This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 12 titles deal with the following topics: (1) the relational nature of humor, (2) pragmatism and transaction, (3) within-channel redundancy versus between-channel redundancy in instructional material and its association with amount learned, (4) verbal synchrony and the maintenance of rapport between collegiate instructors and their students, (5) a communications model for community renewal by a two-year branch campus in Ohio, (6) the role of communication during the process of social change in Grenada--1979-1983, (7) a study of differences in the communicative patterns of normal and hyperactive children, (8) scholarly communication versus classroom communication: an approach to the research versus teaching question, (9) enhanced conversational recall and reduced conversational interference as a function of cognitive complexity, (10) approaches to communication policy--a comparative study of the British and American examples, (11) oral histories of 10 middle-management women, and (12) communicative features of educational computer software. (HOD)
Rhetorical and Communication Theory:

Abstracts of Doctoral Dissertations Published in Dissertation Abstracts International, July through December 1985 (Vol. 46 Nos. 1 through 6).

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Abstracts of the following dissertations are included in this collection:

Bates, Louis C., Jr.
THE RELATIONAL NATURE OF HUMOR

Bolen, Robert Dale
PRAGMATISM AND TRANSACTION: COMPATIBLE PERSPECTIVES FOR COMMUNICATION

Evans, Sharon Ann
WITHIN-CHANNEL REDUNDANCY VERSUS BETWEEN-CHANNEL REDUNDANCY IN INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH AMOUNT LEARNED

Gallo, Fred Philip
VERBAL SYNCHRONY AND THE MAINTENANCE OF RAPPORT BETWEEN COLLEGIATE INSTRUCTORS AND THEIR STUDENTS

Mahan, John Kenneth
A COMMUNICATIONS MODEL FOR COMMUNITY RENEWAL BY A TWO-YEAR BRANCH CAMPUS IN OHIO

McLean, Polly Elise
THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION DURING THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN GRENADA, 1979-1983

Michou, Maria
A STUDY OF DIFFERENCES IN THE COMMUNICATIVE PATTERNS OF NORMAL AND HYPERACTIVE CHILDREN

Neal, Edward Max
SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION VS. CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION: AN APPROACH TO THE RESEARCH VS. TEACHING QUESTION

Neu...lep, James William
ENHANCED CONVERSATIONAL RECALL AND REDUCED CONVERSATIONAL INTERFERENCE AS A FUNCTION OF COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY

Ofobike, Laura
APPROACHES TO COMMUNICATION POLICY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN EXAMPLES

Perry, Linda A. M.
COMMUNICATING CULTURE: ORAL HISTORIES OF TEN MIDDLE-MANAGEMENT WOMEN

Phillips, Amy Friedman
COMMUNICATIVE FEATURES OF EDUCATIONAL COMPUTER SOFTWARE
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THE RELATIONAL NATURE OF HUMOR

BATES, LOUIE C., JR., PH.D. University of Colorado at Boulder, 1984. 158pp. Director: Donald K. Darnell

The purpose of this study was to investigate the transactional nature of humor in a dyadic context. Previous communication researchers have relied on unidimensional explanations for the complex process we call humor. Consequently, humor research is riddled with inconsistent and inconclusive research findings, and humor theory is fragmented and incomplete.

The method of investigation for this dissertation is qualitative in nature. More specifically, data collection methods consisted of using Wheelis' Interpersonal Solidarity Scale, audio-recordings of the dyad meetings, and in-depth interviews of each participant. The subjects of this study were 21 task oriented dyads; debate teams from argumentation classes at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Glaser and Strauss' Constant Comparative Method was used to analyze the data.

The results of this investigation are important in a number of ways. First, this study found support for the idea that humor is a transactional process, and that the nature of the relationship between the interactants is the most important factor in determining whether or not something is perceived as funny. Second, the functions of humor varied depending on the nature of the relationship. Generally, in dyads moving toward closeness, the humor was identified as one of the main factors leading to closeness. In dyads moving toward distance, humor functioned to manage conflict situations, and to set relational boundaries. Finally, the study identified the relationship between humor use and conflict management and humor use and self-disclosure; it suggested the importance of humor in developing close relationships; and found that put-down humor is far less predominant in dyads than in small groups.

