

English Abstracts

Rudolf Stöber: Without Redundancy no Continuity of Communication. A Contribution Paper on Notions of Information and Communication in Communication Studies (Ohne Redundanz keine Anschlusskommunikation. Zum Verhältnis von Information und Kommunikation), pp. 307-323

Communication, information and redundancy are interdependent categories. Information is a function that relates to time – hence, it causes a redundancy in communication which bridges the time gap between the now and the then. This paper is concerned with three types of information: one that emerges from information theory, a second that finds its home in linguistics, and a third which stems from communication studies. These three notions correspond to three redundancies of first to third order. Linguistics, moreover, distinguishes between semantic, syntactic and pragmatic aspects of information. I am illustrating in this paper how mutual understanding depends on all of these three notions of information and redundancy. The idea of information in communication science is a subset of information in linguistics. The latter, indeed, is a subset of information in information theory. These notions of information depend on one another. They are constructed by different rules and practices. They can be measured to diverse extents. However, all notions of information and communication, despite differing between the disciplines, are related to one another.

Key words: redundancy, information, communication, time, understanding, pragmatics, theory of practice, system theory, behavioural psychology

Matthias Hofer: Compassionate Viewing Modes: The Influence of Trait Empathy on Emotions during the Viewing of a Tragic Animated Film (Mitühlende Rezeption. Der Einfluss von Empathiefähigkeit auf Emotionen bei der Rezeption eines traurigen Zeichentrickfilms), pp. 324-344

In a semi-experimental study, the influence of trait empathy on state empathy, emotions and physiological arousal during the reception of a tragic animated film was examined. Heart rate and skin conductance were recorded and analysed with regard to the last five minutes of the film. The results show that viewers with a high level of empathy experienced more negative emotions and more state empathy with the protagonists of the film than those with low levels of empathy. There were also differences in heart rate and skin conductance, although not on a significant level. Furthermore, significant correlations were found between state empathy and negative emotions. However, after controlling for trait empathy, these correlations disappeared in part. This paper discusses the results in the light of theoretical considerations.

Key words: state empathy, trait empathy, emotion, heart rate, skin conductance, tragedy, animated film

Thomas Birkner: Genesis, Formation, Differentiation and the Breakthrough of Journalism in Germany (Genese, Formierung, Ausdifferenzierung und Durchbruch des Journalismus in Deutschland), pp. 345-359

According to Dieter Paul Baumert's "The Emergence of German Journalism" published in 1928, German journalism history has so far been divided into a 'pre-journalistic period', periods of 'corresponding journalism', a period of 'literary journalism' and, ultimately, a period of 'editorial journalism'. Based on an interdisciplinary discussion of journalism history and social history research, this paper presents a new model of classification of the periods in journalism history, taking into account the overall social environment in particular. Four phases are introduced with regard to the journalistic institutions, the journalists, and the journalistic text: 'genesis', from 1605 to 1848; 'formation', from 1849 to 1873, 'differentiation', from 1874 to 1900, and finally the 'breakthrough' of modern journalism in Germany in the first decade of the 20th century. In order to do so, the present author draws on a reconstruction of contemporary journalistic handbooks, mainly written by practitioners.

Key words: journalism history, social history, journalism theory, journalistic handbooks

Katrin Jungnickel: Quality in News Journalism from the Point of View of the Audience – A Comparison of Readers' Evaluation and Normative Quality Standards (Nachrichtenqualität aus Nutzersicht. Ein Vergleich zwischen Leserurteilen und wissenschaftlich-normativen Qualitätsansprüchen), pp. 360-378

With the need to keep the costs at a low level while surviving in highly competitive surroundings, and keeping reports exclusive and up to date, journalists can find it challenging sometimes to follow quality standards. The audience has the power to counteract this trend by selecting – and thus increasing – the demand for high quality news. However, it is not clear whether the quality standards deriving from normative perspectives are mirrored in readers' expectations. Moreover, even if they are, we do not know if their judgement about the quality of a certain news report is the same. The study aims to clarify this by applying a multi-method-design. In a first step, news articles of good and bad quality are identified through content analysis. In a second step, audience members were asked to evaluate these articles, with the help of an online experiment. We examined how these evaluations varied depending on different characteristics of the article (quality, subject area) and different characteristics of consumers (education, media use, subject interest). The results show that media consumers can recognize quality differences. Furthermore, the subject area and the consumers' specific interest in this were identified as important factors influencing the evaluation of news articles.

Key words: news quality, user quality, journalism, online experiment, subject interest

Juliane Urban: Journalistic Evaluations of Issue Importance in the Agenda Setting-Process – The Significance of a Neglected Variable (Journalistische Wichtigkeitszuschreibungen im Agenda Setting-Prozess. Zum Einfluss einer bisher vernachlässigten Größe), pp. 379-400

Contemporary Agenda setting research emanates from the idea of agenda setting effects as layout effects. Content aspects were only rarely investigated. The present study tries to fill this gap by investigating whether journalistic evaluations of issue importance (=direct or indirect evaluations of the relevance of an issue stated by journalists) stimulate First-Level-Agenda Setting. Based on considerations that explain Agenda Setting as an individual learning process, the importance of those evaluations is discussed from a theoretical point of view. Subsequently, the empirical part of the study demonstrates that journalistic evaluations of issue importance do in fact influence consumers' evaluation of issue importance. Even so, it mostly is the longevity of evaluations that is affected. Furthermore, the effect depends on the type of journalistic evaluation (explicit v implicit) and the type of information process (peripheral v central).

Key words: media effects research; Agenda Setting; media content; individual learning processes; experiment