

RECEPTIVE AND EXPRESSIVE COMMUNICATION IN HUMAN INTERACTION

INYANG, M.P

Department of General Studies, Federal College of Agriculture, Ishiagu

ABSTRACT

Communication is bedrock of any meaningful human interaction. Humans interact through communication (receptive or expressive) to meet their needs-social, political, economic, religious needs and so on. This paper is an overview of the essence of receptive and expressive communication in human interaction. It considers the nature of and reasons for human interaction, constraints in human interaction and how to avoid them. The paper also discusses aspects of receptive (listening and reading) and expressive (speaking and writing) communication as they relate to a smooth human interaction. The paper argues that, human interaction is not always smooth because of some constraints consequent on people's lack of receptive and expressive communication skills. Therefore, to ensure effective human interaction, individuals should undergo adequate training on all aspects of receptive and expressive communication skills as discussed in this paper.

INTRODUCTION

Can you envisage a world void of human interaction or where communication does not occur? It could be static and boring you would say. Individuals and the society at large would be 'dead' and there would be no growth or development. However, it is impossible for humans not to interact or communicate. No man

is an island' goes the popular saying. Humans need one another to make life meaningful. For life to be meaningful; humans must interact and that can only be through communication. Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1968) in their interpretive and interaction approach affirm that "one cannot not communicate" (whether receptively or expressively). This is because humans are always interacting or relating. Whether they are talking or keeping silent, they are still communicating or interacting through verbal or non-verbal expressions. That is by spoken, written words or unspoken words-facial expression, body movement, silence and so on. Akpan (1987:26) espouses that communication is the significant factors in human interaction.

This work therefore, focuses on the receptive communication as a factor or a process for human interaction. Before discussing the receptive and expressive communication in detail, we will consider; the nature of and reasons for human interaction; constraints and how to avoid them.

Nature of Human Interaction: Human interaction in this work is seen as the manner in which humans get connected to and affect one another through communication. Interaction may be planned or unplanned as we experience in our daily lives. Human interaction could be physical or mental, formal or informal.

As also affirmed by Banjo (1987:67), human interaction could be formal, consultative, casual or intimate and frozen.

Physical: This has to do with one having a close contact with another-that is in a one to one or face to face relation. It could be a public speaker having a close contact with an audience or a teacher with his students. It involves relating with others in interpersonal, small or large group situation.

Mental: It is mental when one has no personal contact with those he is interacting with. This happens when one reads printed or hand written materials-books, letters, memoranda, notices, text message, magazines, newspapers, journals, periodicals, bill boards, bank statements, reports, manuals, drug prescriptions, road signs etc. Human interaction could also occur mentally when one views or listen to programmes on the electronic media (television and radio), discusses on telephone and also relates with people around the globe on the internet (social media-Face book, twitter, skype, blogs, vlogs and whatsapp).

Formal: Formal interaction takes place when we write formal or business letters to an organization, attend or speak in public lectures (seminar, symposium). Here, we interact with the use of formal language especially when it has to do with a field of study like medicine, engineering etc). There is no sense of intimacy in formal interaction it may also include an introduction between two strangers or unfamiliar persons.

Consultative: This is a two way interaction by people, back ground information is provided, and there is no assumption of prior knowledge. Here questions are asked and answers given,

interruption is permitted. This is evident in teacher-student, doctor-patient, expert-apprentice relationships etc.

Casual: In this form of interaction, informal language, ellipsis, slangs etc. are allowed and interruptions are prevalent. This takes place among friends and acquaintances on social setting.

