

# Book and article reviews

Objekttyp: **BookReview**

Zeitschrift: **Studies in Communication Sciences : journal of the Swiss Association of Communication and Media Research**

Band (Jahr): **3 (2003)**

Heft 1

PDF erstellt am: **31.05.2024**

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## BOOK AND ARTICLE REVIEWS

Carlo Sorrentino. *Journalism - What it is and how it works* (original title: *Il giornalismo - Che cos'è e come funziona*).

This book is a guide and a reflection on the meaning of journalism in the information society. Written by Carlo Sorrentino, professor of "Theory and technique of mass communication" at the University of Florence, the book describes the role of journalism in a society in which information processing gains more and more importance. Sorrentino points out that nowadays places and forms of information exchange multiply. What is the role that journalism has in such a context? The entire book tries to answer this question and Sorrentino, using basic theories of mass communication, shows that the professional role of the journalist has obviously changed over time, but its importance is not to be questioned. Indeed, having changed with society, journalism has gained a new and important role: it helps people build their identity in our current complex society through its integrating function. Concerning all the changes that have occurred, Sorrentino also wonders whether the classical definition of "journalist" is still applicable to all the new professions tied to journalism created in recent years. According to Sorrentino, journalism is facing further changes because of the growing speed of communication and competition: the new scenario he suggests is characterized by an increasing

diversification and interdependence of media. Journalism will be more oriented to the public and unlike in the past, its role will not be to judge or to simplify but to comprehend and to teach how to live with complexity - being able to represent it.

Apart from a consideration of what journalism will become, the book is also a guide: it explains the working of journalism and the operational routines of the newsrooms. The author describes the process of negotiation between the three main actors involved in journalism: the sources of information, the media and the public.

Sorrentino provides basic data for comprehending the Italian media today, and he suggests other sources that can be useful for readers, such as a list of more than fifty Italian websites dealing with journalism.

The book is certainly a good and thoughtful reflection on the way journalism is changing - rather than a guide for beginners interested in the profession.

*Il giornalismo - Che cos'è e come funziona* (229 pages, edited by Carrocci in september 2002) is available only in Italian and is the fourth book that Sorrentino has written in this field (*L'immaginazione giornalistica*, 1987; *I percorsi della notizia*, 1995 e *Cambio di rotta*, 1999).

Cristina Elia  
([cristina.elia@lu.unisi.ch](mailto:cristina.elia@lu.unisi.ch)),  
Università della Svizzera italiana

Maestro Jesús G. (ed.). *Nuevas perspectivas en semiología literaria*, Madrid, Arco/Libros, 2002, 296 p.

The Spanish publishing house, Arco/Libros, located in Madrid, has just published a book on semiotics and its new perspectives. The book is a collection of articles on semiotics written by different European and North American professors: Paul Bouissac, Michel Costantini, Lubomir Dolezel, Tadeusz Kowzan, Jerzy Pelc, Hans Ulrich Reck and Cesare Segre. Jesús G. Maestro, the editor of the collection and a specialist in semiotics and theatrical literature in Spain, has selected and translated the articles into Spanish.

The goals of the collection of texts from the present volume are threefold. First, they attempt to define the concepts: sign and semiotics. Next, they develop some fundamental notions about semiotics within the field of modern literary theory. Lastly, the texts propose various renewed perspectives of semiotics. The first section, about the sign and semiotics, contains the works of Hans Ulrich Reck, Tadeusz Kowzan, and Paul Bouissac. This section focuses on the concept of the sign as interpreted by the current trends of literary criticism. It also centers upon the disciplinary dimension that semiotics has acquired as a result of these trends, which distinguishes it as a literary theory that possesses its own set of rules.

