Volume : 2 | Issue : 12 | Dec 2013 • ISSN No 2277 - 8160



Research Paper | Communication

Analysis of the Semantic Fields Related to Media Competence in an International Educommunication Forum

Carmen Marta-Lazo	University of Zaragoza, Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, Calle Pedro Cerbuna, 12 50009 - Zaragoza
Maria-Jose Masanet	University Pompeu Fabra, C. Roc Boronat 138, 08018 Barcelona
Joan Ferrés Prats	University Pompeu Fabra, C. Roc Boronat 138, 08018 Barcelona

ABSTRACT

The objective of this article is to study which digital competence and media education topics arouse most interest in the research community. According to this aim, we analysed the texts of 214 communications and papers presented at the International Congress of Media Education and Digital Competence held in 2011 at the University of Valladolid. The forum was a monographic presentation of this article's research approach by which, through a semantic analysis, we aim to find out the most frequently addressed fields in the congress contributions, and, as a result, within media education.

KEYWORDS : semantic fields, digital competence, media education

1. Introduction

In recent decades media education has been adopting an increasingly important role in the academic arena. Research into the subject has proliferated significantly, as is to be expected, focusing on various aspects of media education. Given that this is a relatively new area of study, it is appropriate to determine on which points experts focus their research into the subject in order to find out which points remain neglected. This is the purpose of this investigation. The research was performed by analysing the content of the communications presented during the 1st International Congress of Media Education and Digital Competence held in Segovia in 2011. This congress brought together the majority of European and American researchers involved in media education and was based around four central media education themes.

Given that neither the order nor the distribution of the contributions in each theme provided a clear classification or categorising of the issues that most interested researchers, we decided to analyse the content in order to study the body of each text presented and to delimit the semantic fields used most frequently by participants in the scientific forum.

Thus, words were distributed into different semantic fields that were inter-related through their meaning. By classifying them, the semantic domain or lexemes that belong to the same signification field could be analysed.

To specify the semantic fields in this study we took as a basis the research project «Media Competence. Investigation into the degree of competence of Spanish citizens» in which researchers from 17 universities from each autonomous community in Spain participated and which has given rise to several publications (Ferrés et al., 2011; Aguaded-Gómez et al. 2011; Marta-Lazo & Grandío, 2013; Masanet, Contreras Pulido & Ferrés, 2013). The concept of media competence and the dimensions and indicators that comprise it were studied in-depth in the project (Ferrés & Piscitelli, 2012).

The hypothesis taken as a point of departure is that researchers grant priority or afford greater importance to some dimensions over others, whereby, therefore, the semantic fields of these dimensions will occur much more frequently. For example, technology and languages are afforded a much more prominent role than aesthetics or ideology and values.

2. Methodological justification

The semantic field theory was first developed in the 1930s by authors such as Trier. An analysis of semantic fields is approached methodologically from quantitative techniques based on an analysis of content. This was formalized in 1948 with a publication by Berelson and Lazarsfeld entitled *The Analysis of Communication Content*, the theoretical developments of which have been assimilated by numerous authors (Gerdner, Holsti, Kripnendorff, Paisley and Stone, 1969; Holsti, 1969; Mucchielli, 1974; Ghighlione & Col., 1980; Krippendorff, 1990)[1]. This analysis mode has been extensively studied by experts in information analysis and document processing and has important models as precedents (Wiener's cybernetics, 1948; Shanon's mathematical theory, 1948; Chomsky's analyses, 1957) and in relation to language processing and communication (Winograd's discourse model,1977; Kintsch-Van Dijk's propositional model, 1978; Meyer's hierarchical model, 1985; Van Dijk-Kintsch's situational model, 1983; Rumelhart-Thorndyke's narrative model, 1977; Beaugrande's text world model, 1980)[2] and textual linguistic conception. In this investigation, we adhere to the approaches put forward by the different authors.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study sample

A study was carried out of all the communications presented at the International Congress of Media Education and Digital Competence held in Segovia in October 2011. There were 214 communications in total. It was a horizontal, monographic congress, without speakers, in which everyone participated at the same level through written communications and was attended by European and Latin American experts. The congress is a reference point in Latin America. Thus, the communications presented provide an appropriate analysis source.

3.2. Method

The methodology used is a quantitative content analysis. A computer tool that had been designed ad hoc was used, which enabled us to find out systematically the presence or absence of categories selected in a collection. The programme goes through all the files of the collection comparing the different occurrences against a previously defined matching list. The computer tool was developed in Python and Bash, under a Linux-based environment. The tool quantified the total occurrences of the selected terms, after they had been distributed by semantic fields.

In compiling the semantic fields we considered the relationship the subject establishes with the message in the communication process, further to the two criteria that govern audiovisual competence levels (Ferrés, 2006: 10-11): "personal: interaction between emotive and rational" [3] and "operational: interaction between critical reading and reactive expression". We therefore differentiated between rational and emotional fields to observe whether researchers are concerned with encouraging an analysis of cognitive or of attitudinal aspects. Meanwhile, we also included the two utterances that have an impact on the operational dimension, related to critical analysis and creative expression, in order to look at the semantic domain of each of them and to establish comparisons. Finally, we included a field restricted to instrumental aspects, which included topics related to technology, legislation and anything that might affect the communication support field.