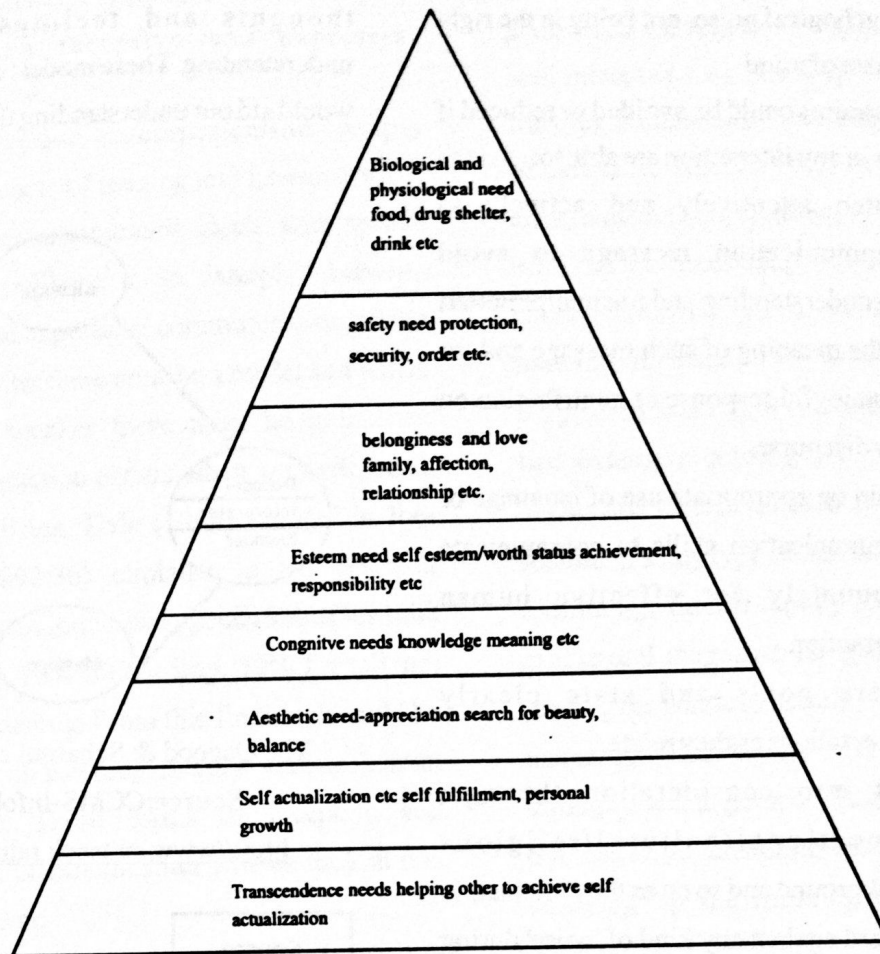
Intimates: Interaction is intimate when it involves family members and close friends. Informal use of language and non-verbal message are evident.

Frozen: Interaction can become frozen when one uses formal language or unguarded words in relating with especially close relatives and friends.

Occasions and Reasons for Human Interaction: There are countless places or occasions which human interaction occurs, schools, seminars, work place (office) home/family, market/business places; parties, coronations, burial ceremonies etc.

Humans interact because of the need for the following: information, growth and development, knowledge of self and the world, culture formation, guidance and counsel, love and acceptance, encouragement, affirmation, motivation, building up self-confidence, safety, the sense of belonging, self-actualization, self-esteem etc.

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory as illustrated in this diagram further buttress this



1990 adapted hierarchy of needs model

Source: www.businessball.com.2016

It is understood that although Maslow referred to additional aspects of motivation-'Cognitive', 'Aesthetic', and 'Transcendence', he did not include any of these as additional stages on the hierarchy of needs.