The second section, dedicated to semiotics in modern literary theory, comprises a selection of texts by Carmen Bobes, Cesare Segre, and Lubomir Dolezel. These works closely examine the role of semiotics in modern literary theory by tracing its evolution during the second half of

the twentieth-century. This evolution ranges from the development of the neo-formalisms up to the present-day theories of pragmatism and the post-structuralisms. The last section, which illuminates new perspectives in semiotics research, includes the works of Michel Costantini, Jerzy Pelc and Tadeusz Kowzan. Their essays offer interesting reflections about semiotics and its possible developments in the upcoming years.

The volume opens with Jesús G. Maestro's critical study of the "recuperation of semiotics". He uses successfully the theory of transduction to move beyond Jakobson's classical model. The poetics of transduction is, without a doubt, a vital question in the development of current literary theories. All access to knowledge is mediated, or transducted; and such mediation carried out neither by the author, who after Barthian structuralism "has died", willingly or unwillingly-nor by the text (or writing), whose interpretation depends, above all since Gadamer, on a "knowing" subject that "dialogues" with the tradition; nor on the ideal reader or model reader, to whom so many identities and labels have been attributed, and almost none of them from any authentically real foundation. Today, access to knowledge is effectively mediated or transducted not by the traditional Jakobsonian agents-author, message, reader-but by the subject who interprets the message for the reader who for that very reason intervenes between the subject and reader. This subject does not speak through the author, nor does he get close to the writing of the text, renouncing his own moral, ideological or axiological values, nor does he even think many times about the scientific education of the common reader at the moment of formulating

his interpretation of the literary work. This intermediary subject thinks of the interpretation of the text in the presence of the reader in the manner in which such interpretation justifies his personal (political, cultural, economic, sexual, etc.) position in the context of his real and social life. The pragmatics of literary communication, at least from society of the end of the twentieth century, must necessarily bear in mind four elements: author-message-transductor-reader. The objective of all transduction is the reader, then, but not just any reader, but rather the voiceless reader, deprived of all possibility of recognized public expression. Only thus is it possible to impose a false interpretation on a community of individuals, because only thus is it possible to make an apparently scientific theory from a mere opinion, when in reality there is nothing scientific or theoretical about that discourse. Doxa is converted into episteme in the eyes of human beings without ceasing to be doxa. Here you have that which since Plato we recognize under the guise of demagoguery: consciously endowing lies with attributes of truth. Although right now it is only a possibility, the Internet is a decisive resource that can allow the overcoming, always relative, of this type of mediated situations. One shouldn't forget, however, that the data and facts are simply in the Internet. That is to say, access to them in the first place, but interpretation, as knowledge, is an experience specific to humans, and essentially depends on the intellectual abilities of each person, on the margin of which only nihilism resides.

Under the heading of poetics of transduction we can refer to studies of different literary theory concerned with the analysis of those factors that

act as intermediary elements in the apprehension and analysis of literary works. This is the case of the sources, translations, critical and methodological theories, ecdotics, interpreters and actors, philological analysis, establishing of texts, etc., whose intervention always mediates the comprehension of those realities that they seek to communicate. This, without doubt, is the road which leads to the renewal of semiotic studies.

It is with difficulty that human beings entirely submit themselves to a reality that is not a product of his own thought. Everything man does has meaning, and all that has meaning is the object of mediation, whether for bettering his possibilities of knowledge and transmission, or for eroding or for confusing them as well. The different methodological currents occupied with the study of the action of intermediaries and the processes of transformation and creation of meaning, that are produced in our society (theory of polysystems, empirical science of literature, control of sociological media, etc....) find a common basis in the analysis of operation of transmission and transformation of sense on which is based the semiotic process of transduction.

*Cristina Percoco*  
*The University of Virginia (USA)*

Fernando Poyatos (2002). *Nonverbal Communication Across Disciplines*, Philadelphia: John Benjamin.  
I Volume 369 pp., II Volume 456 pp., III Volume 287 pp.

