Analyses of communication barriers during consultation processes

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Analyses of communication barriers during consultation processes: The article shows what kind of communication barriers we have observed during agro-extension activities in different regions of the Republic of Armenia. An attempt was made to classify those barriers according to the separate parts of the communication chain aimed at finding solutions in the future. The research was done for the purpose of understanding the main communication barriers during the seminars with adults, according to people's mentality.

Key words: *Communication, barriers, agro-extension, speaker, listener*

INTRODUCTION

The development of the agriculture system in developing countries depends on many factors, but one of the most important ones is the human factor. People, involved in agriculture, must be well informed and they must clearly understand the meaning and importance of this information, as well as operate in time for sustainable development.
This development in many cases depends on up-to-date and comprehensible information, which farmers can use during their decision-making process.

During the process of research and investigation the scientists examined different problems and created a database, and all the consultant had to do was to transfer this information to whom it was necessary or who needed it. And this process is implemented via a communication process.

Until the end of the last century scientists thought, that sustainable development of agriculture depended on technological processes. But now researchers start to understand that the farmer plays a very important role for developing the agriculture system and only technology is not enough. And the transfer of knowledge to farmers via communication is one of the most important factors. It serves as an original bridge, which ensures the transfer of results of scientific institutes into good agricultural practices.

Figure 1. Knowledge transportation from science to farmer
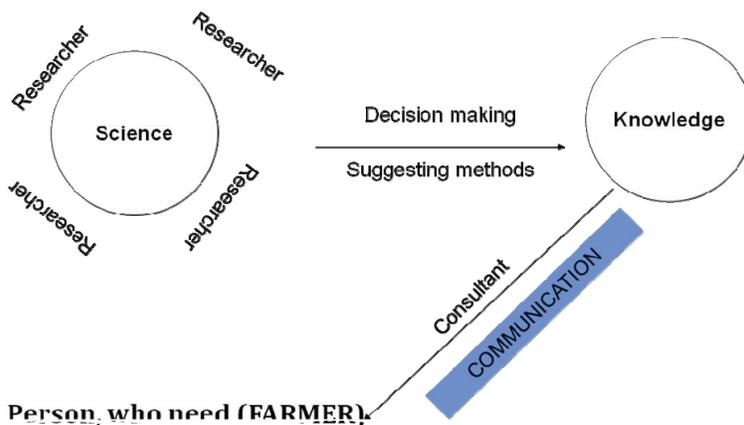
But, as every phenomenon, the communication process has also some disadvantages. Everybody is familiar with situations when the interlocutor does not

understand the meaning of your words. No matter how good and effective a communicator you may be, sometimes farmers listen to you very carefully but do not catch the main idea which causes misunderstanding or non understanding. On the other hand, it is obvious, that the use of clear conversation will directly affect the success you have in dealing with other people.

Such kinds of situation have happened very often during conversations between teachers and students (in Pedagogy), and between farmers and Agro-extension specialists (in andragogy) and represent a communication barrier [1]. The concept of communication barrier usually includes all the factors, which impede effective communication and prevent the transfer of information from speaker to listener. This problem is very important, because unsuccessful communication causes a lot of dissatisfaction for both parties participating in the communication process, as the information received is incomplete, distorted, or completely not understandable.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

For the analyses of communication barriers during consultation processes we have researched 230 seminars and field trips in the period of 2005-2010 in 5 regions of the Republic of Armenia. The subject of the seminars was the same everywhere. The research was done by personal observations, filling questionnaires and making surveys. The research was conducted in three phases.

In the first phase we tried to study the native and international literature about communication barriers (about 45 sources).

In the second phase we studied the mechanisms of communication barriers during consultation (during seminars and field trips in the Republic of Armenia).

In the third phase we created the classification model of communication barriers according to the process of communication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The most common mistake to consider is that people think that they can only express the main idea, and the others will start listening and will understand clearly and perceive the meaning. The basic theoretic assumption is that the received information goes to the recipient without any changes, but in reality it often happens that one person says one thing while the other hears and understands something totally different [1, 2, 5]. This occurs because all information is exposed to the influence of different factors, which can decrease the efficiency of communication.

It is theoretically impossible to take into account all the factors causing communication barriers, because they are too many and different from each other. In that case there are some models of classification of communication barriers. The most famous and popular classifications are the following.

