

Perception: Capacity of Understanding

Abstract

Generally, we mean 'Perception' as an act of interpreting a selected stimulus out of many registered in the brain by using a sense or an entire sense mechanism. A stimulus is any kind of mechanical, physical or chemical change that happens upon a sense organ. The act of perception goes through a process, which similarly happens during any act of communication. The process is something that once begins and never ends. Like this, an act of perception also starts at one point, and passes through a path of environmental or physiological channels until a receiver/respondent starts selection, organization and interpretation of that stimulus to formulate a meaningful message and subsequently go for appropriate action or reaction. S/he ultimately gives a judgment of that selected stimulus based on their experience and intuition of finding similarity with other stimuli on what they reacted upon. As a whole, an act of perception is nothing but a capacity of understanding, which someone has to earn through continuous practice. Accordingly, this article delves into the subject matter for understanding the insight and process of perception from the perspective of creative publication and activities.

Keywords: Perception, Interpretation, Selection, Stimulus, Judgment, Understanding, Communication

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1. Introduction

Generally, *perception* is the act of interpreting a stimulus registered in the brain by using one sense or the entire sense mechanism of an individual. Perception is everybody's way of understanding his surrounding environment and the world. Defining perception, communication expert Joseph DeVito (2015) appropriately said, 'Perception is the process by which you become aware of objects, events, and especially people through your senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, and sound' (p.61). The meaning of it is that we have five senses, and through which technique, we respond to the stimuli surrounding us by using our senses that are called 'sense mechanism'. Watson & Hill (1991) defined perception as 'the process of becoming aware and making sense of stimuli received from our environment by the senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch' (p.129).

Perception is, other way, an act of communication, too. Communication and perception are very much interrelated with each other. Perception is an integral part of communication and vice versa. Without understanding the concept of perception, it isn't easy to understand the insight of communication. Perception is quite important in communication because any act of perception affects the way we understand events, others, and ourselves, or even to conceive any idea for any creative purpose.

'Among the reasons why perception is so important in communication is that it influences your communication choices. The message you send and listen to, the photos and messages you post and view and comment on, will depend on how you see the world, on how you size up specific situations, on what you think of the people with whom you interact' (DeVito, 2015:61).

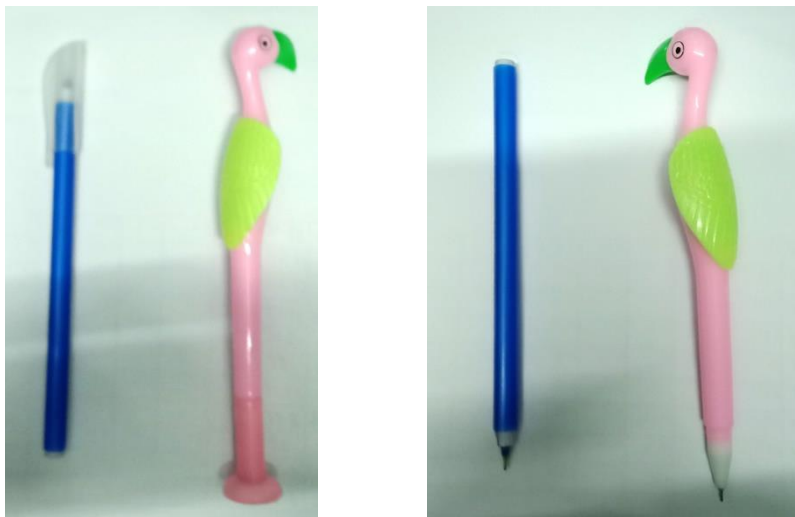
As per Rahman (1995), there is a common notion that the perceptual process of a human being is just like a movie camera. A movie camera records everything, whatever things come across to it, as if it happens automatically and the people have nothing to do. Rahman (1995) further argued that 'the people, who uphold the approaches of a movie camera, think that the meaning lies in the substance, not in the person' (p.72). But a man has to perceive something by his own senses whenever all those things happen around him. That means any act of perception is not

indiscriminate. Therefore, as per Rahman (1995), 'perception is a subjective, creative and active process' (p.72).

Perception is the instant reflection or the ability of an individual which guides him to identify and select any stimulus from the thousands of what he communicates. However, a given social surrounding is more important in which somebody is to communicate of what to whom through his perceptual capacity. Perception, in other ways is the act of interpreting and assessing a stimulus registered in the brain by one's self through their sense mechanism. Usage of sense mechanism is an essential factor in perceiving anything. We go for making judgments of anything only after seeing something, and in the process, become delighted or frustrated. Using the power of our nose, we feel the smell of anything good or bad. We instantly put our attention towards any sound or noise raising our ears and becoming aware, or we express our feelings about anything that draws our attention. There is a difference between the perception and the sensation. While the sensation is only to capture the stimuli or message using any one of our senses, and perception is the process of making interpretation or explanation of any stimuli just after receiving it. If any one of my senses captures only the photograph (information or message) of any oil painting, for example, then it is a sensation; but what a painter thought before his drawing of that painting is perception. The gross difference between the two is "the eye receives' while the mind perceives" (Sperling & Martin, 1986:38). That means the eye simply catches the stimulus, whereas the mind accomplishes the entire task of processing that stimulus to organize and interpret it and turn it into an end product which carries meaning and message both. 'The eyes are', as per Barry (2005), '... direct extension of the brain into the environment' (p.48).

