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COMMUNICATION THEORY AND PRACTICE



Theory and Practice of the Languages of Receptivity

Richard B. Smith

THE VALUE OF COMMUNICATION THEORIES

The appreciation and study of human communication arises from research, observation, practice, and theories that explain the phenomena, realities, and facts of communication; the various components, characteristics, and qualities of human expression and exchange; and the innumerable circumstances, conditions, events, and experiences it creates, in our occurring world, throughout life.

Communication theories, as systematic, scientific explanations, offer principles and practices, models and metaphors, patterns and paradigms that unify and clarify facts, that define and describe the essence of expression and exchange, that create comprehension and understanding for interactivity and its influence and effect on being and becoming, on existence and reality, through countless circumstances, conditions, contexts, and events experienced in life. Although no theory offers an absolute explanation or representation of reality, we advance our comprehension and understanding of communication – we advance our skills, practice, and proficiency – using the facts, components, and qualities of human expression and exchange in theory.

OBSERVATION, RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND THEORY

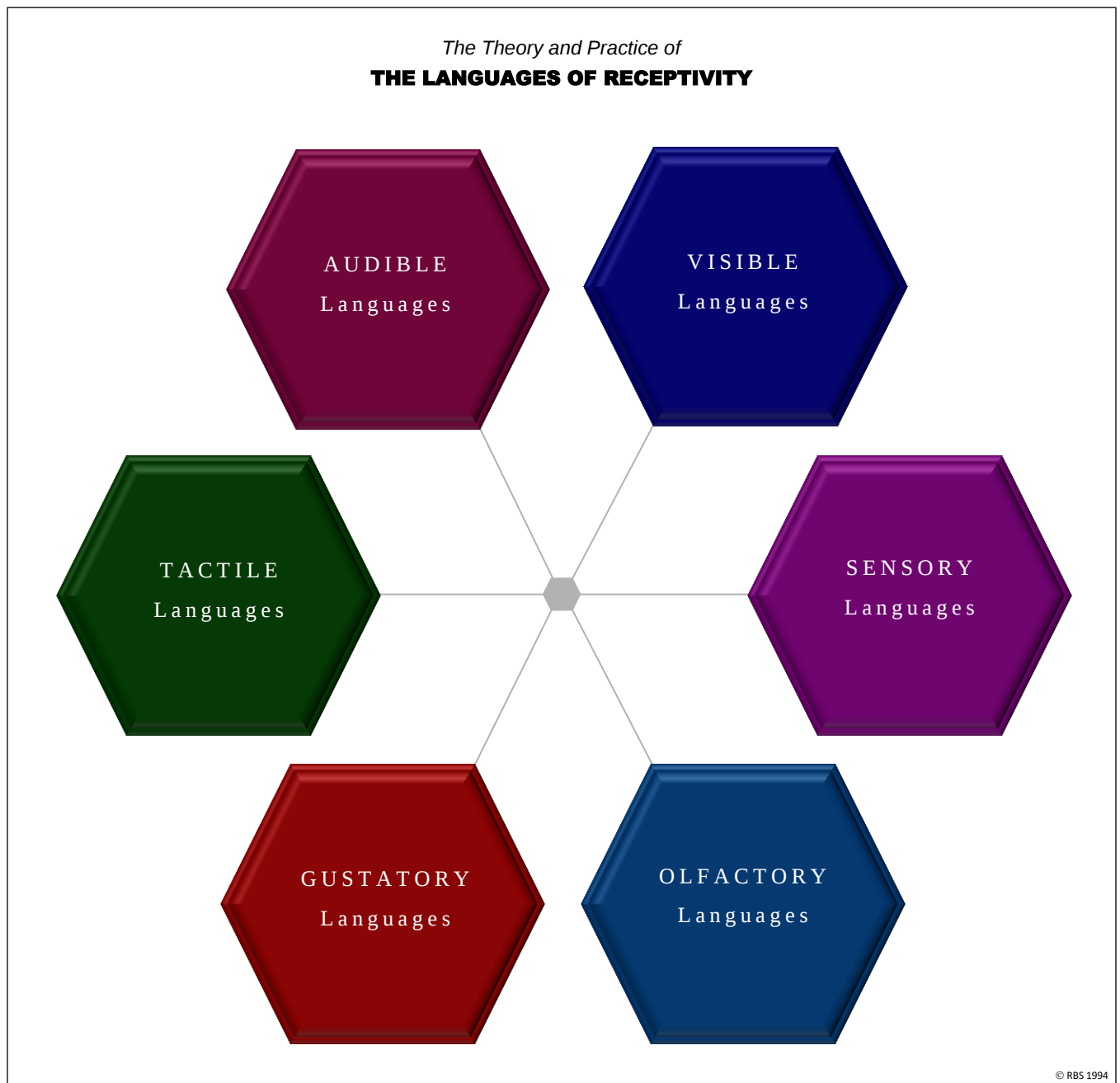
Working nearly fifty years in the business of business communications as a communications specialist, strategist, creative director, writer, and designer, to mention a few areas of my experience and expertise, I have always been fascinated in the nature of human expression and exchange especially in learning and knowing what works and what doesn't work to produce intended outcomes. Accordingly, I have a deep interest in the exploration, observation, study, and research of communication and the practical, productive application of models and theories, assumptions and ideals, opinions and principles. My background in business communications includes promotional and motivational communications; advertising; public and professional relations; internal and external corporate communications; technical, educational, clinical, and scientific writing; public speaking and broadcast media; professional education, instruction, and training programs; and leadership training and personal coaching. Besides the research of professionals and theorists, I have also conducted various forms of research over the years for my clients including surveys, one-on-one studies, image and message testing, focus groups, market analyses, and more.

