General topics editorial

Communication and coexistence in the digital age

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Humberto Maturana Romesín, Chilean biologist and philosopher, winner of the National Science Award in 1994, passed away early May 2021, much to the regret of the national and international academic community. Among his many legacies, his call for dialogue, reflection, and understanding seems crucial for those dedicated to creating social sciences knowledge. In 2012, we had the privilege of his participation inaugurating the first regional conference of the International Communication Association (ICA) held in Latin America, organized along with the Faculty of Communications of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, the unit that publishes *Cuadernos.info*. When with María Elena Gronemeyer, chair of the conference, we visited Professor Maturana to invite him to the opening, he proposed to title his talk with a question: Communication or conversation? In his lecture to the more than 250 researchers from 74 universities who participated in person at the UC-ICA 2012 conference, Professor Maturana referred to language as a symbolic resource to communicate, to its role in "coordinating our coexistence", as well as its ability to allow us to connect with "actions, feelings and emotions". He also stated that communication is an art and stressed the importance of the art of conversation in social cohesion and in the peaceful change of societies:

> "It seems to me that our true issue as humanity nowadays is to choose what we want, even when we talk about communication. Do we want to live together? Or we do not want to? What world do we want to create? Can we talk? And it is very probable that if we are willing to talk we will find that the fundamental things we want are in general the same, and we can discover that those that separate us are in general theories, explanatory conventions, and relate to certain preferences and tastes; that if we talked about them, we would not see anything else, but we want a coexistence in mutual respect, a collaboration, a world desirable for everyone" (Maturana, October 18, 2012).

In the 15 articles that constitute the issue 49 of *Cuadernos.info*, certain of those questions resonate to some extent. Five contributions correspond to the monographic Computational Methods and Big Data in Communication Research, coordinated by guest editors Carlos Arcila, Wouter Van Atteveldt, and Damian Trilling, to whom the journal expresses its deep gratitude.

In the General topics section, Spanish researchers Diana Gavilan and Maria Avello contribute to the empirical study of the differences in mental images evoked by digital advertising due to brand familiarity among university students. It is a relevant contribution to understand how younger generations process advertising information, when increasingly exposed to multiple stimuli, in 360 degrees. The article constitutes an advance to design communicational strategies, specifically in the era of the skippable advertisement (Aslam, Farhat, & Arif, 2021), of the online space and of social networks, those preferred mobile territories of coexistence, more and more used by the new generations, who grow up with a telephone as an extension of themselves and with screens as a room with multiple mirrors.

On the other hand, Raquel Martínez-Sanz and Amaia Arribas-Urrutia investigate the relationship that journalism students and their professors establish with social networks in different universities in Ecuador. The training of new journalists always occurs from intergenerational experiences, although today these are mediated by the consumption and use of new technologies. In a university educational ecosystem impacted by ICTs (Barrios Rubio & Fajardo Valencia, 2017) it is important to explore, as the authors do in their research, how each group living together experiences that, their commonalities, as well as their differences in teaching practice.

The role played by the press and the media in an adequate coverage of the phenomenon of climate change at a global level, considering the particularities of different regions and national contexts, is addressed by Spanish researchers María Carmen Erviti Ilundáin and Bienvenido León Anguiano. They explore whether the coverage made by the Spanish media of the 2015 Paris Climate Summit is different from that of the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. Researching about the information given to the public concerning these summits is relevant and contributes to consider –as indicated in the Decalogue on climate change communication (Fernández Reyes & Mancinas Chávez, 2013)– that it is a systemic process and not isolated events Therefore, a monitoring of the phenomenon is required through duly contextualized information.

As Innerarity and Colomina (2020) state, the digitization of public space has added complexity to our relationship with truth, when information and shared narratives are a precondition of democratic discourse. Along these lines, the

problem of misinformation is addressed by two investigations in this number 49 of *Cuadernos.info*. Both integrate an interesting discussion about the challenge and the different approaches currently used to define fake news.

In the first case, researchers Tamara Vázquez Barrio, Teresa Torrecillas-Lacave, and Rebeca Suárez-Álvarez explore the attitudes of different generations of inhabitants of the community of Madrid towards the consumption of information, to determine what configures the credibility of the news and the degree of trust in the media, as well as the strategies that people use to contrast information in various media, which favors a diverse informational regime.

In the second case, authors Carlos Brenes Peralta, Rolando Pérez Sánchez, and Ignacio Siles González investigate some psychosocial predictors of exposure of the adult population in Costa Rica to fake news, exploring positive associations between authoritarian thinking and the dissemination of this type of information.

This issue also has five articles that study current practices of digital communication of different types and from diverse approaches. Ignacio López Escarcena highlights the ethical problems faced by researchers in digital environments by exposing people's identity, and the potential risk of damaging them. He applies this dilemma to the study of digital communities specialized in cinema and proposes alternative approaches. It is, in our opinion, a contribution that can also be applied to the field of recent studies on the ethics of digital wellbeing, in full development (Burr, Taddeo, & Floridi, 2020).

The use of the audiovisual format by university students to define and build their identity is addressed by Colombian researchers Javier Alejandro Corredor-Aristizábal and Manuel Alberto Corredor-Aristizábal, through Facebook, from the specialty of psychology and the audiovisual.

Communication practices as a vehicle for identification in Argentina are also investigated by Virginia Saenz and Dafne Carp, who analyze the memes created by adolescents as cultural productions about the school and their experiences in this space of daily interaction, as well as with their teachers, starting from an annual contest held in that country. Both articles are interesting scenarios to reflect the interdisciplinary dialogue currently occurring between communications, education, and psychology with the so-called current of digital anthropology and its reflection on the human person (Horst & Miller, 2020).

In the same vein, Beatriz Feijoo and Erika Fernández Gómez study the communication practices of 13 influencers children in Spain, at the beginning of the Covid19 confinement in that country, and the types of content they generated. In addition, they analyze the behavior of brands regarding these specific profiles

of youtubers and instagramers during the same period, as well as the presence of parents, reflecting on advertising ethics in a growing communication phenomenon in that country and in the rest of the world.

Rut Martínez, Pilar Lacasa and Héctor del Castillo study the way in which hundreds of thousands of fans comment and reconstruct the meaning of four television series broadcast by Netflix in Spain on social networks. This, in a context of important changes in television distribution models at a global level, in which Netflix constitutes an emblematic case (Lobato, 2018). The authors employ a double perspective, starting from a big data analysis of online interactions around the series, and then proposing ad hoc steps towards interpretive analyzes to explore meanings, to shed light on some of the limitations of processing automatic data in social sciences, which they name big data opacity .

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