We can identify an object as a pen in a fraction of a second, as we are very aware of any object, which is called pen. And the way (process) this realization happens is called 'Perception'. We need *experience* and a strong sense of feeling of finding *similarity* between an object and another one to perceive anything of its own name and identity. We quickly identify an object a pen as we know it from our experience, and we say an object a pen when we find it very similar to the object that is called a pen and what we have seen earlier. This happens due to our ability to perceive

anything. But it may not be easy for any individual of remote village to call a marker a pen if he is not aware of this one from the earlier rather, he can even call it a bomb if he has some understanding about it from the past. I went for a small experiment (see the following figures) in my first-year honors class in this regard. I showed a dot pen of the Matador High School brand and asked the students what it was. The students had gleefully said a pen. But whenever I had shown them an object that almost looked like a pen in its lower portion but at the top, it was something similar to the throat of a parrot. This time the students responded with different confusing answers. But whenever I just opened the one portion of that object it was simply found a dot pen. That means the students did not find any 'similarity' of that object with the 'familiar' structure or the form of a pen. For that, we, in most cases, arrange those things in such a manner which are very much similar by nature to what we have seen earlier.



If you hear a strange noise, no matter how unusual, you immediately associate or connect it with something familiar, or if you see a unique or unseen object, you instantly relate it to something you have seen earlier. If you see a completely strange and foreign object, you unconsciously attempt to connect it to some form or shape you have seen before. No one of us can look at one object, hear a voice or taste food and receive these sensations without projecting into them some facet of past experience. In describing the phenomenon of perception, Sperling & Martin (1986) have come to the psychological truism that aptly stated by the philosopher Immanuel Kant: 'We see things not as they are but as we are' (p.380). In other words, perception

represents our apprehension of a present situation in terms of our past experiences. Here, one statement is to be good to notice.

Consequently, perception affects the way we view ourselves and the way we present ourselves. In turn, perception influences our experience and assessment of others and our communication with them... Nobody else sees the world the way you do, and nobody experiences events exactly as you do (Pearson et al., 2011:34).

'Perception', is therefore, 'the process by which we derive meaning through experience, is a dynamic, interactive system that utilizes built-in genetic programming to synthesize sensory input, memory, and individual's needs (Barry, 2005:48). For that, Barry (2005) further said, 'The eyes are only an initial part of the equation, and can, in fact, be bypassed altogether' (p.48).

Under this theory, we are able to understand again the concepts of 'experience' and 'similarity', 'continuity', and 'proximity' and, as a whole, the concept of the perception.

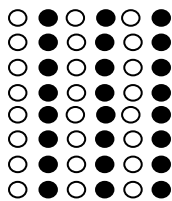


Figure: 3 Similarity

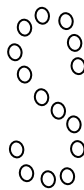


Figure: 4 Continuity

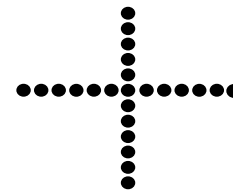


Figure: 5 Continuity

Source: Figure 3 & 4 Ken Smith;

Figure 5 Abraham P. Sperling & Kenneth Martin

1.1. Similarity and continuity

Similarity is the tendency to perceive objects that are similar in appearance as belonging and together. In figure 3, the viewers perceive the white circle as belonging with each other and the black circles/rings as also belonging together. The result is that the viewer organizes both kinds of circles into a series of vertical columns. On the other hand, the figure 4 contains around 15 separate circles. Despite this, the viewers group the circles together rather than attend to the spaces between them. They perceive it a continuous line of creating an English letter 'S', not simply a few circles. This is the rule of *continuity*. Figure 5 is also an example of continuity, where we see a few circles from the four sides and crossing in the middle. But, instead of a few circles we perceive the two straight lines a crossing

each other. This is called the factor of continuity and illustrates our natural opposition to breaking the continuous flow of a line, pattern or design in our perceptual awareness.

1.2. Proximity

Sometimes, we can find out the proximity of stimuli through the process of perception. It can be understood from the following figure.

est abl ish

Figure: 6 Source: Self

We see three words comprising three letters. However, there is no meaning to those words. But, if we bring those meaningless three words (est/abl/ish) closure, then we will get only one word 'establish'; and this word 'establish' is very meaningful and familiar to us. The perceptual guideline here is that we always try to find the proximity of different elements. As per principle of proximity, '...objects physically close to each other will be perceived as a unit or group' (DeVito, 2011:41). The principle of proximity is widely used during the time of make-up of newspaper pages by arranging all materials/elements like news, headlines, pictures, advertisements, nameplate, etc. to get a 'wholeness'.

2.1. Conceptual framework

What so far we have explained, accordingly, we structurally arrange and organize different stimuli/ ideas in the form of visual elements that can be placed in books, magazines or newspapers, or any other publishing materials, and if we go for examining this, putting them in a theoretical structure then it is called as Gestalt Theory. *Gestalt* is a German term that means 'pattern' or 'form'. "Gestalt theory suggests... humans have a subconscious tendency to combine diverse bits of information into organized "wholes" (Smith, 2005:82). Quoting Stroebel et al. (1980), Smith (2005) further said that 'gestalts refers to the observable fact that things are seen as relating to each other and not as discrete elements'(p.82).