CONSTRAINTS IN HUMAN INTERACTION

Human interaction is not often smooth or pleasant. Sometimes people experience some hitches as they try to connect or relate with others. Constraint occurs when the following are evident:

- Misunderstanding or misinterpretation

of the meaning or message – semantic noise

- Inability to use language or communicate with appropriate words or language.
- Akpan(1987:18) asserts that unshared goals and unclearly stated expectation especially in interpersonal or group interaction generate heat and can any relationship
- Inability to empathise with respect other
- Ambiguity in communication
- Difference in age/education/cultural /religious and background.
- Time and situation

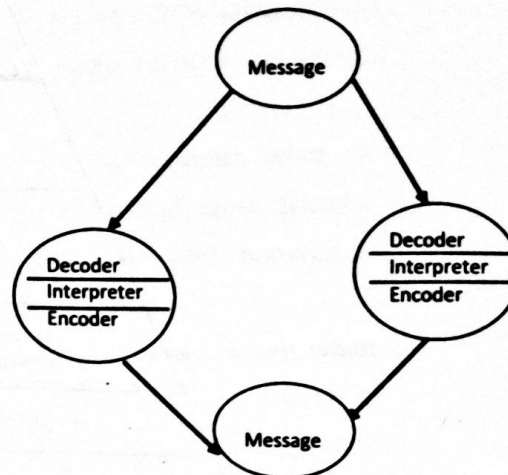
International Journal of Agriculture Management and Technology
 thoughts and feelings. for mutual understanding. These models of communication would aid our understanding the more.

Psychological noise- not being in the right frame of mind

These constraints could be avoided or reduced if individuals in any interaction are able to:

- Listen attentively and actively to communication message to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the meaning of such message and for meaningful response or contribution on any discourse.
- Train on appropriate use of language or communication skills to communicate adequately for effective human interaction.
- Share goals and state clearly expectations as they relate.
- Put into consideration the age, educational/cultural/religious background and so on as they interact.
- Guard against any kind of 'noise' during interaction- whether semantic or psychology, physiological or physical (noise element is anything that disrupt the clarity of communication).
- Be less ambiguous when communicating.
- Empathise with and respect others.

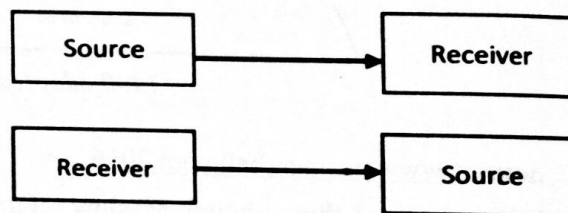
As earlier stated in this paper, human interaction is made possible through the process of communication. Communication has been widely defined by many scholars in diverse ways depending on the different fields of human endeavour on this work, we would consider communication as a process of meaning sharing between the sources and the receiver as simply put by Akpan (1987:101). It could also be seen as the process of interaction between the source and receiver who share information, ideals,



The Osgood & Scharmn circular model

Source:CCMS-Infobase at

<http://www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk/>



Interactional model of communication

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/communication>

From these models, communication is a two-way process and interactional as the source and the receiver swap or alternate roles. That is, the receiver assumes the role of the source/encoder and the source assumes the role of the receiver/decoder. These processes of communication ensure feedback (response from both source and receiver) for mutual understanding and sharing of meaning. Human interaction thrives on this process of communication. Humans interact by communicating receptively or expressively to

meet their needs. It is pertinent at this point to elucidate on receptive and expressive communication.

Receptive communication simply involves the acts of reading and listening while expressive communication deals with speech and writing. There is an interplay between receptive and expressive communication, where there is a writer there must be a reader and where there is a speaker there must be a listener. Human interaction occurs when we write, read, speak and listen. Dale (1969) as cited in Ibe-Bassey (1992:36) explains in his research finding that an individual spends 9% of his time for writing, 16% for reading, 30% for talking, 45% for listening. From this finding, it could be deduced that listening is very vital to human interaction. These forms of receptive and expressive communication will be look at one after the other.