Non-verbal Communication Studies is covered in these three volumes in a great variety of aspects, including the

deeper levels of the "basic triple structure of human communication<sup>1</sup>" in the context of sensory perception and cultural shaping, how reflect his experience of teaching multidisciplinary field of non verbal communication for over 30 years in many universities over the world and his international variety of students at the university of New Brunswick in Canada. In fact this work is the result of different approach (to foster the interdisciplinary approach needed today in many domain) and cross-cultural perspective to interactive communication, integrating language and literature, speech analysis, voice phenomena, paralanguage, gestures, kinesics, silence and environmental sound.

Besides the innovative content of the chapters some kinds of aids offered by these volumes constitute a virtual treasure on non-verbal communication in literature.

Each volume present Figures to afford a visual illustration for a quick reference for discussions.

The last part of every volume is dedicated to the Literary Quotations (over 3800 from hundred authors) exclusively from his own personal readings. It's a very extensive overview, so the inclusions of certain authors not imply his agreement with their ideas.

The topics for Interdisciplinary Research constitute a closing section for each chapter in every volume, twenty-five suggestions of possible applications of research projects.

The Scientific References is presented at the end of each volume, Poyatos chooses bibliographical data to show the many facets of what we call non-verbal communication, its interdisciplinary and his grateful acknowledgement.

At the end the volumes are enriched by an extensive Literary Refer-

ence that offer again much cultural, subcultural and even regional information and show a complete overview on these writers and works that have provided illustration for non-verbal topics. In this intellectual scenery we found writers as Balzac and Oscar Wilde and Work at the level of the Bible. An additional Index of Authors and Works cited allows the readers to identify and locate each one.

Finally a Named Index and a Subject index can help the readers to rapidly identify all the many topics and subtopics mentioned in these volumes.

Volume I: Culture, sensory interaction speech, conversation

In Volume I Poyatos sets the groundwork for most of the analyses in the book by presenting an elaborate, progressive and cumulative study of culture, language, interaction and communication in general, always through an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspective. This first volume presents culture as a sign system in space and time identifying the semiotic and interactive problems inherent in intercultural and subcultural communication according to the verbal and non-verbal cultural fluency. Poyatos also explore an exhaustive model of "non-verbal categories" for a detailed analysis of normal or pathological behaviours in any interactive or not manifestations.

Chapter 1 defines the communicative nature of a culture in both space and time and identifies the verbal and nonverbal problems in intercultural communication. Chapter 2 consist of the language in the total communicative context of its interbodily channels and environmental system. Chapter 3 is based on the audiovisuals production of interactive



discourse and analyses the speech production as the acoustic and visual functions of the phonatory organs. Chapter 4 focuses on the basic triple structure of human communication (verbal language-paralanguage-kinesics) its segmentable and nonsegmentable elements and the realisations and mutual combinations of the three co-system; as well as the transmission through space and time and balance and pathology in this triple structure. Chapter 5, linking to the previous chapter presents two applications of the still mentioned basic triple structure model. One is a model for the speech transcription and the other is the foreign-language teaching methods. Chapter 6 includes rather exhaustive model for the analyses of social interaction. Poyatos presents nonverbal categories as personal and socio-cultural identifiers. Chapter 7 is based on the structure of conversation dependent largely on nonverbal elements. Chapter 8 consist in a realistic and exhaustive treatment of the significance of the nonverbal elements in interpretation (defines as the relaying from a speaker-actor to a listener-viewer) of verbal and nonverbal messages indistinctively through verbal and nonverbal ones.

At the end a detailed perusal of the table of contents disclose an amplitude on this field of interest: 956 literary quotations from 103 authors and 194 works illustrate all the points discussed in the first volume.

Volume II: Paralanguage, Kinesics, silence, personal and environmental interaction

In this second volume Poyatos maintains the integrative and interdisciplinary approach to communication. He discusses five main topics which constitute five areas: paran-

guage, the communicative sounds beyond paralanguage silence, kinesics, and interaction. The importance of the component of the triple structure of speech<sup>2</sup> incite Poyatos to devote to this field a large contribute, with paper and contributions in symposiums and by organizing some international congresses in different disciplines and in different countries to promote nonverbal communication studies, in some guests courses and lectures around the world and as well as in his own University and by his books.