The Interaction Design Foundation considers Gestalt psychology as a theory of mind that is applied in different aspects of human thought, action, and perception. Gestalt theorists and researchers understand visual perception in terms of how underlying

processes are organized and how they help us make sense of the world. They consider the organization of these cognitive processes very important for our understanding of how we interpret the constant stream of visual information by entering our eyes and how it becomes a cohesive, meaningful, and usable representation of the world. Interaction designers and other professionals developing products for human users have been adopted the work of Gestalt psychologists in the last twenty years (Retrieved from the website on 29.09.2021).

Sperling & Martin (19820) said, 'The gestalt adherents point out that in our perceptions we are prone to organize stimuli along the lines of certain natural tendencies which might be related to an organizing and grouping function in the brain'(p.40).

2.2. Objectives:

The objectives of the article are to provide

- i. A wide idea about the concept of perception and its organizing process in the perspective of creative publication and activities
- ii. An idea of how to develop that perceptual capacity through which an author/ creator/ writer what to think about (stimulus), and then to realize that thinking (stimulus) into an end product.

2.3. Methodology and methods:

Generally, 'methodology is the study of methods and the underpinning philosophical assumptions of the research process itself'(Wimmer & Dominick, 2011:117). They (2011) further said, 'methodology deals with the question of 'why' to do research in a certain way. It is a guide to what problems are worth investigating and how the research should proceed'. Kothari & Garg (2019) said, Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem (p.7). 'A method', on the other hand, 'is a specific technique for gathering information following the assumptions of the chosen methodology'. 'The methods, in the case of a qualitative research, allow a researcher to view behaviour in a natural setting without the artificiality'(Wimmer & Dominick, 2011:117, 48).

The present research work is accomplished based on qualitative approach. Naturally, 'a critical or interpretive paradigm is the main focus of the article. Interpretative scholars attempt to produce a unique explanation about a given situation or individual'. The aim of the interpretive paradigm is to understand how people in everyday natural settings create meaning and interpret the events of their world'(Wimmer & Dominick, 2011:116, 115).

Besides, Wimmer & Dominick (2011) further said, 'qualitative techniques can increase a researcher's depth of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation' (p.48). A researcher 'chooses the interpretive paradigm will rely on methods such as focus groups, ethnography and observations. Qualitative data come in a variety of forms, such as notes made while observing in the field, interview transcripts, documents, diaries, and journals (p.117). Therefore, in qualitative analysis, truth lies not in the objective proof but in the experience of existence or non-existence in the minds of human beings.

From the epistemological subjectivism standpoint in relation to theoretical perspective (Dawson, 2013), basically three qualitative methods are applied for generating information (new knowledge) with the objective of critically analyze the aforementioned phenomenon (topic).

Subjectivism suggests that there is no underlying truth and that reality is only what we perceive it to be. All knowledge is limited to experiences by the self and transcendent knowledge is impossible. Therefore, knowledge cannot be discovered as it is subjectively acquired and everything is relative (Dawson, 2013:8).

For that, it mainly proceeds with some secondary data/information that is extracted from some high-standard research-oriented reference books and chapters. Secondly, the author has used his self-observational capacity by the side of using empirical method. Using empirical method is a way of gaining knowledge by means of direct or indirect observation or experience. Empirical evidence can be analyzed quantitatively or qualitatively.

2.4. Scope:

The article is to be very useful for the students/learners of printing and publication studies, mass communication and journalism, fine arts, and other relevant disciplines, as well as for the professionals of concerned industries. Besides, it will be helpful for those knowledge-hunting people who intend to know about this subject-matter and to inject their learning into their respective working fields, especially in the creative platforms.

3. Steps for perception

We have earlier said that perception is a process. Any act of perception goes through an endless cycle which once starts and practically never ends despite its apparent ending at one particular point. But at which point it apparently ends, exactly from that point another round of acts initiates as per the nature of communication. For that, a perceptual process usually goes through three steps. These three steps are:

- (a) Selection**
- (b) Organization**
- (c) Interpretation**

Besides those three steps, DeVito (2015) added another two steps. The additional two steps are *memory* and *recall*. Therefore, we need to pay more attention and discuss and analyze all these five steps to get a better understanding of the perceptual process. Through the five stages of perception process, we sense and pick up some kind of stimulation first, then to organize that stimulus in some way; after that we evaluate that particular stimuli that we have already perceived, and then we need to store our perception in our memory, and finally we need to retrieve that stimulus (message or meaning) whenever it is necessary.