Reading: We read in our everyday life consciously or unconsciously. Without being aware, we read signs, newspaper, headlines, sign posts and TV listings. But conscious reading transcends just reading sign post. Reading is a conscious and purposeful mental process which entails a reader (the receiver/decoder) interacting, decoding and interpreting a written text or message of a writer (source/encoder). The reader which is the decoder mentally interacts with the writer-the source for meaning sharing. This requires concentration for the understanding of printed or written text, introducing oneself to new ideas and ways of thinking and working with new ideas. This decoding process as affirms by Dominic (1990:8) enables the reader to translate or interpret message into a form that makes

meaning to the receiver. Communication takes place when the intended meaning of the writer is well interpreted and acted upon by the receiver. Reading is classified depending on the intention of the reader. One may read for pleasure (that is entertainment) information, surface meaning, to criticize, gain knowledge about the latest current event around the globe, make inference, gain motivation, create or write. Whatever the purpose of reading, it is basically grouped into two extensive reading and intensive reading. These are further divided into skimming and scanning, study type and critical reading.

Skimming: Entails rapidly reading a text or an article and magazine for general idea without reading the whole material.

Scanning: Has to do with looking quickly through a text to get specific information. It does not entail an elaborate reading for instance, checking up the meaning of a word in the dictionary.

Study-type: Is more serious and demanding than the first two type of reading. It requires concentration, open-mindedness and a disciplined mind. As stated earlier in this discourse, this type of reading entails the following:

- Introduction of oneself to new ideas and ways of thinking for better understanding.
- Being actively involved and working with the new ideas.
- Asking questions like; what is the writer trying to say? How does this relate to my life? Does this help me to make sense of the world as I know it?

Critical Reading: aims at in-depth understanding of ideas. The reader does not swallow up all information available to him. He evaluates by way of asking questions. He distinguishes between facts and opinions, identifies propaganda, sweeping generalization, emotionally toned language and so on. Critical reading aids in the following;

- detecting weakness and finds out stronger points to make them up.
- making inference and deduction from statement.

The act of reading is indispensable for learning, growth and development as humans interact whether at interpersonal, smaller or larger group level.

Habits that hinder effective reading

Since there are lots of materials to be read to gain knowledge, reading requires speed. But the following habits can impair effective reading and should be avoided:

- **Head Movement-** Moving one's head from one point to another while reading is a poor habit and it causes boredom and pain.
- **Word pointing-** This slows down reading and may cause one to interpret words in isolation or out of context.
- **Vocalization-** It has to do with mouthing of words. It is reading aloud. It reduces reading speed.
- **Sub-vocalization-** It is silently saying the words to one's hearing. It is an attempt to match words with their sounds.
- **Regression-** is repeatedly reading a word or phrase on a line of a text. One

should read progressively for better comprehension.

- Looking up the meaning of unfamiliar words in the dictionary while reading constitutes regression and should be avoided. Unfamiliar words could be jotted down and their meanings established.

Listening

Listening is another important form of receptive communication that helps in effective human interaction. It is different from hearing. One can hear a sound or message not meant for him without paying attention to such. Listening transcends this, listening is an active exercise that demands concentration. It is giving an undivided attention and an open mind to a message and being able to summarize the message accurately. As earlier mentioned in this discourse, the percentage at which people listen to message or conversation supersedes that of reading, writing and speaking as confirmed by the research findings of Dale (1969) cited in Ibe-Bassey (1992:36). But one wonders if that findings still stands. This is because it is common today to see or observe people talk without listening to others in an interaction or a discourse. It is evident in some of our television discussion programmes like; Reflection, Diplomatic Ties, and Tuesday Live etc. on NTA International. Sometimes some of the interlocutors constantly interrupt others without allowing them to conclude on the point they are trying to make on the topic of discussion. If not for the ingenuity of the moderators in trying to

maintain turns, such could discourage viewers and listeners.

A child whose parent sent on an errand to buy a pack of bottled water and ended up buying a bottle of water would not be said to have listened to the instruction from the parent. Sometimes in our different places of worship, some people only hear but do not listen to the preacher. That is the reason some cannot recall the theme of the message when asked. Again, in a teacher-student relationship/interaction, it is common to hear students say that the lesson or lecture is understood. However, when a question is asked on the lesson or lecture delivered; the response would be "starling" and the teacher would wonder if he was just talking to himself. The ability to listen strengthens human interaction. One who constantly talks does not learn. Communication occurs as messages are listened to, (received) and understood by the parties involved. Active listening ensures a well calculative and intelligent response to message for adequate action.