1. Jerry L. Allen [3] classified communication barriers only according human characteristics. According to that classification, there are seven barriers
1.1. Physical barriers
1.2. Perceptual barriers
1.3. Emotional barriers
1.4. Cultural barriers
1.5. Language barriers
1.6. Gender barriers
1.7. Interpersonal barriers
2. According to McCroskey [2], communication barriers are classified based on the meaning of information. He marked out 4 types of barriers:
    2.1. Phonetic, which occurs from incorrect speech, strong accent and obscure phrases

   2.2. Semantic, when the other person uses unfamiliar terminology or when we react emotionally to words or phrases

   2.3. Mental, when we focus on ourselves or when we focus on the other person

   2.4. Factual, when we listen for facts rather than for the main ideas and feelings behind the message.

  3. According to Wilbur Schramm [4], communication barriers, which are classified on the basis of the psychological filters of organisms, are as follows.

   3.1. Barriers, occurring from active language filter

   3.2. Barriers, occurring from imagination filter

   3.3. Barriers, occurring from the filtering of ideas

   3.4. Barriers, occurring from the filter of remembering

During our 230 seminars and field trips in 5 regions of Armenia we revealed 203 different types of barriers, which were a synthesis of the barriers, mentioned before and which have not been included in the authors' works mentioned above. For comprehensive investigation we have tried to classify all barriers, mentioned during our seminars. We used two indicators: frequency and distribution and we have prepared the following table.

Table 1. The frequency and distribution of communication barriers

##	Description of communication barrier	Indicator
1.	Barriers, which occur because farmers don't understand or are not interested in the information, which they listen to during the consultation. They did not listen or got tired, because the information seemed too difficult or not actual. *(message barriers)*	****
2.	Barriers, which occur due to the speaker (creator, interpreter). When he is not qualified or doesn't have experience in public speaking, disagreements happen between the farmers and speaker, or farmers do not like the speaker's behavior. *(speaker barriers)*	***
3.	Barriers, which occur because farmers think that they know everything and so they are haughty, but in reality the level of knowledge is very low; or when the farmer's attention is digressed on other things. *(receiver barriers)*	****
4.	Barriers, which occur during the consultation and digress even effective processes (e.g. electricity cutoff, un-air conditioned rooms, noisy environment, etc) *(factors barriers)*	*
5.	Barriers, when even during long negotiations farmer and consultant don't find common solution and everybody holds their own opinion. After that there is no effective communication. *(correction barriers)*	**

Where: **** means, that barrier happens often and everywhere
*** means, that barrier happens often, but not everywhere
** means, that barrier happens not often, but everywhere
* means, that barrier happens not often and not everywhere

The table below shows the frequency of barriers during the discussion on the same subject. As we can see from the table, the most widespread barriers are the barriers when farmers do not understand the presenter and when farmers think that they know everything and do not need any information.

We have also researched the distribution of communication barriers according to different regions. We have examined 5 regions (Ararat, Armavir, Kotayq, Vayots Dzor and Tavush). The results are as follows:

Table 2. The dissemination of Communication barriers in different regions

Type of barrier	Region										Total	
	Ararat		Armavir		Vayots Dzor		Kotayq		Tavush			
	Num. of barriers	%	Num. of barriers	%	Num. of barriers	%	Num. of barriers	%	Num. of barriers	%	Num. of barriers	%
Message barriers	12	6	7	3	7	3	8	4	15	7	49	24
Speaker barriers	2	1	9	4	15	7	9	4	18	9	53	26
Receiver barriers	8	4	9	4	22	11	9	4	13	6	61	30
Factor Barriers	6	3	1	0	3	1	1	0	1	0	12	6
Correction barriers	3	1	3	1	12	6	3	1	7	3	28	14
Total	31		29		59		30		54		203	100