3.1. (a). Selection:

At the first stage of a perceptual process our sense organs are stimulated. We can hear a new music album, we conceive a theme of a book, see a close friend many days later, we smell someone's perfume they started using of it, or we can taste a very juicy mango at the beginning of a new fruit season. DeVito (2015) suggests that naturally we do not perceive everything; rather we engage in selective perception,

which includes selective attention and selective exposure. Selective attention is said to be attending to those things which we anticipate will fulfill our needs and will prove enjoyable. On the other hand, selective exposure means that we tend to expose ourselves to that information which will confirm our existing beliefs and that will contribute to our objectives. Selection is, therefore, the first step of the process through which we rightly and meaningfully choose and select a few stimuli and leave behind some others and concentrate on selective ones. Terming the perception as selective, Watson & Hill (1991), said, 'We are surrounded by many sensations but we tend to direct our attention to only a few of these' (p.129). The issue of selecting stimuli is, however, influenced by some external and internal elements of individuals.

3.2. *External elements:*

We said earlier that so many active stimuli constantly surround us. When we, for instance, try to read a book, we could have a smell from the kitchen. We have to encounter some noises in the streets considered as a tyre-burst of a car. Maybe a vendor (stroller) is calling outside in a loud voice to sell any consumable products. Out of that three who are putting attention to the smell of food out of many stimuli indicate they are foodaholic or might be they were hungry at that very moment; one who responds to the sound of a tyre-burst is possibly a political activist as any kind of burst or noise gives him any meaning connecting to any political situation (considering our political culture). Anybody giving much attention to any *hurrah-noise* coming from any cricket ground is an indicator of his fascination and love for sports.

From here, we see that I am trying to read a book, but some other stimuli do not allow me to get any relief for the intervention of some other stimuli. That means so many stimuli are always in competition to draw our attention, but very few of them are being succeeded. And only those stimuli get succeeded, which are holding the following characters.

3.3. *Intensity & size:*

In line with Watson and Hill (1991), our decision of attending to which environmental and personal factors can influence stimuli. Environmental factors, for example, can include the intensity, size, motion or novelty of the stimuli. The things which are

considered to be extreme or odd attract more. Suppose very big or small in size, or very high or short always attracts attention. Somebody's name is Chikan Ali (Bangla *chikan* means very thin), but practically he is fatty, and that would obviously attract our attention. Somebody who is taller than the appropriate height would also attract attention. A pocket-sized colorful book of rhymes or any book of big and bizarre size would attract more than that of any usual form.

The well-known and popular character *Lilliput* or *Brobdingnag* of renowned British author Jonathon Swift's *Gulliver's Travel* always attracts High School level children of all ages in their reading apprehension. Swift was extraordinarily successful in perceiving the psychology and reading level of children and writing this epic narrative. He was a writer of strong perceptual capacity through which he was able to perceive the writing of such kinds of story which delighted people of every part of the hemisphere generation after generation with the same urge and attraction. This kind of apprehension is quite essential for writing books for appropriate readers. How many of us are capable of writing such kind of books using the psychology of thinking and imagination? The way *Gulliver's Travels'* *Lilliput* or *Brobdingnag* delighted us; *Robinson Crusoe*, a character created by another British writer, Daniel Defoe, also delighted us with equal urge and attraction. There once was an extremely tall man in Bangladesh named Parimal, who was the centre of all attraction of the people. While he used to walk through the streets, the people, especially the young children, always found chasing him. Parimal always reminded us about *Brobdingnag* of Swift. From the communication and journalism's point of view, *oddity* in particular, the unusual things always create the attention of the receivers/consumers. Swift and Defoe both were successful to perceiving and projecting those elements in their books.

3.4. Discrimination:

If a stimulus remains unchanged for a long time, then we do not put our attention on it. And if any change is happened in between, it attracts more. While the clock goes on, there is no problem, but a clock found stopped, which attracts attention. A congenial atmosphere has been prevailing at East West University, a leading private university in Bangladesh, and that would not attract any attention as this is a very usual phenomenon, but if the same kind of serenity and calm and quietness prevails

at Dhaka University for a long that would obviously attract attention as Dhaka University is the epicentre of producing a different kind of (political) incidents almost every day. However, for more than fourteen years since 2009, Dhaka University has been remained comparatively peaceful except 2024 violent students' unrest on quota issue, and that also had drawn some attention from the people.

3.5. Repetition:

We pay heed to any stimulus that repeatedly comes across to our senses. That's why TV Commercials are being broadcast frequently. Any message of any Ad has to be repeated frequently to earn attention and retention of the messages for the consumers. If the price of a product is TK. 499, for example, that message would be repeated several times in any Advertisement in the TV commercial to increase the attention of the consumers, and in that way, the volume of retention for the possible consumers/ buyers would be increased. Another psychology you need to understand here is the figure. It is 499, but it is virtually five hundred. Figure 499 is the trick from the sellers' point of view as most consumers perceive it as less than five hundred no matter how much less it is. However, a few would feel discouraged to perceive it as flat five hundred.

Highly likely and highly unlikely is one potential conceptual view for the advertisers. A good name is highly expected. In one advertisement for Lux soap, the face of an illustrious glamour queen attracted much attention. But a bad name like *Pocha saban* (literally: *rotten soap*) also attracted the attention of the consumers of general class in Bangladesh. In any speech, manuscript, advertisement, or any script of film, the application of repetition is always very important as frequent thrust of stimuli would provide more attention and retention of any message for the consumers. Famous lavender named 'Poison' once had been extremely successful in drawing extravagant attention from consumers despite its negative connotations and reverse policy.

