

# Understanding and Misunderstanding Elements of Communication

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## ABSTRACT

This paper ponders certain questions underlying any act of communication, such as: – how do we know that communication is successful? or - how do we know that a group of people really understands written or spoken signs of another group of people? Is it, perhaps, possible that we have gotten used to misunderstandings so much that we do not notice them any more (like the air that we breathe), and become cognizant of them only when they exceed a certain limit? Misunderstandings play an important, sometimes tragic, role in our lives. Among people belonging to the same social group or community, misunderstandings are contingent upon those subjective elements of meaning which vary from one person to another. When it comes to relations among different groups or entire communities, the causes of misunderstanding are specific, group related elements of meaning that differ from one group to another. And yet, despite all these hurdles, people do understand each other in most cases, and often work towards a common goal, sometimes involving a whole group, nation or the population of the globe.