PRAGMATISM AND TRANSACTION: COMPATIBLE PERSPECTIVES FOR COMMUNICATION

BOLEN, ROBERT DALE, PH.D. University of Colorado at Boulder, 1984. 133pp. Director: Donald K. Darnell

Pragmatism has been defined and utilized in a variety of ways. Within the communication field it has most often been perceived as signifying a practical approach to speechmaking, a branch of semiotics, or as a representative of one of the systems perspectives. Each of these provides potentially useful conceptualizations. Each is however representative of a more narrow perspective than this author favors.

An investigation was made of the historic foundations of pragmatism as exemplified in the works of Charles Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. These authors' concepts were compared with the ideas of humanism, wholism, and evolutionary change which are presented as the three distinguishing characteristics of transactional communication theory.

This author feels that there is ample evidence of primary suppositions central to the traditional pragmatic perspective which are also central to the contemporary transactional perspective in communication. This is not to argue that traditional pragmatism and transaction are synonymous but that they are certainly compatible.

This study concludes that traditional pragmatism offers a productive source of conceptualizations for analysis by contemporary communication scholars. While there is always the temptation to produce "new" and exciting alternatives, the significance of this study is that it proposes a substantial thread—traditional pragmatism—which, instead of further fracturing the field of communication, provides opportunity to construct a more unified and perhaps more productive theoretical structure.

WITHIN-CHANNEL REDUNDANCY VERSUS BETWEEN-CHANNEL REDUNDANCY IN INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH AMOUNT LEARNED

EVANS, SHARON ANN, PH.D. North Texas State University, 1985. 68pp.

The problem of this study is whether between-channel redundancy in an instructional audio-visual message enhances immediate recall of information more than within-channel redundancy. A secondary purpose was to compare three forms of between-channel redundancy: audio-video, audio-video-caption, and audio-caption with one form of within-channel redundancy: video-caption. These comparisons were designed to demonstrate which form of redundancy had a higher association with recall of information.

The subjects were administered the Kentucky Comprehensive Listening Inventory to measure listening skills, and the Receiver Appreciation Inventory to identify subjects who experienced significantly high apprehension as receivers of information. Then the subjects were randomly divided into four treatment groups and shown an eight minute newscast. All four groups were presented the same instructional message, but the mode of presentation differed depending upon the treatment group. After viewing the instructional program each member of each group was given a forty item multiple-choice retention inventory based on the information presented in the newscast.

The data were presented in terms of correct responses on the Kentucky Comprehensive Listening Inventory and the forty item retention inventory. Discriminate analysis was used to determine which items from the multiple-choice retention inventory accounted for the most variance. Thirteen items were found to account for the greatest amount of variance. Reliability estimates were calculated for all four story categories and for the forty items collectively. All reliability estimates were acceptable.

A close examination of the test scores, means, and treatment groups illustrated that treatment Group I, audio-video, did produce a significant difference from the other three treatment groups. Treatment Group III, audio-caption, edged out treatment Group II, audio-video-caption. This was expected because Group II required that one channel, sight, use two sources of information, the visual picture and the caption. Overall, between-channel redundancy produced higher means and higher test scores than did within-channel redundancy, all other factors being equal.

VERBAL SYNCHRONY AND THE MAINTENANCE OF RA'SPORT BETWEEN COLLEGIATE INSTRUCTORS AND THEIR STUDENTS

GALLO, FRED PHILIP, PH.D. University of Pittsburgh, 1984. 73pp. Chairman: Alex J. Ducanis

This study examined the effect of sensory predicate matching on the development of rapport within a collegiate instructional context. Sensory predicate matching is a form of verbal synchrony, whereby the instructor matches categories of sensory predicates evident in the student's speech. This study was limited to an examination of this variable on rapport maintenance within individual discussion situations.