A good name is always loved and expected, but a name with bad connotations also sometimes attracts attention. Controversial writer Taslima Nasreen had put one of her novels as *Lajja* (Shame), which created a huge stir. Pioneering Bengali small story

writer Sharatchandra Chatterjee kept a title in one of her famous novels as *Charitraheen* (Characterless).

3.6. Speed, space and perspective:

We pay attention to an active and dynamic stimulus more than that of a static stimulus. We pay much attention when major news breaks or we pay much attention when frequent changes happen in war-like situations. Speed is a good element of understanding perception. Quickly changing situations in any cricket match stirs the attention of sport-lovers. Any news of normal situations would not attract us but an abnormal situation does always attract us. Any book with an older perspective may not have the same power to create good attention that had; rather, any new book with a newer perspective or any book with an older perspective but with a newer dimension would attract more. *Badshah Namdar* of litterateur, Humayun Ahmed of Bangladesh, is a novel on the basis of historical event that was written a decade back from an older historical perspective involving the life of Mughal Emperor Humayun, and it got a good response from the readers.

3.7. Internal elements:

Some internal elements of an individual, like needs, motivation, preparation, etc., influence paying attention to stimulus. It is not less important than that of external elements. Internal elements are---

3.8. Necessity & values:

Many necessities and values control our attention. Necessity is of various types like physical, mental, and social. As per Abraham Maslow's theory of Hierarchy of needs, the instinct of human being is to meet up biological needs first, like food, drinks, sex, etc., and then they pay attention to other necessities like getting an education and getting a good position and placement in society. It is apparent a group of hungry people look at any object, considering it as food. Keenly observing the demand of only food by the distressed people, the prominent Marxist Bengali poet, Sukanta Bhattacharya, was once encouraged to write his historic line '*Purnimar chand jeno jhalsano rut*' (The full-moon is just like a roasted bread). The national poet of Bangladesh, Kazi Nazrul Islam, had written a poem saying, '*Dhaner shishe batas neche*

jay chapal cheler mato' (Wind dances at the sheaf of paddy like a restless boy). There is no actual truth of those two lines; it is simply the mood or imaginary and creative idea of any writer or any creator. A creator can transfer his abstract thinking or idea in his poem, novel, or any aesthetical creation. It is not quite difficult to write any book or poem if these kinds of ornaments of language somebody perceives. Is there any news that a medicine has been discovered that helps to grow hair on baldhead. This will attract the attention of bald people. If any teacher during their lecture stressed that this particular topic/issue may come up at the examinations, the students would become very much aware and attentive to that issue.

Our attention is being influenced by social values, too. We pay heed to anything very close to our values, and we do not pay attention to anything that is in line with different values. Offering a glass of water or a soft drink to anybody while he is thirsty in our culture, is not a problem; but if somebody offers a glass of beer to a Bengali, would create some indifferent ideas in you as our values do not always permit offering beers. A native Englishman naturally would look at the glass of beer and a typical Bengali would look at the glass of water while they are offered. An English man would sip beer, and we would not mind, but if I see that a Bengali drinks beer, then it would be a little bit shocking. So, perception depends on mental preparation and attitude. But if I am staying in America and adaptive to American customs, then I would not mind to seeing a Bengali drinking beer. So, social surrounding is also very instrumental in the process of an act of perception.

3.9. Mental preparation & expectation: We pay attention to anything according to our mental setup and preparation. We want to understand anything as per our expectations.



Figure: 7 Source: Shafiqur Rahman

Mental preparation, like expectations, influences attention, too. We can perceive the above picture as the English letter B or Figure 13. If we put the picture among the English letters then we perceive it as B, or if we put the picture on the figures then

we perceive it as number 13. That means perception is dependent on mental setup and preparation. If my focus is on B, then I would assume 13 as B, but while my focus is on a figure like 13, then I would assume B also as 13.

4. (b). Organization: The received and selected stimuli from several stimuli can be organized through our senses. One guy would find different figures (human or animal or plants) in the sky while he enjoys on any day of autumn. If one is a plant lover then he would find simply the figures of plants, but another one can find the figures of animals, who is animal lovers. It depends on the following principles.

4.1. Mobilization:

The first and simple rule of organizing stimuli is to mobilize them. That means we usually mobilize the stimuli into different groups and clusters according to their homogeneity. Exceptionally some people would arrange those in a very heterogeneous way.

4.2. Closure:

If there is any gap of a stimulus then we try to ignore that. This trend of arrangement is called closure. Suppose there is a gap in the following two stimuli but we ignore it and accept it as full form. In the first one (figure 8) apparently some gaps or shortages in straight lines in the four corners of the rectangle. But our perception gives the idea that there are no gaps in the rectangle. We perceive it as full. The second one (figure 9) gives us an apparent idea of a couple of sketched lines that carry no clear meaning. But, if we meticulously look at the figure then it gives an idea about the face of human being despite some gaps in the full face of the figure. If we carefully attend to the curves then we would be able to perceive it as the face of Gandhiji. This is all about the capacity of *visualization* which is essentially important for preparing any kind of printing materials. From the following two figures we would be able to understand the concept of 'closure' and 'wholeness' as per Gestalt theory. This rule is mostly exercised by the designers.