In my expertise and experience, I have come to recognize certain facts, realities, and phenomena of human communication; accordingly, I have established a series of theories, based on universal truths, which advance our knowledge and understanding of expression and exchange, which advance our skills, practice, and proficiency for achieving full self-expression, for reaching desired outcomes, for satisfying our needs, wants, and desires in life. The Theory and Practice of the Languages of Receptivity is seventh in a series.

THE LANGUAGES OF RECEPTIVITY

The Theory and Practice of the Languages of Receptivity is about distinguishing our inherent ways of sensing, experiencing, and interpreting that which is communicated to us by others or that which is communicated in the circumstances and conditions, events and environments of our occurring world. The languages of receptivity are about sensing and feeling, listening and observing, smelling and tasting, comprehending and understanding conversations in life. Accordingly, the Theory and Practice of the Languages of Receptivity is concerned with receiving, decoding, and interpreting messages; reception originates with the human sensorium and our natural capacity to sense changes in experiences, entities, and energy as stimuli (sensation) and transform these stimuli into signals that the brain can process, interpret, and understand (perception) eliciting sensory and behavioral responses. Although they perform two distinct roles, sensation and perception are intimately related giving us the ability to comprehend and understand messages and their meanings.

In addition to receiving, decoding, and interpreting messages which exemplify the languages of receptivity, a second parallel theory defines and describes the methods of encoding and transmitting messages called the Theory and Practice of the Languages of Conveyance. Both theories contribute to communication interaction for conveyance and recipience of messages; for example, we listen and hear that which we speak and sing, we observe and see that which we depict and portray, we sense and feel that which we touch and interact with, we smell and taste that which we project, and we sense and perceive that which we create. The Theory and Practice of the Languages of Receptivity simply reminds us of our innate capacity for sensing and perceiving, comprehending and understanding the messages and meanings of communication as well as the circumstances and conditions, events and environments of our occurring world. The six languages of receptivity are visible, audible, tactile, olfactory, gustatory, and sensory languages.