To test the effect of this procedure the design entailed semi-structured discussions which simulated a collegiate instructional/discussion context. Experimental manipulation of instructor verbal behavior was conducted with the following three conditions being assessed: Unspecified (providing a baseline by generating unspecified predicates in response to Ss' verbalizations), Matching (a condition in which the instructor matches categories of sensory predicates), and Mismatching (a condition in which the Ss' sensory predicates were mismatched). Each condition entailed a method of instructor behavior used throughout the discussions. Other relevant variables such as voice tone/tempo, gestures, posture, etc. were controlled for as much as possible. At the
The role of communication during the process of social change in Grenada, 1979-1983

Order No. DAB513261

The relationship of communication to the social change process in Grenada is examined within a framework of the socioeconomic and political transformation processes that occurred between March 1979 and October 1983. The evidence shows that the communication systems (mass media and interpersonal) were directly affected by the policies adopted by the vanguard party, the New Jewel Movement (NJM) prior to 1979, and integrated into the system of government after 1979.

Between March 1979 and October 1983, the NJM and the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) sought to change the socioeconomic and political structure through a series of dramatic reforms and programs centered on more popular participation, self-reliance, and mobilization of the masses of people. These policies directly influenced the interpersonal communication process by creating an interactive horizontal communication system between the government and the people. In addition, the state-owned and operated mass media were used to facilitate and consolidate the Revolutionary ideology of the NJM.

The leading conclusion is that the NJM/PRG was the primary driving force behind the social change process which in turn directly influenced the communication systems.

A STUDY OF DIFFERENCES IN THE COMMUNICATIVE PATTERNS OF NORMAL AND HYPERACTIVE CHILDREN

Order No. DAB511644
McHou, Maria, Ph.D. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1985. 281pp. Chairperson: Robert L. Sprague

This investigation examined the communicative differences between normal and hyperactive children. Ten minutes of conversations of 6 normal, 6 hyperactive, and 6 mixed-speaker listeners of male American 2nd and 3rd graders were analyzed and documented according to a taxonomy of linguistic, psycho-linguistic, interactional, and compliance variables.

The taxonomy consisted of 7 quantitatively and 5 qualitatively derived variables. The 5 qualitative variables were derived from ratings of 20 adult raters who rated all the conversations for clarity, flow, staying on task, amount of nonsense, and overall organization. Analyses of variance and Duncan's test of significance revealed significant differences between the 3 groups for Amount of compliance with equipment characteristics—which was one of the qualitative variables—in addition to differences for all 5 qualitative variables.

There were no differences whatsoever for either the Linguistic (Completeness of sentences and Amount of disfluency), or the Psycholinguistic (Interruptions and overlaps, Amount of imperatives, Amount of aggressive language, and Amount of shouting at partner) variables that were examined.

Concerning the direction of differences for Compliance with equipment characteristics, the hyperactive was significantly different from both the normal and the mixed conversational groups. For the 5 qualitative variables, the normal children were different from both the hyperactive and the mixed groups. This finding was discussed in relation to the specific age-group that was studied. More generally, a likely interpretation is that hyperactive children have a strong influence on their conversational partners towards disorganizing and disorienting them from the purpose of a particular conversation. One possible consequence of such a situation might be that normal children, either consciously or unconsciously, become tired of the conversational behaviors to which they have been "carried away". It is moreover possible that the negative feelings attached to eventually transferred to their hyperactive conversational partners who are also their peers.

The significance of properly functioning arousal mechanisms, including the monitoring of one's level of arousal, for communication were then stressed. Finally, some suggestions for education in interpersonal skills were made, followed by a note of caution by concerning generalizations, and suggestions for further studies in the area.
The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between scholarly communication and classroom communication with respect to their impact on perceived teaching effectiveness. As a research scholar, a university professor communicates with his/her peers in publications and in professional meetings using a highly specialized, "academic" style of communication. This type of communication is quite different from the style required to teach undergraduates, who read and expect readily comprehensible explication of the course material.

Since previous research has revealed no consistent association between research and teaching effectiveness (or even between years of experience and teaching effectiveness), this communication factor may provide the key to these relationships. Two causal models were developed to test the hypothesis that research productivity, as an indicator of scholarly communication, may affect classroom communication and thereby have an impact on teaching effectiveness. Additional variables which have some influence on student ratings of teaching effectiveness (class size, expected grade, and whether the course is required or elective) were also included in the models.

The sample of teachers (n = 60) was drawn from faculty members in the Division of Academic Affairs at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Graduate teaching assistants, lecturers, and adjunct faculty were excluded from the pool from which the random sample was drawn. Each professor distributed student questionnaires to one randomly-selected undergraduate class (1,989 students participated) and filled out special faculty questionnaires themselves.