Further to the above, the semantic fields were distributed in the dimensions shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Distribution of semantic fields analysed in the study

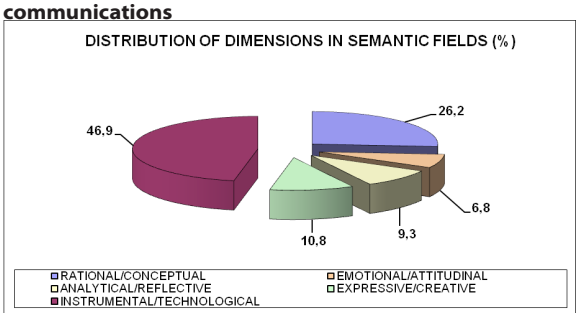
Dimension	Terms
Rational/conceptual	Comprehension, information, knowledge, informations, thought and reason
Emotional/attitudinal	Attitude, desire, emotion, empathy, enjoyment, identification, unconscious, motivation, sensation, feeling, subconscious and value
Analytical/reflective	Critical, evaluation, opinion and reflection
Expressive/creative	Expression, interaction, narration, participation and production.
Instrumental/ technological	Format, genre, tool, law, medium, standard, social media, regulation, story and technology.

Source: own

4. Results analysis

In the corpus of articles a total of 14,817 references to media education were counted. The dimension with the highest percentage in the Congress contributions was instrumental/technological (46.9% of the total; N=6956), followed by rational/conceptual (26.2%; N=3885), the expressive/creative area (10.8%; N=1595), and the analytical/reflective field (9.3%; N=1380). It is noteworthy that the dimension investigators included most infrequently was that of emotional/attitudinal (6.8%; N=1001) (See graph 1).

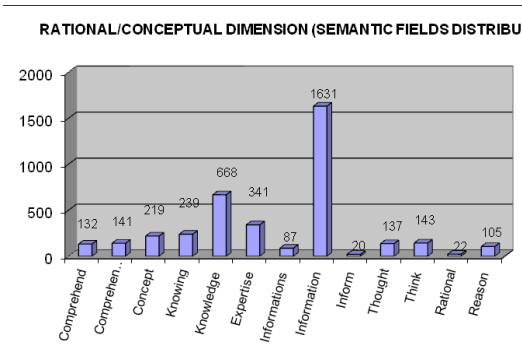
Graph 1: Presence of the dimensions in the corpus of communications



Source: own

In the rational-conceptual dimension, the most popular field was "information" and its derivatives, followed by knowledge and knowing. Concept, thought and comprehension are included to a lesser degree (see graph 2).

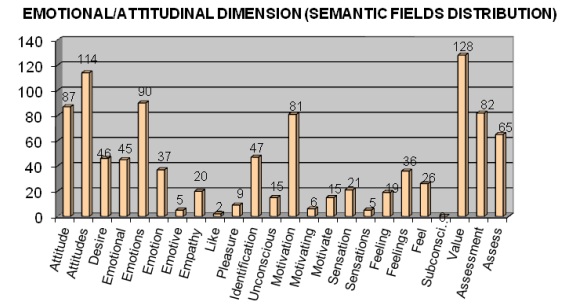
Graph 2: Presence of the Rational/Conceptual dimension in the corpus of communications



Source: Own

Fields related to the emotional-attitudinal dimension are distributed with a lower frequency rate. The most numerous refer to value, attitudes, emotions and motivation and derivatives. Unconscious is mentioned on only 15 occasions (see graph 3).

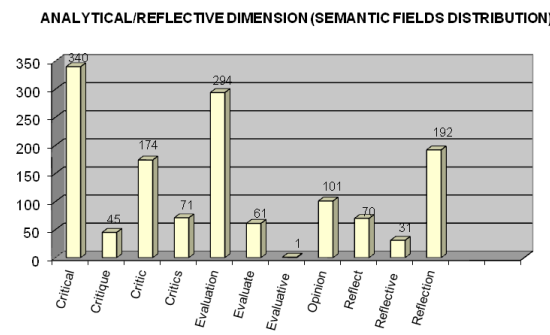
Graph 3: Presence of the Emotional/Attitudinal dimension in the corpus of Communications



Source: own

The analytical –reflective dimension is mostly referred to in the critical, assessment and reflection fields (see graph 4).

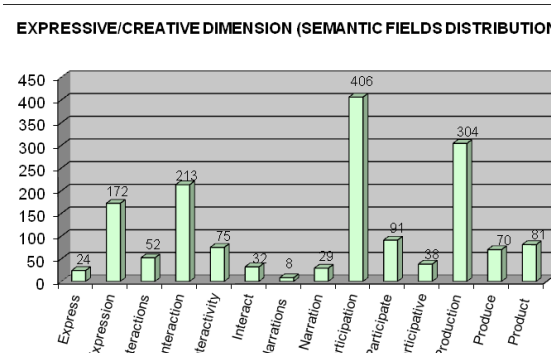
Graph 4: Presence of the Analytical/Reflective dimension in the corpus of communications



Source: own

Participation, production and interaction are the most frequently mentioned in the expressive-creative dimension (see graph 5).

