analysis of Diagram 3

We see that Panini extended the channels of Technical Communication in comparison to Aristotle Model. Chronologically speaking, Aristotelian Model was quite earlier and simpler than Paninian Model. Panini Model refers to both 'Oral - Aural' and 'Written - Readable' communication. It is needless to highlight the fact that 'Devnagari Script' was

spread throughout Aryabarta (as the whole of North India was called so) during the Imperial Guptas. One paramount feature of Paninian Model of Technical Communication is the role played by ‘Interpreters’ of ‘Oral’ and ‘Written’ discourse. It means there were several dialectical varieties and linguistic differences among Indians of Gupta era as we find in modern India and Panini tried to offer one ready- made solution to such an essential problem.

Application of Paninian Model

We find the application of Paninian Model in the art of writing fiction and non-fiction during the Romantic Age and the Victorian Age of English literature. The abolition of Play licensing in 1843 paved the way for the publication of Elizabethan Plays for class room reading. Learned readers may remember Dr. Samuel Johnson’s role as editor of Shakespearean Plays for High School Textbooks in this regard. Moreover, the language policy based on ‘bilingualism’ and ‘multilingualism’, adopted since Independence of India (1947), is still based on the Paninian Model. It is surprising to note that long before Panini projected his model of Technical Communication, Plato’s Republic had adopted Dialogue – based writing. We find Paninian Model adopted in Anand Coomerswamy’s famous non-fiction, **The Dance of Nataraj** and Sir Walter Scott’s fiction **The Heart of Midlothian**.

Shannon-Weaver Model of Technical Communication

C.E. Shannon and Weaver developed the Mathematical Theory of Communication in 1949. This theory popularly called Shannon and Weaver theory concentrated on the technical aspects of communication.

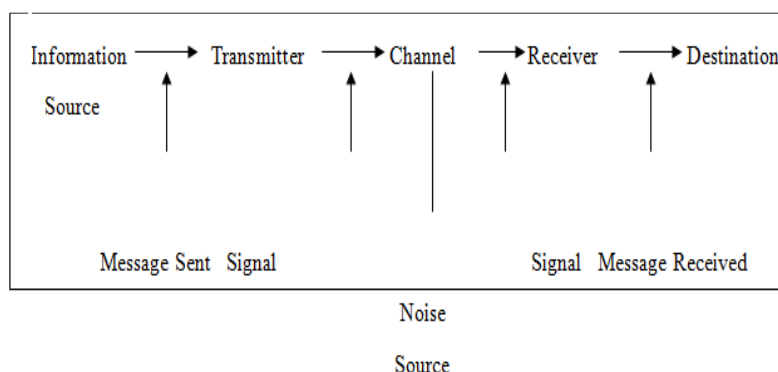


Diagram 4: Shannon and Weaver Model of Technical Communication

Analysis of Diagram 4

Shannon-Weaver Model refers to Mechanical distribution of Oral & Written communication. According to Shannon-Weaver Model there are nine elements of the process Technical Communication:

- Information source
- Transmitter – to convert a message into transmittable signals
- Receiver – who reconstructs the message from the signals
- Channel
- Destination – the person or machine to whom it is intended
- The message

- Transmitted signals
- Received signals and
- Noise sources

Application of Shannon -Weaver Model

We find the application of Shannon-Weaver Model in Telecommunication Network, News coverage, Seasonal and daily Conference, and in intra-continental and inter-continental Seminars and workshops. It is needless to point out one can never think of any modern literature that are shorn of these gifts of Electronics and Communication Engineering. We can refer to all Science fictions and bed time light Fictions that are published for young generation and that are available on Internet follow Shannon-Weaver Model of Technical Communication. R. K. Narayan used this model long back in his one time best seller **The English Teacher** and Patrick_White combined Paninian Model with Shannon Weaver Model to get huge response of the reading public in **The White Mandala**.

Harold D. Lasswell Model of Technical Communication

Lasswell emphasized on the behavioural aspects of the sender. It has five elements viz. Who says? What is said? Which channel is used?, To Whom it is sent? And, what is its effect?

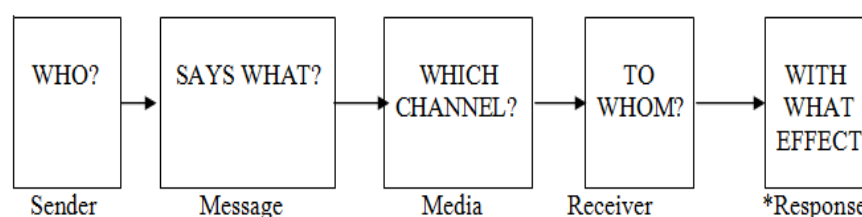


Diagram 5: Lasswell's Model of Technical Communication

Analysis of Diagram 5

We can easily distinguish the_Harold D. Lasswell Model and Shannon-Weaver Model from the rest. These Models are highly integrated where we see the sender in two different roles. He is an encoder when the message is sent and he becomes the decoder when he receives the feedback. Thus Technical Communication is viewed as a never ending spiral process of interaction. The key terms associated with Harold D. Lasswell Model are:

- Sender (Speaker/Encoder/ in Communication & Listener /Decoder/during Feedback)
- Message (Message in encoded terms during Communication)
- Media (Linguistic/Paralinguistic/Signal Device/ Electronic or Print)
- Receiver (Listener /Decoder/during Communication & Speaker/Encoder in Feedback)
- Response (Message in encoded terms or Reader's Response in Feedback)

Application of Harold D. Lasswell Model

We find the application of Harold D. Lasswell Model in Internet communication Network, Tele News coverage, different types of Conference, and in intra-continental and inter-continental Seminars and workshops. One can never think of English literature that is not blessed with Electronics and Tele-Communication Engineering. Modern Science fictions

and socialite Fictions that are published through Internet and Web Page also follow Harold D. Lasswell Model of Technical Communication. Salman Rushdie used this model long back in **Midnight Children** and Hardly Chase has used this model of communication in **Other Side of the Midnight** in recent times

CONCLUSIONS

These randomly chosen models of Technical Communication may not be able to explain few things that are significant for day to day changes in perspective and prospective scenario related to their applications in English literature. For example, James Boswell who wrote '**Life of Johnson**' (1791), SEVEN years after Dr. Samuel Johnson's death during the last decade of the eighteenth century unconsciously adopted a model which is same to same as of Shannon Weaver Model and Paninian Model rolled into one.

The present study can serve as an introduction to find out how far expertise in the field of Applied Linguistics, Comparative Literature and Communicative English can be amalgamated for teaching Business Communication to MBA; or teaching Business English to MCA; or teaching Technical Communication to BE/B. Tech students using English literature as a tool.

This article would definitely refresh the memory of those who are already in the field of teaching and in research of English Language and Literature and their allied domains.

Again, the Scholars in the field of English Language and Literature may face some new problems which would lead them to ponder over and to find out original solutions for them. Their spirit of inquiry may try few soft measures so that they can get rid of troubles and tribulations of understanding English Literature.

The understanding of the ground reality related to Technical Communication Models opens up the portals of all the 'soft skills' that human beings possess or aspire to possess in future for going through English literature in present context.

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