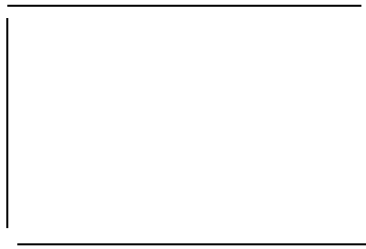


Figure: 8 Closure Source: self



Figure: 9 Wholeness Source: Collected

4.3. Seen as Form & background:

Sometimes we perceive any object as an object (or figure) as its background helps to understand it. When we see any object, the object is seen ahead of its background. A form has its substantive value but the background has no structure or form, and it is amorphous. Here, the figure is the focal point of our attention. If we see the white portion of the following figure (10) seems like as flower vase but whenever we treat the white portion as backgrounds then we see two faces in conversation. And again, if we consider the black areas as background then we see the pawn of chess at the top. This understanding gives a proper direction of thinking to any author/publisher or any cover and layout designer of a book/publication to go for making their book covers or page layouts or inside graphical in line with expected demands of the potential readers and obviously from the content's point-of-view.

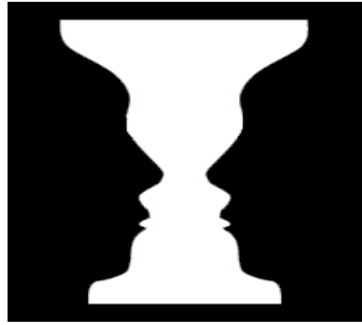


Figure: 10 Figure and Ground Sources: Self-created

DeVito (2015) has identified at least two important things or ways through which you can organize material (or scattered information or elements) by creating a *Schemata* (or schematas) and another one is *Script*. This is another way said to be a mental templates or structure that help you organize the millions of items of information you came come into contact with every time as well as the information you have already stored in memory. Pearson et al (2011) described schema as “Organizational ‘filing systems’ for thoughts held in long-term memory”.

4.5. Organization of stimuli by Schemata

The way we organize information (stimuli) by creating mental templates or structures is called *schemata* (or schemas). A schemata or schema helps us to come into contact with every day as well as those we have stored in the memory. Schemata are thus viewed as ‘general ideas about people; about yourself (your qualities, abilities, and even liabilities) or about social roles’ (DeVito, 2015:62). Possessing Schemata is extremely useful for any thinking author or publisher or any creator of any discipline.

One can develop schemata from his own experience. It could be his actual experience or vicarious experience he extracts from television, reading, studying, and hearsay. You may develop schemata about anybody's individual character. You can develop schemata for different groups or communities, ethnicities, or people of different affectional orientations. You might have some familiarities that will be represented in your mind in some kind of schema. Schemata help us to organize our perceptions by allowing us to classify lacs of people and their actions or events involving them into different manageable and convenient numbers of categories or classes. It helps us to

retrieve that information as per our priority, demand, or choices. Michael Madhusudan Dutta, the pioneer of injecting modernism in Bengali literature, for example, is to be noticed for how he used the technique of schemata. He used to write the verses for more than three or four books of different natures at a time through his hired scribes, successfully bringing down the information from his schemata. While he did it, he in a fantastic manner exercised his absolute intrapersonal communication power.

4.6. Organization by Scripts

A *script* is a type of schema. 'Like a schema, a script is an organized body of information; but a script focuses on an action, event, or procedure. It's a general idea of how some event should unfold; it's the rules governing events and their sequence' (DeVito, 2015:62). An event or subject is virtually a chain of action or thought process. For example, whenever a publisher has a plan to publish a book on a selected subject/topic, then he has to go through some actions or to go for some thinking and decisions; and for either process, you should or might have a script.

DeVito (2015) further says, 'Everyone relies on shortcuts - rules, schemata, and scripts, for example, are all useful shortcuts to simplify understanding, remembering, and reaching information about people and events. ... If you didn't use these shortcuts, you'd be unable to generalize, draw connections, or otherwise profit from previously acquired knowledge'(p. 62). Shortcuts, however, may mislead you; they may contribute to your remembering things that are consistent with your schemata (even if they didn't occur) and distorting or forgetting information that is inconsistent'. The practices of maintaining shortcut is gradually disappearing now from the possession of the present day's learners of different categories. People nowadays mostly depend of storing raw information (stimuli) simply on a computer/machine instead of using brain-based schemata or scripts. In the process, we are mostly losing our emotion and creativity.

5. (c). Interpretation:

In the time of perception, we not only select and arrange the stimuli, but we also interpret them. Interpretation is otherwise said to be evaluation, too. Interpretation is

understood as a process through which we make a judgment or reach an assumption about the selective and organized impulses. As per Rahman (1995), this Judgment or Assumption is usually of two types. One is identification, and another is evaluation. If we hear any sound we try to understand the nature of the sound, and then try to understand whether it is suitable for us. In any way, these three step-wise processes happen so quickly that we think they happen at a glance of time.

Rahman (1995) also suggested that the Perceptual Judgment or evaluation can be divided into two groups.

