

English Abstracts

Ruth Ayass: Conversation analysis media research (Konversationsanalytische Medienforschung), pp. 5–29

During recent years, a host of conversation analysis studies have turned to the subject of communication in or via or about mass media. To name just a few examples, studies exist on the “recipient design” and “turn” structures of news interviews or on involvement structures in what are known as “radio call-ins”. These studies have been virtually unknown up to now to German (as well as international) media research. The article presents the methods and contents of the findings and topics so far of conversation analysis studies on mass media communication. The aim of the article is to methodically and methodologically reflect (mass) media communication as the subject of conversation analysis, to present it as a method in German media research and to thus extend the canon of methods of media research.

Keywords: Conversation analysis, ethnomethodological conversation analysis, qualitative methods, news interview, Computer Supported Cooperative Work

Bertram Scheufele: Framing effects put to the test. A theoretical, methodological and empirical examination of the effects perspective of the framing approach (Framing-Effekte auf dem Prüfstand. Eine theoretische, methodische und empirische Auseinandersetzung mit der Wirkungsperspektive des Framing-Ansatzes), pp. 30–55

This article deals with research on framing effects. First, different approaches on framing are classified. In addition, a definition of “frame” and “framing” is provided that extends beyond framing research so far – both theoretically and operationally. Furthermore, a pragmatic distinction is established between the constructs “frame” and “schema”. With these tools, a profound discussion of studies on framing effects in terms of theory, methods und empirical results can be conducted. This examination shows that studies on framing effects deal to an insufficient extent with more recent psychological constructs and theories. Focussing on the activation of schemata, most studies ignore further types of framing effects. Several empirical questions, therefore, remain unanswered and methodological opportunities would appear to be wasted.

Keywords: Frame, framing, schema, media effects, agenda-setting, priming

Jörg Matthes / Matthias Kohring: The empirical of media frames (Die empirische Erfassung von Medien-Frames), pp. 56–75

The main purpose of this study is to shed light on methodological problems when operationalising media frames. After briefly outlining four common methods for the assessment of media frames, criticism mainly focuses on the lack of reliability and validity of these techniques. A new method for the assessment of media frames is then presented. Building on the definition of frames advanced by Entman (1993), it is proposed that previously defined frame elements systematically group together in a specific way, thereby forming a certain pattern that can be identified across several texts by means of cluster analysis. The proposed method is then demonstrated with data on international coverage on biotechnology. As a result, five frames are identified (“benefits for agriculture”, “benefits for medicine”, “scientific research”, “agriculture regulation” and “ethi-

cal concerns”) that can be reliably assessed across samples in Germany, the UK, France and the USA and one frame (“diffuse prospects”) that is harder to interpret. Finally, the implications of the proposed method for future framing research are discussed.

Keywords: Media frames, methods, biotechnology, content analysis, international media comparison

Mirko Marr: Who’s afraid of the Digital Divide? On the tenability of the threat scenario (Wer hat Angst vor der Digitalen Spaltung? Zur Haltbarkeit des Bedrohungsszenarios), pp. 76–94

Against the background of the imminent threat of a digital divide of society, extensive control activities were launched in recent years with the aim of guaranteeing Internet access for everyone. This objective, however, is not undisputed and has been criticised both in terms of its appropriateness and its necessity. Taking this as a point of reference, the article discusses the conditions under which the assumption of a digital divide threat scenario can be as warranted and the promotion of access thus regarded as justified. Whereas it can be shown that the continuing exclusion of certain sections of the population legitimate the measures initiated, the article also points out that the inference from access exclusion of an actual handicapping can only be made with reservations. In the light of this insight, research on the digital divide is urged to focus more of its interest on the actual consequences of access disparities.

Keywords: digital divide, Internet, access exclusion, access disparities, access promotion, Internet for everyone

Michael Meyen: Media users in the late GDR. A typology based on biographical interviews (Mediennutzer in der späten DDR. Eine Typologie auf der Basis biografischer Interviews), pp. 95–112

The media experiences in the GDR still rank as one of the central reasons for East-West differences with respect to media use. The fact that the focus in the past has nonetheless not extended beyond justified conjecture is also connected with the quality of the sources available. The typology of media users in the GDR presented in this article is based on about 100 biographical interviews. The respondents were selected on the basis of theoretical sampling and interviewed in guideline discussions about their journey through life and everyday experiences in the GDR. The typology criteria were the general sets of expectations vis-à-vis the media and the attitude towards the media policies of the SED and the degree of orientation to the West. The typology shows that the East Germans did not take “the” media experience into unification, but that they have highly differing experiences, which depended, in their turn, on a host of factors: on the position in the occupational hierarchy and the requirements of everyday life, on the climate of opinion formation in their own personal environment, on the ties with the other part of Germany, on the personal (also intellectual) possibilities, and on the career and promotion opportunities the GDR offered the individual.

Keywords: GDR, media use, media experiences, media socialisation, biographical interviews, typology