Levels of Listening

Communication messages are paid attention to at different levels by individuals. These levels are: marginal, evaluative and projective.

Marginal Listening: Occurs when a person (receiver) is not fully paying attention to the message of the speaker (the source). It is a partial form of listening. For example, when talking to someone and his mind is so far away from you (as you may observe) and sometime responding contrary to the content of the discussion or conversation; it signals marginal listening, this can cause misunderstanding which is inimical to

Evaluation Listening: This requires the person spoken to, paying full attention to the speaker. Here the message heard is evaluated and judged, compared and inferences made. Sometimes if the message contradicts the views or previous knowledge of the one spoken to, communication may cease.

Projective Listening: This is an effective kind of listening in which human interaction thrives and communication occurs. Listeners fully use their time trying to put themselves or empathise with the position of the speaker and understand what is being said from the speaker's viewpoint. It entails an ability to listen for feelings as well as for words.

Akpan (1987:91) postulates that for the listening levels mentioned above to take place, one must first have the pleasure to listen. To him effective listening (listening for understanding and evaluation) starts with show pleasure in allowing oneself to get involved with the message.

Active listening skills involve the following:

- Paying attention without distractions and maintaining eye contact.
- Clarifying through repeating on what is heard (it entails similar words to express back to the speaker what was understood about the content of the message).
- Showing empathy by identifying with the feelings of others.
- Listening with an open mind in order to understand another person's point of

view.

- Distinguishing between points and colouring; facts and opinions.
- Striving to take important point. etc.

To lend credence to the essence of listening in human interaction, The Foundation Coalition (2008:3) outlines the following skills set to constitute effective listening:

- Active listening
- Perspective taking
- Understanding the message
- Maintaining neutrality
- Understanding position vs. interest and
- Managing ones emotions

The receiver can only understand the context of the message passed across to him by the source through effective listening for this reason, it is necessary to further explain the point listed above that constitute effect listening.

Active Listening: This has to do with a communication procedure in which the listener uses non-verbal, open-ended questions, restatement, and summaries to demonstrate to the speaker that he is being heard. Summarizing is an aspect of active listening utilized by all parties in dialogues to increase a common understanding.

Perspective Talking: is concerned with the ability to understand another person's point of view without necessarily agreeing with him.

Understanding the message: This entails interpreting and looking for the underlying meaning of what one hears.

Maintaining neutrality: is a valuable skill of listening without making judgment that is not favouring or being biased to either side (especially in trying to resolve conflict).

Understanding Position: deals with a position, a point of view or a specific solution that a party proposes to meet his interest or needs. It is likely to be concrete and explicit, often involving a demand or threat, and leaving a little room for discussion.

Managing emotions: has to do with recognizing one's emotions, biases, prejudices and understanding that it can impact positively or negatively effective communication process.

Speaking/speech and writing: are the two forms of expressive communication that will be considered in this work although there are other forms such as: music, dance, drama, visual art, work etc. When we express our thoughts, feelings, share experience, ideas, findings, knowledge, information etc. in writing or in speech we are engaging in expressive communication. Communication message is transmitted either in speech or in writing. Human interaction is made possible through the process of communication (receptively or expressively) and communication occurs through the use of language.