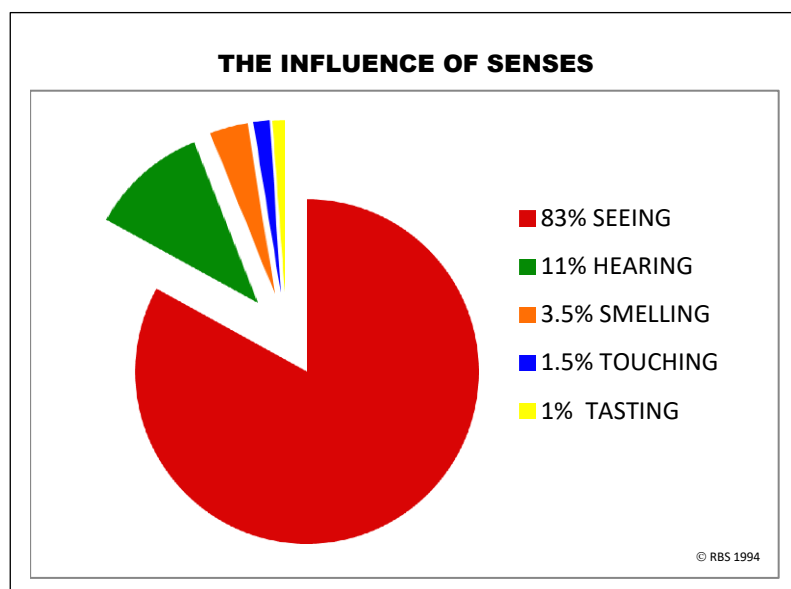
THE INFLUENCE OF SENSES

Research in cognitive psychology and neuroscience regarding the sensorium, our inherent capacity of the mind for reception and interpretation of sensory stimuli otherwise called sensation and perception, reveal the power and influence of our senses in sensing and perceiving, comprehending and understanding information for learning and living and for communicating and relating to our occurring world. According to researchers L.D. Rosenblum, H.D. Stolovitch, and E.J. Keeps, the sense of sight dominates the other senses in sensing and perceiving information individually and together. As such, what we see in contrast to what we hear, touch, smell, and taste has a prodigious effect on what we think and how we think influencing our development and growth. Of course, in moments when we focus our attention on a specific stimulus, that sensation and

perception dominates other senses. Although our other senses often command our consideration, our minds invariably give preference to vision first.

Compared to touching, tasting, and smelling, the sense of sight prefers and processes 83% of all information whereas the sense of hearing processes 11% of information. Observing and seeing dominate our sensations and perceptions a little more than four fifths of our life while listening and hearing account for about one tenth of our perceptions in life. The sense of smelling processes 3.5% of information and the sense of tasting processes a mere 1% of information. As we know, the sense of tasting is affected by the sense of smelling and together they account for 4.5% or about one twentieth of our perceptions in life. Lastly, the sense of touching processes 1.5% of information; and, although this is less than what is considered optimal for our development and growth as neonates, the sense of touch accounts for a little more than one one-hundredth of our perceptions in adult life.

Understanding the power and influence of our senses, H.D. Stolovitch and E.J. Keeps created an example to compare the percentages of the influence and power of our senses in our lives. Using distance as a quantifiable measurement and assuming conditions and circumstances are favorable in the example, typically: we can see things about fifty miles or 260,000 feet away, we can hear things about one to two miles or 8,000 feet away, we can smell things about 50 feet away, we can touch things with either our hand or foot about 2 feet away, and we can taste things with the tip of our tongue about 2 inches away. This example skillfully exemplifies the relational, proportional influence and power of our senses.



What makes the influence of senses all the more interesting especially when multiple sensations and perceptions are working together is that they enhance and intensify our comprehension and understanding of events, circumstances, conditions, or communications. Although we might think our senses individually influence us, they are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. For example, in hearing an explanation for something, that explanation is greatly improved with the addition of a visual demonstration and further improved with hands-on input.

The Theory and Practice of the Languages of Receptivity involve sense and sensation, the physiological capacity of sentient beings that provide information for perception, the interpretation of that information for comprehension and understanding. As topics of cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and the philosophy of perception, the languages of receptivity are all about sensation and perception as they are essential to the fundamentals of communication. In other words, there is no exchange in expression and exchange without sensing and perceiving, without listening and hearing, without observing and seeing, and so forth; and, there is no response or reply without interpretation, comprehension, and understanding.

AUDIBLE LANGUAGES

Audible Languages are received and decoded in listening and hearing. The audible languages sense and perceive the languages of conversation and other sounds and noises in our occurring world. In particular, the languages of conversation involve talking, singing, laughing, crying, humming, whistling, hooting, clicking, hissing, snorting, grunting, cheering, and other voicings, utterances, and sounds. Messages and their meanings are perceived in audioception, the ability to hear sounds. When sound waves are sensed in the outer ear and eardrum and those vibrations are further sensed in the middle and inner ears, the sensation of sound is transmitted to the brain by way of the auditory nerve to be collected and interpreted in the mind creating the perception of sound. The sense of hearing has an influence of about 11% on life and learning, communication and relation. Audible languages contribute to expression and exchange, comprehension and understanding, response and reply. By listening and really hearing others and our occurring world, we can potentially increase the influence and power of audible languages for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of our communications and relations.