Although the models failed to disclose any direct or indirect relationship between scholarly activity and perceived teaching effectiveness, the results do indicate that a professor's verbal and nonverbal classroom communication behaviors have a profound effect on student perceptions of the quality of teaching. In the first causal model, classroom communication was used as a single intervening variable, and in the second model it was divided into its four components: friendly/attentive, dramatic/animated, relaxed, and conversational.

This study investigated the influence of cognitive complexity on the ability to recall conversations. It was hypothesized that because of highly differentiated and abstract cognitive systems, cognitively complex individuals would be able to recall conversations better than non-complex individuals. Specifically, it was deduced that conversations are thus definable in terms of degrees of difference over common concerns. The study takes the theoretical position that the tendency to adopt policies and systems represents uncritical deference to what is technically the result of particular selections and combinations of empirical and normative determinants. A deferential approach to communication policy, the study argues, fails to meet the challenge to developing countries to devise coherent national communication policies that ensure the needed stability and flexibility for the system to function any social purpose. It leaves unexplored whatever resources the indigenous culture might have for coping with communication problems.

Since policies in democracies are formulated through debates in institutional settings, the study postulates that a study of the debates over broadcast policy would provide evidence of issue transformation and yield distinctive patterns to justify their description as a characteristic national approach. Analysis of the data suggests that while such definite and distinctive patterns would be difficult to establish conclusively, the emphasis and justifications applied to specific issues indicate trends in ways of treating specific policy questions clearly enough for them to be associated with each of the two countries. The distinctions in approaches are thus definable in terms of degrees of difference over common concerns.
quantitative methods. But, "quantity will not yield form" (Jones, 1951, p. 334). Thus, I attempted qualitatively to discover themes within messages across subjects. First I placed onto sort cards excerpts from the taped interviewees' conversations that were accounts of messages or incidents that seemed to have some bearing on their organizational enculturation. Next, I arranged the sort cards into common issues and themes. Finally, I returned to the tape recorded interviews to ensure that the subjects' original meanings were not lost in the analysis process.

Analysis of data resulted in the isolation of thirteen themes in five categories. The five categories were messages the subjects received from, sent to, or heard about (1) the organization, (2) superiors, (3) subordinates, (4) peers, and (5) themselves. A residual finding—that the traditional model of communication does not account for the dynamics and dialectics of communication—resulted in the development of a "commuacology" model of communication (see Appendix C). It explains my perspective on communication and the role of communication in enculturation.

COMMUNICATIVE FEATURES OF EDUCATIONAL COMPUTER SOFTWARE

Phillips, Amy Friedman, Ph.D. University of Southern California, 1986. Chairman: Frederick Williams

This research identified and described the major interactive features of educational computer software as representative of a new communications medium. A large-scale survey of commercially available software was conducted and a series of cross-tabulations performed to determine how software is distributed according to intended age levels, content areas, manufacturers, and learning strategies.

Twenty-six of the more popular programs were selected and subjected to a detailed features analysis. Five categories of features were identified, including instructional, presentation, user control, usage requirements, and affective features.

Selected software designers were interviewed. Data were analyzed for descriptions of which software features function to make this an interactive medium.

Observations of computer use in classrooms and interviews with Los Angeles teachers who are currently using educational software were conducted. These data were analyzed to reveal which features affect teachers' choices of and responses to programs.

The results indicated that the more interactive programs used complex simulations and tutorials, appropriately illustrative graphics, intrinsically challenging content, and corrective feedback to actively involve students in critical and creative thinking skills. They offered greater control over the speed, content, and difficulty levels. However, these programs, which were found to be fun, interesting, and exciting, accounted for only a small percentage of the available software. The majority of programs were non-interactive drill and practice strategies that offered students little control, involved memorization, and used simple, repetitive feedback to teach basic curriculum areas.

The designers generally disliked drill and practice software and favored interactive learning strategies, user control, and entertaining affective features. Teachers with previous computer experience were willing to try complex simulations that required interaction among groups of students. Teachers with less computer experience preferred software with simple instructional strategies that could be used by individual students without supervision. Presentation features, while acknowledged to be motivating, were frequently viewed by designers and teachers as detracting from the medium's educational effectiveness.

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