

## ***ABOUT THE NAME OF ACTUALLY COMMUNICATION STUDYING DISCIPLINE***

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### ***Abstract***

*This study explores the literature on the name of discipline which seeks communication. It notes that there are various names designating this subject: Communication Theory, Communication Science, Sciences de l'Information et of Communication (SIC), Communicology, Communication studies. It appears, then, that the discipline dealing with the phenomena of communication is (along with Psychology, Anthropology and Sociology) a social science. There is that, although seem to refer to one and the same phenomenon of communication, referred disciplines not examine the communication as a whole, but focuses on different areas; ie they are fragmented. Starting from the origin and connection (Lat. "Communis" + the Gr. Word "logos" "speech, thought, study") and making use of the analogy of Sociology (Latin word "Socius" + Gr. "Logos" ) and Anthropology (Gr. "anthropos" + "logos") is seeking a convergence of names. It is estimated that it should reach convergence in respect of at least two criteria: the study of communication as a whole and understanding communication as a multi-structured universe. Such criteria somehow it would comply with a title like "Strong Communication Science Communicology". Yet the question persists and therefore the future must be sought arguments to name a possible unitary communication science.*

*Key-words: communication, object of communication discipline, communication science, communication theory*

### **1. Introduction**

People are enveloped and traversed by communication. In relation to their existence, communication emerges as a multi-space and multi-structure universe. Communication is a social phenomenon. As Wilbur L. Schramm underlined, "communication is a, perhaps the, fundamental social process. Without communication, human groups and societies not exist" (Schramm, 1963, p. 1). Besides the other social phenomena, communication integrates into the area of social sciences. Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology etc. are recorded as social sciences. The creation of their names is done according to the known rule, but made visible by the contribution of Auguste Comte: from the Latin word "socius" + Gr. "logos", the French word "Sociologie", English word Sociology resulted. These social sciences have an academic statute. It uses quantitative and qualitative methods, which

were partially also applied during the communication stage. Because they directly or indirectly deal with the human behavior, they a) attract through it the human significations into the flow of theoretical and applicative research; b) in relation to the friability, volatility and turbulence of the significations they use hermeneutic methods.

Leo Thayer showed in 1979 that "there exists no single scientific discipline having on exhaustive interest in communication as a systematic body of knowledge" (Thayer, 1979, p. 8). The sole "scientific discipline" that would accurately and obstinately deal with "a body of knowledge" exclusively about communication must be a science that would deal with communication, whether it is called communicology, or communication science, or communication studies. How it would reasonably and epistemologically be called correctly is another issue. Surely, no science works fundamentally in the interest of another science. The science that needs to care for communication must have a clear awareness of communication and work in the interest of communication, and this must be a special science specific to communication. There is a discipline of communication as field of concern and "contradiction". Its profile is confusing and vague, and when it is not confusing and vague it is fragmented, incoherent and contradictory. A multitude of theories darken the Gioconda profile of communication. Many years ago, J. D. Delia observed a phenomenon that has not changed its harmfulness even to this day: "a significant feature of communication research has been its fragmentation" (Delia, 1987, p. 20).

Normally, the onto-epistemological science of communication should be "Communicology": from the Lat. word "cum" ("together") and the Lat. word "munus" ("task, mission"), Lat. "communis" + the Gr. word "logos" (speech, thought, study) (see also Cobley & Schulz, 2013, p. 1, "munus" like "duty, gift"). The concept of communication is of Latin origin and got its signification from "Communico, comunicare" which meant "to put something together". In other words, communication is "putting something together with someone".

A discipline with this title, "Communicology", exists. As Isaac E. Catt and Deborah Eicher-Catt show, the name of "Communicology" "was first introduced in the United States in the late 1950s by the founders of the International Communication Association (in particular Franklin H. Knowler, Elwood Murray, and Wendel Johnson" (Catt & Eicher-Catt D., 2010, p. 17). Subsequently, the works of Vilem Flusser (in the 1970's), Joseph de Vito and Richard L. Lanigan, in the 1980's, 1990's were placed under the title "Communicology". The concept of communication is of Latin origin and got its signification from "Communico, comunicare" which meant "to put something together". In other words, communication is "putting something together with someone". In return, Richard L. Lanigan created a school of communicology. "Communicology" set an ultra specialised study object. So that

"communicology" is rather a speciality instead of a discipline. In other words, before being thoroughly unified, the discipline of communication started on the path of fragmentation and hybridisation in specializations. Mattei Dogan and Robert Pahre observe that the disciplines are divided by object and "also fragment along epistemological, methodological, theoretical, and ideological lines" (Dogan & Phare, 1990, p. 53). The general observation is that "in scientific research the growth of specialties fissures the formal disciplines" (Dogan, 1997, p. 429). In 1991, C. R. Berger observed the "high level of fragmentation" in the field of communication and retained the "specialization" "as an inevitable consequence of growth" (Berger, 1991, p. 101).