VISIBLE LANGUAGES

Visible Languages are received and decoded in observing and seeing. The visible languages sense and perceive the languages of depiction and other circumstances, conditions, events, and environments in our occurring world. In particular, the languages of depiction involve gestures and expressions of the eyes, face, and hands as well as the postures, motions, movements, and mimes of the body; it involves, depicting, displaying, and demonstrating and presenting, portraying, and performing. In addition to showing, signing, and staging messages, languages of depiction also involve writing messages, drawing diagrams, illustrating ideas, and more with pens, pencils, crayons, chalk, markers, and keyboards. The visible languages also sense and perceive the languages of invention, the creations of man like works of art, crafts, pastimes, and performances and creations of nature like clouds, earthquakes, floods, and fires. Messages and their meanings are perceived in opthamoception, the ability to see sights. Our eyes sense images, colors, and motions in visible light. When light waves pass through the cornea, controlled by the pupil that is regulated by the iris, and focused by the lens onto the retina, the sensation of sight is transmitted to the brain by way of the optic nerve to be collected and interpreted in the mind creating the perception of sight. The sense of seeing has an influence of about 83% on life and learning, communication and relation. Visible languages contribute to expression and exchange, comprehension and understanding, response and reply. By observing and really seeing others and our occurring world, we can potentially increase the influence and power of visible languages for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of our communications and relations.

TACTILE LANGUAGES

Tactile Languages are received and decoded in sensing and feeling. The tactile languages sense and perceive the languages of interaction and other sensations, elements, and environments in our occurring world. In particular, the languages of interaction involve touching, feeling, contacting, or connecting others by personally handling or holding, hitting or kicking, punching or pinching, pushing or pulling, kissing or biting, or other forms of contact or connection with them; or by using an object to touch, contact, or connect with them; or by manipulating or controlling elements to cause a sensation with them. Messages and their meanings are perceived in tactioception, the ability to experience physical sensations including pressure and pain, moving and positioning, textures and temperatures, vibration and balance. Physical connections, contacts, and changes are sensed by neural receptors, nerve endings, and transmitted by to the brain by way of the central nervous system to be

collected and interpreted in the mind creating the perception of touch and feeling. The sense of touching has an influence of about 1.5% on life and learning, communication and relation, as an adult. With the neonatal, touching, holding, hugging, and other forms of caring offer a more profound influence on their early development and growth. Tactile languages contribute to expression and exchange, comprehension and understanding, response and reply.

OLFACTORY LANGUAGES

Olfactory Languages are received and decoded in smelling and inhaling. The olfactory languages sense and perceive the languages of projection and other smells and stench in our occurring world. In particular, the languages of projection, relative to olfaction, involve aromas, scents, fragrances, perfumes, bouquets, and air fresheners as well as stinks, stench, and odors. Messages and their meanings are perceived in olfactoception, the ability to smell odors. When odorant molecules are inhaled, come in contact with receptor neurons in the nasal cavity, and are processed by the olfactory bulb, the sensation of smell is transmitted to the brain to be collected and interpreted in the mind creating the perception of smell. The sense of smelling has an influence of about 3.5% on life and learning, communication and relation. Olfactory languages contribute to expression and exchange, comprehension and understanding, response and reply.

GUSTATORY LANGUAGES

Gustatory Languages are received and decoded in tasting and licking. The gustatory languages sense and perceive the languages of projection and other tastes and flavors in our occurring world. In particular, the languages of projection, relative to gustation, involve tasting, licking, eating, drinking, savoring, and sampling. Messages and their meanings are perceived in gustaoception, the ability to taste flavors. When the tongue, palate, and epiglottis come in contact with sweet, sour, salty, savory, or bitter substances or flavorings, taste buds transmit information through taste receptor cells to the brain to be collected and interpreted in the mind creating the perception of taste. The sense of tasting has an influence of about 1.5% on life and learning, communication and relation. Gustatory languages contribute to expression and exchange, comprehension and understanding, response and reply.