The first four chapters cover the topic of the paralanguage. After an introduction of paralinguistic studies Poyatos presents the qualifiers or voice types that operate normally to cultural circumstantial and personal reasons. A panoramic on the differentiations, which characterise and differentiate our physiological reactions as well as psychological states and emotional reactions, characterizes these chapters. Finally the author offers a study of paralinguistic alternants our vocabulary beyond the dictionary. Chapter 5 attempts to consider useful in the field of kinesics. The distinction between gestures, manners and postures is established as fundamental. Special attention is given from audible kinesics to environmental sound; the study in Chapter 6 covers the sounds produced by our movements and those of the surrounding environment. Chapter 7 offers the nonactivities resulting from the absence of sound and movement in a culture and its environments: the silence and stillness. Finally, Chapter 8 presents what happens or does not happen among people and between them and their environment exploring the communicative problems.

1854 literary quotations from 154 authors and 271 works (especially

from narrative texts, but also the theatre) illustrate all topics.

### Volume III: Narrative literature, Theatre, Cinema, Translation

This volume, based on the first two for what concern the background, is entirely devoted to the verbal and non verbal personal and environmental components of narrative and dramaturgic text and cinema, the environmental sounds in the novel, the theatre and the cinema, and the functions of personal and environmental silence. This volume is an independent work to encourage the readers to carry out a more exhaustive investigation in different literary periods and their cultures, always with an interdisciplinary approach, and also simply to enjoy a novel more and perceive things in more deeply manner.

Chapter 1 attempts to seek out all the explicit and implicit nonverbal components of the literature. Attention is then focused on the semiotic-communicative itinerary of the character between writer and reader in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 is devoted to the presence and absence of language, paralinguistics and kinesics, and environmental sound in narrative literature.

Having completed in Chapter 4 the kinesics and the other usual system and its intercultural aspects in the novel and in the theatre, Chapter 5 offers an interdisciplinary approach to the limitation, problems and ambiguities of punctuation system. Chapter 6 defines the stylistic, communicative and technical functions, which the nonverbal repertoires can perform in the literature. In the last Chapter 7, after identifying all the sign systems through which we establish interactive contacts, concentrates on the literary text as a basis of literary anthropology

to try to analyze and understand people living in different environment.

The literary quotations, 1081 from 162 authors and 286 works, are an addition to those offered in the first two volumes.

This effort (encouraged by the pioneering work of Ray Birdwhistell, George Trager and Albert Scheflen which is dedicated the second volume) opens up some new area of study that will certainly be of interest to both literature scholars and students of intercultural as well as intersemiotic communication.

*Sibilla Rezzonico*  
*Università della Svizzera Italiana*  
*rezzonis@lu.unisi.ch*

Laurentia Dasclu-Jinga. *Corpus de română vorbită (CORV). Eaantioane* ("Corpus of Spoken Romanian. Samples"), București: Oscar Print, 2002, 321 pp.

At the present moment, most branches of Romanian linguistics are still much indebted to written language (literary texts). Although dialectal inquiries are hardly representative of spontaneous conversation (as they tend to be controlled by an outsider and the focus is often metalinguistic), they have been employed in pragmatic approaches. A few linguistic studies on spoken Romanian are based on private corpora, but so far there has been no corpus of spoken Romanian opened for public use. Attempting to fill this gap, *Corpus de română vorbită (=CORV)*, i.e. "Corpus of Spoken Romanian", aims at capturing samples of "Romanian of average use", that is the language spoken by native Roma-

nians with a medium or high degree of instruction, engaged in various everyday communicative situations, with different degrees of formality.

Since 1993 Laurentia Dasclu-Jinga has made recordings of nondialectal spoken Romanian and developed studies in phonetics, pragmatics and conversation analysis based on this corpus. 65 hours of recordings selected from the existing 180 hours constitute the first archives of nondialectal spoken Romanian, which is a part of the Phonogramic Archives of Romanian Language (available at the Institute of Linguistics from the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, where Laurentia Dasclu-Jinga functions as a senior researcher).