According to Isaac E. Catt and Deborah Echer-Catt (2010), "Communicology designates a holistic approach of communication, encompassing information theory and diverse fragments of the field" (Catt & Eicher-Catt, 2010, p. 17). We agree that a science of communication would deal with the "communication in its wholeness", to use semiotic and phenomenological methods. It is not understood why the "communicology" should deal with the area of "information theory". It is excessive to retain the information theory as being part of "Communicology". In a study, we dealt with the "contradiction between communication and information" (Smarandache & Vlăduțescu, 2014). One can agree that "Communicology" would be a "critical-interpretive approach", to deal with the "embodied semiotic process", to have 4 levels (intrapersonal communicology, interpersonal communicology, social communicology and cultural communicology), but a general theory/science of communication cannot remain "of communication and discourse" or "science of embodied discourse" (Catt & Eicher-Catt, 2010, p. 26, p. 17 and 19). One cannot understand why "Communicology is, therefore, a coherent theory and methodology that explores the existential ground from which subjectivity and inter-subjectivity emerge as an embodied semiotic process" (Catt & Eicher-Catt D., 2010, p. 17). We know that theory is a system of knowing or at least a structure of knowing that has at least an ontology, an epistemology, an axiology, a methodology, not to speak of hermeneutics, praxeology, history, psychology, etc. Why would "communicology" be "theory and methodology"? Something else: a theory/science has its own paradigm of its own field. Or it does not: if it is in a pre-paradigmatic stage. Yet a theory/science cannot have an external paradigm. It can have an interdisciplinary, "trans-disciplinary" orientation or approach, as Basarab Nicolescu says, but it cannot have an import paradigm. Why is "the paradigm exemplar of communicology a semiotic phenomenology" (Catt & Eicher-Catt, 2010, pp. 17-18)? Why would it have a mixed paradigm, consisting of semiotics and phenomenology?

About 20 years ago, Charles R. Berger thought of a unification of the approaches in the field of communication by a preparation "of all communication researchers so that the roles of theoretician

and researcher might be played simultaneously by the same individual" (Berger, 1991, pp. 102-103); observed that there were just a "few" theories, which were unable to create in themselves a science. It is a natural concern for the emergence of theories, knowing "its role in communication science" (Berger & Roloff, 2010, p. 9). It must be said that "communication science", as any other science: it is created and consolidated in theories verified in relation to the main areas of its ontological field. 20 years have passed since then, since 1991-1993.

In 2005, at the "Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA)", New York, May 28, 2005, Wolfgang Donsbach observed about "the identity of communication research": "Thesis 1: Communication as a research field has seen the greatest growth of probably all academic fields over the last 30 years" (Donsbach, 2006, p. 437). In such an evolution, theories should have and might have "melted" in a strong social science of communication. This has not yet happened. I now think we have sufficient theories to coherently think a unified science of communication. I also think that a unification of the researches about communication will not happen soon. We identify the main cause in the polarization between "communication scientists" (Berger & Roloff, 2010, p. 8), as promoters of "communication science", "Science of human communication" (W. L. Schramm), and "communication theorists" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008, p. 23), advocates of the "communication theory" or "theory of communication", of the "theory of human communication", of the "communication studies" has increased. It is strange that renowned specialists from the two orientations in communication do not cite each other (we do not give examples). Thomas Kuhn shows that science is primarily a social undertaking: the community of scientists, as social guild, agrees on a shared understanding in relation with what is to be called on an interval "normal science". We observe that "normal science" is a convention and also a social construct of a community. Under the impulse and pressure from some of its members and/or of some from outside that bring theoretical-scientific enrichments, epistemes and patterns of problems, solutions and representation. Thus a paradigm shift, a change in thinking the content and functions of a science occur. For such an achievement, but also for science improvement in general, it is necessary that specialists would validate concepts, notions, theories, models through demonstrations, arguments and consensus. Therefore, we would say that a communication about "communication" is absolutely necessary. J. C. Nunally observed that "Science is a highly public enterprise in which efficient communication among scientists is essential" (Nunally, 1994, p. 6).

As temporary solution, we see a resuscitation of the denomination of "Communicology" and a combination of this with the most rigorous content of "Communication Science". Without adhering to the theoretical load which it was impregnated with by J. A. DeVito (1982) and/or Robert L. Lanigan

(1992), we consider that "Communicology" is the appropriate lexeme, which, brought into convergence with the "Communication science", would form a rigorous and robust science, a strong Communication Science, meaning a "Strong Communication Science-Communicology" (SCSC).

A true "Strong Communication Science-Communicology", as "disciplined" science of communication, must study the communication not only as a whole.

(1) It must be studied as a whole, but

(2) it must be a "speech" and a deep "thought", a rigorous and robust cogitation about the complexity of communication and

(3) aim at it as much as possible as a whole, in completeness. Let us not forget that "-logy" also in "Communicology" comes from the Greek word "logos" that means "speech, thinking"! The study must be oriented on 15 interconnected axes. A "Strong Communication Science-Communicology".

(4) must coherently and multi-polarly, multi-vectorally deal with communication. The content we consider to be communication can be found in Variable Geometry-Constructive-Transactional Paradigm, P3, la C. R. Berger (2010), J. O. Greene (2008), J. K. Burgoon (2009), M. E. Roloff (2008), S. W. Littlejohn and K. A. Foss (2008), B. R. Burleson (2010), R. T. Craig (2001; 2009; 2015), R. T. and K. Tracy (1995). This content is labelled either with "communication science", or with "communication theory". This is why we consider that the discipline that is to be a rigorous and robust, multi-polar and multi-vectorial cogitative system of speech-thought about the communication as a whole, it must retain the label of the current "Communicology" and provide the content of the current "Communication Science" or "Communication Theory". We assess that a rigorous and robust, meaning strong cogitative system must be a science. Consequently, we prefer the content, accumulation, the knowledge thesaurus of the "Communication Science". Strangely, because the terminological-ontological disorder of history wanted it, we shall speak of "Communication Science-Communicology", of Strong Communication Science-Communicology" (SCSC).

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