SENSORY LANGUAGES

Sensory Languages are received and decoded in listening and hearing, observing and seeing, smelling and tasting, touching and feeling. First and foremost, the sensory languages sense and perceive the language of projection although the other languages of conversation and depiction, interaction and invention contribute to communications. In addition, the sensory languages sense and perceive circumstances, conditions, events, and environments in our occurring world and extend our comprehension and understanding. Sensory languages involve that which is not spoken or shown but it also involves that which is unintentionally spoken and shown. Moreover, sensory languages involve that in which there is no interaction or a lack of action especially when action is expected. Sensory languages involve unusual issues regarding personal space, scents and fragrances, and flavors and tastes. Messages and their meanings are sensed and perceived in various capacities of recipience. Nevertheless, sensory languages contribute to expression and exchange, comprehension and understanding, response and reply. By being aware and really present to others and our occurring world, we can potentially increase the influence and power of sensory languages for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of our communications and relations.

BENEFITS AND VALUE

The Theory and Practice of the Languages of Receptivity address our innate capacity for sensing and perceiving, comprehending and understanding messages and their meanings. In view of this, the languages of receptivity are grounded in our five conventional senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting and in a sixth sense designating our aptitude for intuiting meaning and implication. As such, our methods of receptivity are distinguished as audible and visible languages, olfactory and gustatory languages, tactile and sensory languages. The purpose in defining and describing the languages of receptivity is to establish a parallel with the Theory and Practice of the Languages of Conveyance. While languages of conveyance encode and transmit information, languages of receptivity receive, decode, and interpret information; both are essential to expression and exchange.

We distinguish four fundamentals of communication as, one, expression and exchange; two, listening and observation; three, comprehension and understanding; and four, response and reply. Within this proposition, we recognize the established and necessary steps required for communication namely message intention, creation, encoding, transmission, reception, decoding, and interpretation. While expression clearly involves the intentional creation and encoded transmission of messages, listening and observation along with comprehension and understanding involve the reception, decoding, and interpretation of messages and their meanings. Languages of receptivity make communication possible. Without our sensory perceptions, we could not interpret or understand any messages of man or nature. We could neither participate in meaningful exchange nor we could we enter into effective exchange. The languages of receptivity give us access to others and our occurring world for communicating and fulfilling on our needs, wants, and desires.

In summary, the audible languages give us access to listening and hearing combined with the visible languages which give us access to observing and seeing. We communicate, create and relate in listening and seeing; we live life and negotiate our world visually and aurally. What's more, we create very effective and efficient communications when we are simply with others, when we are clearly observing and really seeing, listening and really hearing, being aware and being really present to the conversation. The olfactory languages give us access to scents and fragrances and the gustatory languages give us access to tastes and flavors. Both languages often work together and although they have less influence in life compared with the messages and meanings of sight and sound, they can, at times, be persuasive and influential in communication. While tactile languages give us access to understanding physical sensations and feelings, sensory languages give us access to understanding intellectual sensations and feelings. As such, tactile sensations and feelings are physical forms of contact and connection; sensory sensations and feelings are cerebral thoughts; they are comprised of instincts, intuitions, and insights. As a point of differentiation, instincts are inborn patterns of behavior often in response to specific stimuli; intuitions are abilities of knowing, sensing, and perceiving without the use of rational processes; and insights are occurrences of comprehending the true nature of a thing through instinct or intuitive understanding.

The value of the languages of receptivity is clear; there is no communication without listening and hearing, without observing and seeing, without the other languages of receptivity. And there is no sensing and perceiving, comprehending and understanding either. The languages of receptivity are essential in achieving effective, efficient communication.

OVERVIEW MAP

Theory and Practice of the Languages of Reception

1. Audible Languages

- A. Received and Decoded in Listening and Hearing
- B. 11% Influence

2. Visible Languages

- A. Received and Decoded in Observing and Seeing
- B. 83% Influence

3. Tactile Languages

- A. Received and Decoded in Sensing and Feeling
- B. 1.5% Influence

4. Olfactory Languages

- A. Received and Decoded in Smelling and Inhaling
- B. 3.5% Influence

5. Gustatory Languages

- A. Received and Decoded in Tasting and Licking
- B. 1% Influence

6. Sensory Languages

- A. Received and Decoded in
 - Listening, Hearing, Observing, and Seeing
 - Smelling, Inhaling, Tasting, and Licking
 - Sensing and Feeling
- B. Instinct, Intuition, and Insight