Before going further with expressive communication, it is necessary to give a cursory look at language. Language is undoubtedly the indispensable vehicle through which communication occurs. It is through language that we express our thought, feelings emotions and opinions, whether in spoken or in written words. According to Banjo (1987:5) "language is either spoken or written, heard or read and the ability to write and read language depends on a prior knowledge to speak that language and understand it...". Language is dynamic and has the ability to create or produce new expressions

that are not the existence. It is what distinguishes humans from animals. A writer or speaker can appeal to the emotions of his reader or listening through the appropriate use of language. Expressive communication (speech and writing) hinged on the use of language for effective human interaction

Writing: is the mental ability to put down in a meaningful and understandable way one's ideas, thought, feelings etc. in the form of symbols written or printed on a surface. It is viewed as a more permanent physical record of the spoken language. According to crystal (1997) cited in Ndimele (1999:172).writing is merely "transcribed speech". Writing comes in different forms which includes a letter, a note, a memorandum, a text message on phone, a poem, an essay, a book, an article, article, a written prayer, a written speech for delivery, an advertisement, road sign, a report, a news release, a brochure, post card etc. Writing can be formal or informal, though it is often view as a more formal activity. Formal writing is governed by certain rules, convention and principles in presenting the message. For instance, the use of formal language or words, grammatical and syntactic rules are adhered to. Colloquial words, slangs, abbreviations, contracted forms are not allowed. Informal writing is opposite. The subject or field of discourse; the context of situation and style (tenor-relationship that exist between the writer and the reader) determine the formality of the text or message. The same is applicable to speech depending on whether it is formal or informal.

International Journal of Agriculture Management and Technology mentioned, an individual spends 9% of his time for writing. This is a clear indication that writing is demanding, difficult and brain tasking and that is why people struggle with it. However, the following factors if judiciously adhered to will make writing easier thereby enhancing effective human interaction.

Factors to consider in writing:

- Having a purpose for writing
- Knowledge and mastery of the topic to be discussed
- Knowledge of the readers (their age, status, etc. nature-children or adults, specialize or general)
- Knowledge and mastery of the language-mastery of grammar, syntax and meaning, using the right register depending on the topic/subject to the discussed.
- Ensuring mechanical accuracy.
- Ensuing that the write up has a beginning, middle and end (that is attention getting title, interest arousing introducing, logically arranged content and a well co-ordinated conclusion).
- Ensuring brevity clarity and simplicity depending on the kind of writing.
- Logical arrangement of ideas in paragraphs.
- Applying the acronym kiss (keep it short and simple) especially in formal letter, memorandum, advertisement message etc.

Form the researcher finding earlier

Advantages of writing

The advantages of writing include the following:

- message can be edited and revised as many times as possible before it is sent
- It provides record for every message sent and can be saved for future use or for later study.
- It enables the receiver to have full understanding of it (writing) and sends appropriate feedback.

The only disadvantage in writing is that feedback is delayed.

Speaking: This is another aspect of expressive communication that makes human interaction possible or effective. It can be seen as the use of words or a language in sending and receiving message. It was the oral medium through which humans shared their thoughts, feelings, ideas, described things and persuaded one another prior to the introduction or development of writing. It is a natural way children show the understanding of their environment. Speaking is an activity that involves the speaker (source) and the listener (receiver). It is a daily human activity which takes place at formal and informal settings. The ability to speak fluently is a mark of sound literacy. Speaking has to do with speech which is a major vehicle through which communication occurs. Speech is often accompanied by non-verbal cues which include: facial expression, gestures and postures, eye contact, body movement of kinesics, and vocal fillers ('you know' 'well', 'am', 'em', 'uh' etc). It is equally influenced by voice quality (Paralanguage) of the speaker. Good voice quality helps listeners to relax and pay attention to the speaker with pleasure while poor voice

quality interferes with communication. The voice can be rich and resonant, soft and alluring, thin and nasal, deep and raspy, harsh and irritating. Voice is unique to a speaker, provided he is able to control voice in distinct aspects such as volume, pitch, rate, pauses, vocalized pauses (vocal fillers), Vocal variety (changes in the speaker rate, pitch and volume), enunciation, articulation and dialect (variation of accent, grammar or vocabulary). Speech is time bound, dynamic, transient and addressed to one or more people who may or may not be known by the speaker in a face-to-face interaction. It has an element of spontaneity. There is instant feedback in speech. Speech aids individuals to interact with one another within and outside their immediate environment.

