Chapter 11
Interaction in Online Learning Environments:
A View From Theory to Practice

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ABSTRACT

Interaction is simply defined as the interacting components communicating with each other. It is a necessary activity to ensure learning in learning environments. Unlike other learning environments, online learning environments have many requirements. Being in an environment where the learning process is not controlled causes the student to impose learning responsibilities on himself. On the other hand, in online learning environments, it is expected that the student increase academic success, ensure satisfaction, create motivation, meet social needs, acquire different perspectives, and cooperate. When the assumptions of the theories put forward to provide these positive gains in the literature are examined, it is seen that interaction has an important place. In this study, online learning environments that can provide different types of interaction are discussed. The benefits and limitations of these environments are indicated. Furthermore, suggestions have been made to support interaction in learning.

INTRODUCTION

Interaction should be considered as a concept that increases the effectiveness of the communication process. In this context, communication is generally defined as the process of transferring feelings, thoughts, and information from a sender to a receiver (Luhmann, 1992). The source, which is an element of the communication process, can be human, such as teachers, or non-human, such as books, television, internet media, and can contain all kinds of information. However, the receiver is a human being, and

Figure 1. Elements of the communication process
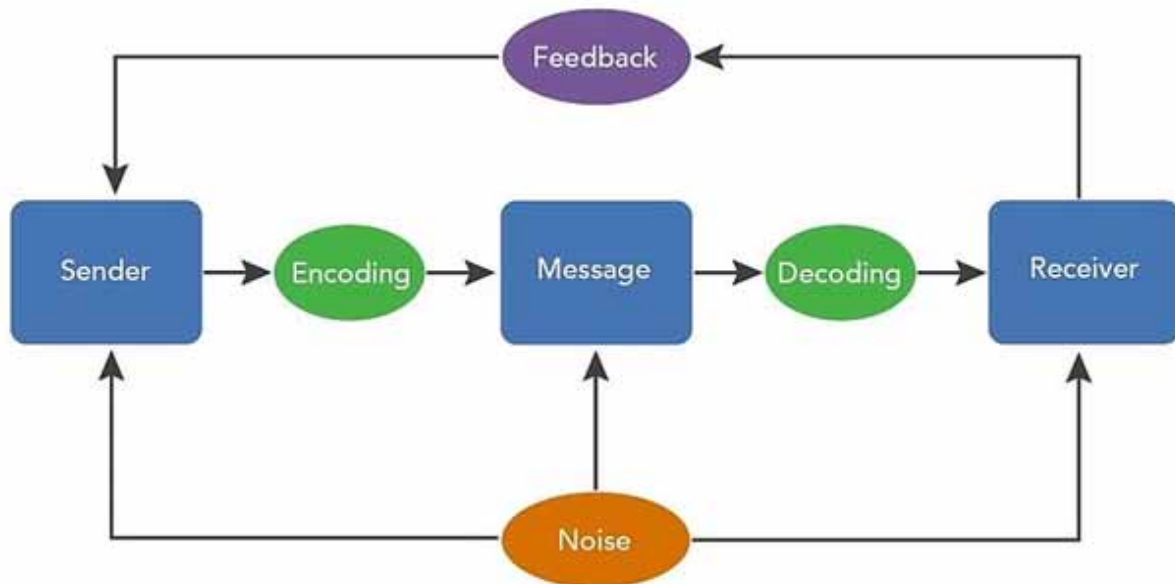
in this process, the main purpose of the receiver is to decode the information encoded by the source in different formats such as sound, picture, animation, video. The primary purpose of the communication process is to transfer feelings, thoughts, and information as entirely as possible between the source and the receiver (Figure 1).

As shown in Figure 1, the communication process includes various elements (Nordquist, 2018). These communication elements take place in every process, such as an individual listening to the news in daily life, two friends talking on the phone, the patient telling the doctor his problem, the doctor advising him to get better, the child telling his/her mother that he/she is hungry or upset about something. Individuals are in the elements of this communication process tens, maybe hundreds of times every day, consciously or unconsciously throughout their lives. Examples include reading the newspaper, asking for water, responding to someone's help, picking up the phone. In this respect, communication can be more qualified if supported by many elements such as language skills, expression style, diction, and materials used. Every effort made to realize communication can be expressed as an example of interaction. In the communication process, it is not possible to transfer the information in the human brain directly to another human brain yet. Therefore, noise, which indicates social, cultural and political factors, may cause information loss while the information in the source is coded with one's own knowledge and experience, transmitted by a tool and channel, and the information is analyzed and interpreted by the receiver with their own experience and knowledge. Here, an extra effort should be made to avoid loss of information, a certain loss between narration and understanding, and to catch the right expressions. Reducing this loss in communication can be achieved by interaction activities so that the information, feelings and thoughts that are meant to be conveyed and understood are as much as possible. In other words, interaction can be defined as any activity that will increase the awareness of the receiver towards the desired goal.

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