*Corpus de româna vorbită* (CORV). Esantioane offers, together with a description of CORV, an anthology of transcriptions after some of these recordings and an introductory study to corpus linguistics. The latter brings up issues less explored in Romanian linguistics: methodological problems of gathering samples of spontaneous verbal interaction, short descriptions of spoken, written and broadcast language and the way they are illustrated in the book, types of linguistic variation which can be identified in the texts. Ethical issues are of great interest since quite often Romanians resent being recorded, given their experiences before '89. It is precisely this background that makes the author insist on getting the subjects' agreement (preferably after the event to avoid the effects of the observer's paradox), going as far as erasing the recording when the participants disagreed.

After a brief presentation of conversation as a prototypical form of verbal interaction, Laurentia Dasclu-Jinga accounts for the transcription

system employed in her texts. The system is basically the one put forth by Jefferson (1974, 1978), to which the author has added a few other phenomena to be marked: prosodic (non-final contour -ascendent or descendent-, "rejective intonation"), and those related to correction (self-corrections, other-corrections as well as uncorrected errors). The phenomena followed throughout the texts transcribed are syntactical (false starts, hesitations and most uncorrected errors, noted by "sic!"), phonetic (segmental and suprasegmental, emphasis, various transient qualities of voice), interactional (repetition, correction, interruption, etc.). Given the novelty of this approach on spoken Romanian and its transcription, the author has explicitly chosen to have a system of conventions as close as possible to the current orthography of standard Romanian (which does not usually pose major spelling problems, being a phonetic one). However, when the ordinary spelling would have covered a - supposedly relevant - variety of forms in speech, the author used either pseudophonetic transcription (for foreign words) or IPA (when the pronunciation itself is the focus of the verbal exchange, as it is the case of a seminar in linguistics).

The speech events recorded are various: from greetings and small-talk to talk-shows and debates, from casual storytelling to political discourse, all being glimpses of Romanian life, personal accounts of historical events, evoking past and anticipating future at various moments from the last decade. The excerpts transcribed are given suggestive and catching titles, which make the anthology look like a postmodern novel. This feeling is enforced by the relatively small number of subjects recorded in family and pri-



vate situations (out of 25 subjects recorded in family and private situations, 7 are members of the same family, while 11 are colleagues of the author). They seem to enter and exit during 9 conversations (defined as verbal interactions with more than two participants), 9 dialogues and 7 monologues, face-to-face or at telephone. In all transcriptions the participants are indicated by means of their initials, therefore their discourse and verbal behavior can be followed throughout the book. Some of them take part in various speech events, for instance, one speaker is involved in 15 recordings, another in 10 a.s.o., some are "encountered" once, but are spoken of on other occasions (as it is the case of VJ, evoked in 5 other samples). The author's choice for initials instead of arbitrary letters encourages further analysis regarding variation of channel or of the situation in the same speaker's discourse.

In order to offer a basis for comparison with other existing corpora of spoken language, the author embraces the criteria of text classification proposed by C-ORAL-ROM (conversation/dialogue/monologue, according to the number of participants, and family/private/public, which should reflect the social projection of the communicative context). Every text is preceded by information about participants (sex, place and year of birth, relationships with other participants) and situation (date, place, other observations); there are also mentioned the authors of the recording and transcription, the duration of the excerpt transcribed and the total duration of the recording. Much of this kind of information (necessary for a database) may be of interest for the users of the corpus: the duration of the excerpt transcribed (expressed in minutes and

seconds) enables them to correlate, for example, speech debit and degrees of formality, draw conclusions on particular speaker styles, etc.

Corpus de româna vorbita (CORV). Esantioane is the first anthology of nondialectal spoken Romanian: it offers an insight to corpus linguistics, its methodology and instruments (a transcription system and a rich bibliography), but also a generous invitation to use the public archives of spoken Romanian, at the Romanian Academy from Bucharest.