One is **Static judgment**, and other is **Dynamic judgment**. Static judgment is when we judge anybody considering his/ her perpetual character, and dynamic judgment is- when we judge anybody considering his/ her ever changing character. Somebody is introvert, and somebody is extrovert. It is a perpetual character of any individual. But when we say somebody is happy or somebody is tired, this indicates his temporary character as this particular individual may be unhappy at other times or may be active. This kind of judgment is sometimes called sociometric judgment.

Somebody is said to be soft-spoken. How do we judge it? From a long observation, it could be proved that he/ she is soft-spoken. One single glance of observation could be a misjudgement. Similarly, another one is said to be outspoken. You need to judge him/ her not for a while but for a long. But one perceptual judgment is soft-spoken people are mostly found as thinking people.

And what is the basis of that judgment? We do make it through our experience. And that experience can be categorized into three principles.

5.1. Principle of Experience:

Usually, we can understand behaviour and character of anybody through experience. This experience could be a personal experience. From our personal experience, we assess a student is who is very studious and wears thick glasses spectacles. But what we learn from reading books is being termed as derived experience. This is a very concrete experience.

5.2. Principles of comparison:

In which condition, how an individual responds can be determined by the other individual how he responded to the same condition. In any particular condition how an individual could react- based on that, we could understand what we could do if we have to face any situation like that.

5.3. Authoritative principles:

When we grow up in our family life, we learn how to assess many things. And we learn it through the assessment being made by our parents or other elderly members of the family. And whenever we make any judgment about any political or religious group, we try to judge it through the above three principles.

In the end, perception is the power, act, or state of receiving the knowledge of external things by impressions on the senses.

The following statement of DeVito (2015) is important here to consider. He says,

'Judgments about members of other cultures are often ethnocentric. Because you form schemata and scripts on the basis of your own cultural beliefs and experiences, you can easily (but inappropriately) apply these to members of other cultures. It's easy to infer that when members of other cultures do things that conform to your scripts, they're right, and when they do things that contradict your scripts, they're wrong - a classic example of ethnocentric thinking' (p.62).

6. (d). Memory

In the process of any perceptual act, the stages of Memory and Recall are also very important by the side of earlier three steps namely, Selection, Organization and Interpretation. We usually store both our perceptions (i.e., response to stimuli) and their interpretations-evaluations in our memory. If we, for example, stored somebody in our memory through a *schema* that he (somebody) is strong, intelligent, agile, meritorious, etc., then the 'cognitive tags' in our memory would always tell me that man is intelligent, agile or meritorious. If we consider any writer's writing style or content to be quite strong, creative, innovative and unique through our schema, then our cognition tags stored in our memory world would tell the same. If this similar cognitive pattern is maintained by an author or writer about his selected readers/consumers, then he/she would be more successful in writing those books which will be well read by his selected/projected readers stored in his memory.

What is the script about your possible and potential readers or consumers you maintained in your memory; accordingly, that script directs an author or writer to write a manuscript which would satisfy your potential readers stored in your memory. As per Aronson et al. (2010), Information that are very much consistent with your schema, as per the example given earlier, will strengthen your schema and make it more resistant to change.

'When you remember about a person or an event isn't an objective collection; it's more likely heavily influenced by your preconceptions or your schemata about what belongs and what doesn't belong. Your reconstruction of an event or person contains a lot of information that was not in your original experience and may omit a lot that was in this experience' (DeVito, 2015:63)

7. (e). Recall

The last step of any perceptual procedural act is 'Recalling'. What information, knowledge, idea, etc., you perceived once, you cannot act on those issues at that right moment when you perceived, instead at some day later, at your convenient or necessary time, you may want to recall or access that information that you have once stored in your memory. You, as a prolific writer or author, for example, perceive an idea or a plot to write a manuscript on a particular issue or discipline, then at any time later, you can want to retrieve that information that are stored in your memory, but memory is sometimes not straightway a typical reproductive instrument, for that, you cannot simply to reproduce that you have heard, read or seen. Instead, you should not reconstruct that information/knowledge/idea that you have seen, read, heard or experienced over a while, and that reconstructed information should be very meaningful to you or for those people targeted, but it mostly depends on your schemata and scripts. And the reconstructed information you got/prepared will be stored again in your memory.

When you want to retrieve the information from your memory that you stored earlier, you may recall this information with a variety of inaccuracies. DeVito (2015) identified three categories through which something happened during the retrieval of your information. These are:

i. Recall your information that is consistent with your schema. That means the memory smartly responds by providing the exact information that you want. The plot an author or writer once perceived can be utterly successful in retrieving, and accordingly, s/he will be able to pen their writing piece that s/he expected in terms of information, style or pattern s/he adopted.

ii. Fail to recall information that is inconsistent with your schema. Like the computer, the brain also sometimes cannot allow storing for the lack of space or the information you have placed in the memory that is not stored in time of your schema. So, while you try to retrieve, then that could be found inconsistent in the way you want. That means what you stored once that you can have the chance to lose it or forget it.

iii. Recall information that drastically contradicts your schema. The information that you want to retrieve could be drastically found contradictory to your schema. For that, it can force you to think and perhaps rethink of your schema, and its accuracy; it may even force you to revise your schema and store it again in your memory.