Occasions for speech: Occasions which call for speaking presentation include: seminars, symposia, discussions, debates, inaugurations, launchings, graduation ceremonies, fund raising, workshops, conferences, phatic communion etc.

Speech forms: Speech can come in various or diverse forms. Examples are: welcome address, farewell speech or valedictory speech, announcements, manifesto, tribute, funeral oration, birthday and wedding toast, opening and closing remark, sermon, lecture and acceptance speech, inaugural speech, congratulatory speech.

Element of a good Speech: Speech is said to be good when the following features are considered.

Subject matter or topic: Speech must have a topic and the speaker must have a good

knowledge and mastery of the topic or subject matter he is to speak on. The topic may be given to him or chosen by him. Whatever the topic, the following questions would aid him: is the topic a familiar one? What facts or ideas are available on it? Is it fresh or over discussed? Does it have any relevance in the contemporary age or time? Subject matter determines the right register or vocabulary to be used.

Audience: Constitutes the listener or recipients of the speech. The speaker should know the demographics of the audience before speech delivery. That is their nature (children or adults, specialized or general), size (no of people), gender, status-education, political, economic, social, culture or religious background. The speaker should know the audience biases, dispositions, prejudices etc. the make-up of the audience will influence the speaker's use of language, choice of words and style of delivery.

Occasion and situation: Occasion deals with the type of event in which a speaker is going to deliver his speech. It may be send-off-party, welcome ceremony, reception service, funeral, wedding, child-naming ceremony or dedication service etc. Situation is the circumstance or context in which the speech is delivered. It entails the time (morning, afternoon or evening), venue, duration of presentation. Occasion and situation will determine, salutation, tone of voice and mode of dressing of the speaker.

Purpose: Implies the reason or aim of speaking. Is it to inform, educate, persuade, entertain, convince, etc.? Whatever, the purpose is can only be decided by the speaker.

In addition to aforementioned factors, the speaker should ensure to; project his voice by being audible, pronounce words clearly and

speak with clarity. He should master the adequate use of non-verbal cues. Speech could be formal (discussion, symposium etc) or informal-salutation, giving invitation, vote of thanks, making request etc. Its methods of delivery include: impromptu presentation, manuscript delivery or readings, speaking from notes or extemporaneous delivery, and memorizing or memory delivery.

Conclusion

Having carefully considered what human interaction is, what necessitated it, how and where humans interact and that it can only be made possible through receptive (reading and listening) and expressive (writing and speaking) communication; we indubitably conclude that communication is indispensable for effective human interaction. Communication and human interaction are strung together and cannot be separated. It is advised that for a hitch-free and effective human interaction, individuals should have adequate training on and master the act of receptive and expressive communication skills as discussed in this paper.

REFERENCES

Books:-

- Akpan, E. (1987). *Communication and Media Art: A new approach to the basics*. Uyo: Modern Business Press Ltd.
- Akpan, E.(1993). *Prologue to Communication Understanding*. Uyo: modern business press Ltd.
- Banjo, A. (1987). "Linguistic Perspectives on the Development of Human

Communication” In S. Unoh (ED). *Tropical Issues in Communication Arts*. Uyo: Modern Business Press.
Dominick, J.R (1990). *The Dynamics of Mass Communication*. New York: McGraw hill, Inc.
Ibe-Bassey. G. (1999). *Principles and Practices of Instruction Communication*. Uyo: Dor and publishers.
Ndimele, O. (1999). *Semantics and Frontiers of Communication* Port Harcourt University of Port
Harcourt Press Ltd.

Watzlawick, P, Beavin, J, Jackson, d. (1968). *Pragmatics of Human Communication*.
London: Faber.

Electronic Sources:-

Effective Interpersonal. Intrateam Communication. The Foundation Coalition; 13th December
2008 <http://www.foundation.org>

Interactional Model of Communication. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/communication>.

CCMS-Infobase at <http://www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk/>

www.businessball.com.2016