Figure 2. The dissemination of Communication barriers in different regions, by %, of all barriers
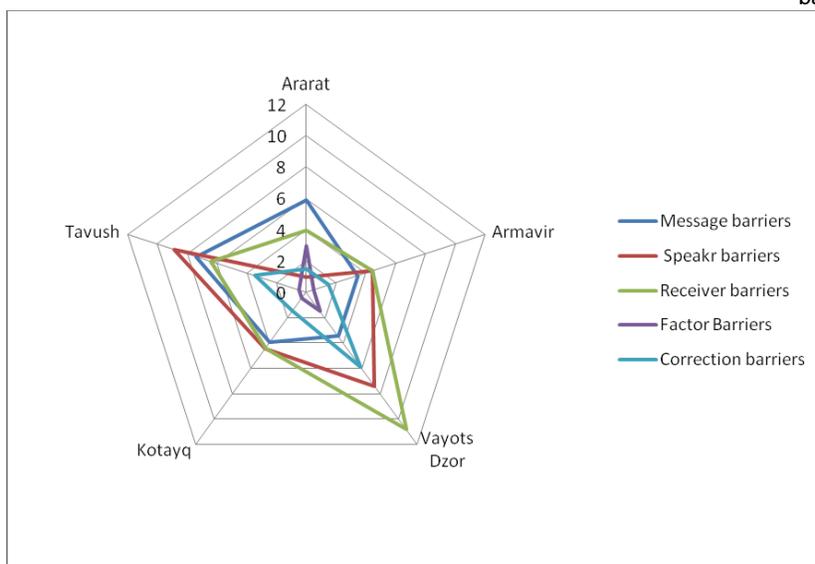
As we can see from the graph, the main barrier, which we have found, is when farmers think, that they know everything and therefore they are haughty, but in reality the level of knowledge is very low or when the farmers' attention is digressed on other things (receiver barriers).

We can also see from the graph that the main barriers occurred during the seminars in Vayots Dzor region. We think that the reason for that is the fact that the people in that region are known for their hot blood and bully character.

Finally, during our research, we observed that the comparison of barriers received from our seminars with the communication chain demonstrates unification in the sense that every group of barriers is compared with a ring of the communication chain. After the comparison we obtained graph 3:

We can see from the graph that each group of barriers compares with part of the communication chain. Thus, for future solutions of problems caused by communication barriers we can use the classification which is the result of our research work.

Graph 3. Classification of communication barriers according to the communication chain
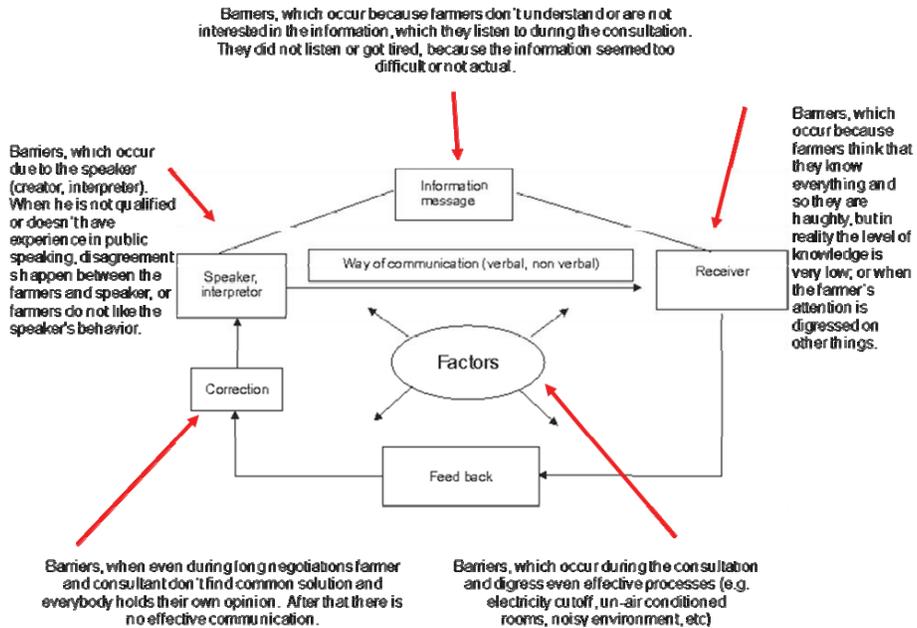
CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

After our research we can conclude that

1. We can classify the communication barriers according to communication chains, which can be helpful for future solutions.
2. The most common communication barrier, which occured during the seminars in 5 regions of the Republic of Armenia, was, when the farmers did not understand the presenter's language and when the farmers thought that they knew everything and did not need any information. In that case, our efforts will be directed to dealing successfully with this type of barriers.
3. Another conclusion is that the main region, where communication barriers appear, is Vayots Dzor region. Therefore, we have to investigate this finding further for the purpose of identifying the reasons and proposing working solutions.

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The paper has been reviewed.