8. Communication and perception: Relatedness

The uniqueness of human experience is based largely on differences in perception. Since our perceptions are unique, communication between and among people becomes complicated (Pearson et al, 2011:35).

'Self' is the cornerstone in an act of communication and also equally essential in the understanding process of a round of perceptual acts. Any act of perception mostly happens through anyone's self. In terms of communication, if we say, the communication itself is probably understood as a dialogic process. A dialogue is simply the act of taking part in a conversation, discussion, or negotiation. All these three, are sometimes happen in the case of interpersonal level of communication, and they also happen in the case of intrapersonal level of communication, too. We not only engage in a dialogue with others, but sometimes and mostly, in any sort of communication we engage ourselves with us. In this case, an individual plays the dual role of sender and receiver. In fact, an act of perceiving a stimulus is nothing but an act of intrapersonal communication. It is said, the intrapersonal level of communication is regarded as the base of all kinds of communication.

Practically, the process of perception, by its nature, is very near to the intrapersonal level of communication. Perceived any stimulus and after going for storing it in the form of schema or script, is one way to be understood as simply a round of intrapersonal communication, and whenever we transmit it through the level of inter, mass, and mediated communication system, it should be said as the transformation the perceived schemata(processed information or stimuli) into reality.

We engage mostly in three separate activities during the process of perception: selection, organization, and interpretation. No one is aware of these separate processes because they occur quickly and almost simultaneously. Nonetheless, each activity plays a discrete role in perception. In turn, our perceptions affect our communication (Pearson et al, 2011:38). After seeing a burst of rain-bathed sunshine, for example, I can have an ecstatic and creative mood, and with that, I can enjoy in my own, or perhaps I share it with others at an interpersonal or mass level. Both are the ultimate results of intrapersonal and interpersonal communication, and in this way, we transform the perceived (stimulus) anything into reality.

Aristotle, as quoted by David K Berlo (1960), 'Rhetoric (communication) is the search for all the available means of persuasion' (p.7). In any creative work, application of persuasion is quite essential. An author of creative areas has to convince him first in the process of perceiving those stimuli that will help them to accomplish their work. If he is pleased with him that the elements (stimuli) he gathered, he will ultimately be able to satisfy his consumers. If so, the entire perceptual process and its execution will be accomplished. If the issue of writing a book for a classified group of children (readers/consumers), for example, the author/ publisher has to convince them first about the stimuli they collected like visualizing the characters of that book, its cover and design, colour, illustration or ornaments, book's size, binding options, quality or opacity of papers to be used for. If all the things go satisfactorily, they will decide to publish it and to reach to the readers (receivers). This will be the bridge between perception and reality, and it will be considered a worthy communication.

9. Conclusion

The article opens up by providing conceptual understanding and insight into perception. Then, the steps and process of perception are explained and discussed with a lot of examples in line with the field of publication as well as creative functions. Perception, we know, is the process through which an individual becomes aware of objects and events by using their senses. Once perception is considered as a very passive act, but now it is regarded as active.

'Passive perception means that, like video recorders, people are simply recorders of stimuli. ... Active perception means that your mind selects, organizes, and interprets that which you sense. So each person is a different video camera, and each person aims the camera at different things; and each person's lens is different, each person sees different colors; and each person's audio picks up different sounds (Pearson et al, 2011: pp 34-35).

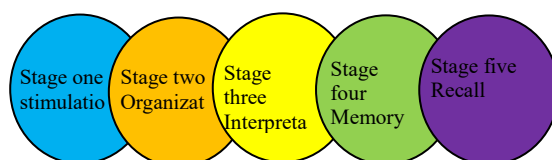


Figure 11: 5 Stages of perception *Source: Joseph A. DeVito*

The process of perception goes through five stages (see above figure 10). The human being perceives certain stimuli through these steps like selection, organization, interpretation, memory and recall; but the act of perception on any object, event or issue happens so quickly that we are not always found ourselves aware of when or how we perceive stimuli through those five steps in a fraction of second. But the way any act of perception is happened can be effectively utilized in any creative activities and especially in the field of publication of any platform. The people engaged in any field like publishing, would obviously have the communicative power to visualize anything (stimuli) in his or her artistic way to create something that would be able to draw comparatively large attention of the people of the respective fields. Therefore, enhancing the capacity to understand their surrounding world is very essential for those people who are working in the creative industries, especially in the field of publishing/communication/designing, to understand the insight and inside of perception with the objective of contributing to their respective field or profession.

'A publisher', for example, 'requires imagination, long-term planning, and spirit of experimentation as well as patience and plenty of staying power. ...'Publishers

develop lists, a collection of like or harmonious titles, of a similar style or category. ...Publishers usually sent out to demonstrate that they have good knowledge of subject-matter is expected and respected' (Guthrie, 2011:15).

The same thing is equally applicable for a thinking author or writer as s/he has to conceive a theme and/or a plot for writing a book of specific discipline targeting the expected readers. For that, they have to develop the capacity of understanding to respond to the stimuli surrounding him or her and to process those into meaningful messages/data or information appropriately. Therefore, DeVito (2015) properly said, 'Understanding how perception works will help make your own perceptions (of yourself and of others) more accurate' (p.61). And lastly, in terms of communication, it is a bridging between the perception and reality.

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