*Diana Stanciulescu*  
*Institute of Linguistics*  
*"I.Iordan - Al. Rosetti", Bucharest*

Laurentia Dascalu-Jinga. *Melodia vorbirii în limba română* ("Melody of Speech in Romanian"), Bucuresti: Univers Enciclopedic, 2002, 184 pp.

Having studied intonation for over three decades, Laurentia Dascalu-Jinga offers, with *Melodia vorbirii în limba română* ("Melody of Speech in Romanian"), the first synthesis on Romanian intonation, based on modern investigation methods. The book consists in a thorough description of Romanian intonation patterns based on acoustic analysis (by sonagraph) of some speech sequences uttered by native speakers of standard Romanian, and validated as "natural" or "normal" in this language by another group of Romanians (acting as listeners in perceptual tests). The intonation types were identified by means of the commutation method (studying the intonation of each sequence as part of a minimal pair); when the intonation difference corresponded to functional

and / or semantic differences between the two utterances, it was considered that there were two distinctive intonations, called intonation patterns.

The volume puts forth a "basic inventory" of such Romanian intonation patterns, covering a great variety of types, which reflect the manifestation of intonation functions in this language, for instance: the logic function (intonation of finality, continuity, interruption); the modal function (the assertive, interrogative, imperative, exclamative intonation); the contrastive function (by which various emphatic intonations are opposed to their neutral counterparts), and the syntactic function (the role of intonation in distinguishing the predicative from the subject, the paratactic from the hypotactic structures, the direct from the reported speech, the elliptical utterances from their "complete" original source, or the role of intonation in solving syntactic ambiguity).

A great number of semantic values of Romanian intonation are also presented, such as: the "call contour", which is different from the addressing one, the enumerative and the parenthetical patterns, the rhetorical interrogative pattern as opposed to the interrogative proper, or the numerous subtypes of questions which can be defined by means of intonation: yes-no questions, wh-questions, alternative, echoing, reminding, complementary questions, etc.

The book offers thorough descriptions of the way in which various syntactic elements influence the basic intonation patterns (the vocative, negative predication, subordination etc.) It also provides interesting accounts for the way intonation can undertake information from other linguistic levels, as it is the case with "melodic transfer": the elliptic sentence shows a dif-

ferent intonation compared to the one of the - supposedly - complete original sentence, but similar to the intonation of the omitted sequence.

Varying sentence length, usage, and syntactic-semantic complexity of the examples, the study describes and analyses a number of expressive patterns, idiomatic intonations, the relation between intonation and punctuation systems (sometimes asymmetrical and faulty); a last chapter is dedicated to some Romanian dialectal intonations (from various regions, such as Bihor, Maramures, Muscel, Tara Oltului).

Remarks on Romanian intonation have been, so far, rare, isolated and impressionistic, even those from *Gramatica limbii române* ("Romanian Grammar"), edited by Romanian Academy. The contribution of the book lies mainly in describing the norm of Romanian intonation, together with making a series of adjustments to and comments upon prior descriptions. Secondly, certain aspects of intonation are highly relevant for conversation analysis (an example is the intonation of various interruptions), so that the book is important for those interested in transcribing and analyzing spoken Romanian. Quite often, the author resorts to contrastive studies on intonation, accounting for the similarities and differences across various languages by involving logic, pragmatics a.s.o. Given the conventional character of intonation, within which even expressive patterns must be regarded, it becomes apparent why the study of each language intonation is so important (for foreign learners, for public speech and performance, etc.).

Although are novel, on the one hand, and thorough, on the other, the results of intonation analysis can be

approached from various levels of linguistic knowledge, as it is well argued; the book is rich in examples and accessible in presentation (in most of the cases, the changes of tone suggested by means of linear variation of the printed letters).

*Diana Stanciulescu*  
*Institute of Linguistics*  
*"I. Iordan - Al. Rosetti", Bucharest*