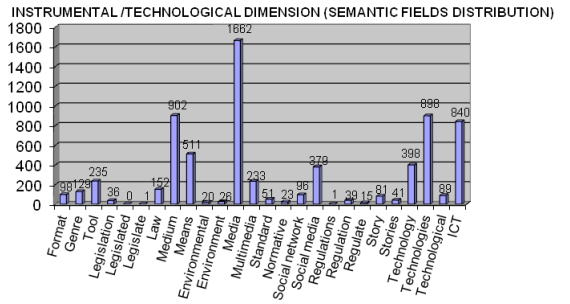
Graph 5: Presence of the Expressive/Creative dimension in the corpus of communications.



Source: own

In the instrumental-technological area, references to media are the most prominent, followed by the technology field and its derivatives (see graph 6).

Graph 6: Presence of the Instrumental /Technological dimension in the corpus of communications



Source: own

4. Conclusions

Undoubtedly these results will seem logical and coherent to most academics as, in accordance with the dominant paradigm in western culture, media education has focused traditionally on critical thought, on the investiture of reason and awareness in a media environment dominated by emotions.

However, in recent decades, it is not just the technological environment that has changed; comprehension of mechanisms governing the minds that interact with technology has also changed and this change should necessitate a review of the prevailing paradigm in media education.

The London-based neurologist Donald Calne states that the essential difference between reason and emotion is that emotion leads to action while reason leads to conclusions (quoted in Roberts, 2005: 42). From the results of the analysis of the semantic fields in the experts' documents it can be seen that the academic world is concerned that citizens draw conclusions; it is not concerned with driving them to act nor with personal or social change.

The German neurologist Stefan Klein states that dopamine, which is the molecule of desire, is a fuel for action (Klein, 2004: 137). From the results of an analysis of the semantic fields it can be inferred from the experts' approaches to media education that importance is not given to an analysis of how power manages desire nor is desire management taught in order to produce effective messages.

The American neuroscientist Joseph LeDoux affirms that "consciousness can only be understood if the unconscious processes that make it possible are studied" (LeDoux, 1999: 32). By marginalizing the unconscious, which is the largest part of the mental iceberg, from media education proposals we therefore prevent citizens from being understood as profound screen commentators.

In short, not only is the scant attention paid to media education a significant problem in Spain, but also the shortcomings in terms of the focus afforded it when it is taught.

REFERENCES

AGUADED-GÓMEZ, I. et al. (2011): El grado de competencia mediática en la ciudadanía andaluza. Huelva: Grupo Comunicar y Universidad de Huelva. | | COLLE, R. (2011): "El análisis de contenido de las comunicaciones. 1. Fundamentos", Cuadernos Artesanos de Latina, núm. 11.Tenerife: Sociedad Latina de Comunicación Social. | | FERRÉS, J. & PISCITELLI, A. (2012): "La competencia mediática: propuesta articulada de dimensiones e indicadores". Comunicar, 38, 75-82. http:// dx.doi.org/10.3916/C38-2012-02-08. | | FERRÉS, J. et al. (2011): Competencia mediática. Investigación sobre el grado de competencia de la ciudadanía en España. España: Ministerio de Educación (Instituto de Tecnología Educativa), Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya y Grupo Comunicar. | | FERRÉS, J. (2006): "La competencia en comunicación audiovisual: Propuesta articulada de dimensiones e indicadores". Quaderns del CAC, 25, 9-17. (www.cac.cat/pfw_files/cma/recerca/quaderns_cac/Q25ferres2_ES.pdf) (Fecha de consulta: 10-5-2013). | | KLEIN, S. (2004): La fórmula de la felicidad. Barcelona: Ediciones Urano. | | KRIPPENDORFF, K. (1990): Metodología de análisis de contenido: teoría y práctica. Barcelona: Paidós. | | LEDOUX, J. (1999): El cerebro emocional. Barcelona: Ariel y Planeta. | | MARTA-LAZO, CM. & GRANDÍO, M. (2013): "Análisis de la competencia audiovisual de la ciudadanía española en la dimensión de recepción y audiencia". Communication & Society, Vol. 26, n. 2, pp.114-130. | | MASANET, M-J., CONTRERAS PUBLIDO, P. & FERRÉS, J. (2013): "Highly qualified students? Research into the media competence level of Spanish youth". Communication & Society, Vol. 26, n. 4, 2013, pp. 217-234. | | PINTO, M. y GÁLVEZ, C. (1996): Análisis documental de contenido. Madrid: Editorial Síntesis. | | ROBERTS, K. (2005): Lovemarks. El futuro más allá de las marcas. Barcelona: Ediciones Urano. |