

For the adoption of the pertinence perspective in communication research¹

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Abstract

This essay proposes the notion of pertinence as a guiding element in communication research. If not a long time ago challenges such as defining the “communication object” seemed to be the main difficulties facing communication research, today choosing the best methodological approaches remains an unresolved issue. Even if at a first glance methodological hesitation seems to be negative, looking from another point of view, that of the wealth and diversity of communication research, method issues will show to be positive regarding the full development of the area, including the questions related the definition of the “communication objects”, which are multiple, requiring different methodological approaches. The notion of pertinence developed in this paper should be understood as part of the methodological effort to understand communication and its issues from three interconnected domains: theoretical, empirical and analytical.

Keywords

Pertinence. Communication. Research. Hermeneutics.

1 Putting issues into perspective

According to the Houaiss dictionary (2001, p. 2197) pertinence is “what is related to the subject; what refers to”. A good starting point, therefore, for the reflections we propose here is to think of pertinence as a notion that guides research in Communication, making sure the theoretical, empirical and analytical bases involved in investigations are coherent and point towards a same dimension of possible solutions for the issues at hand.

Also at the Houaiss dictionary we find the adjective pertinent (2001, p. 2.197), which, among other things, means “referring (to something); concerning, related to; according to the purpose it is intended; which has relevance or validity”. The latter meaning is particularly important in our discussion, since the notion of relevance or validity has been, not only in the field of communication research, but anywhere else, something hard to delimit.

Are there unequivocal criteria that can, at the same time, offer guarantees of relevance

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and validity for investigations in the field of Communication? Are we dealing with quantitatively justifiable dimensions, for example, according to statistical limits? Are we dealing with the challenge of constructing arguments that can handle qualitative analyses that will ensure relevance and validity? Or are we dealing with the need of bringing together the quantitative and qualitative domains in order not to leave any room for doubt regarding the relevance and validity of the proposed research? If the latter question is the one that would best describe the field of Communication from the methodological point of view, what would be the pertinent elements and elements of pertinence that would leave no doubt that the right direction was actually taken?

Although these issues have deserved the best efforts of researchers already for almost one century, considering here the 1920's as the time when a field of more "genuine" communication research was established, the previous questions seem to have, on the contrary, led to good answers and have generated certain obstacles. Generally speaking, as a result of the eagerness to be considered a scientific field, research studies in communication often fell in the same trap as other fields of Humanities: finding methodological instruments and the theoretical refinement that would ensure, as in Natural Sciences, the same accuracy supposedly enabled by definition criteria with statistical foundation

but, above all, with the capacity to rationally explain beyond the presence of researchers, mere organizers of data who do not affect or would be affected by their passions and world views. An organization that could ultimately be unbiased regarding directions taken and results.

For those who have a minimum contact with the spiny issues related to the establishment of sciences, their methods and engagements, the reference to its positivist conceptions becomes clear, even if they are often not admitted as such. Many authors have already made historical reviews of this conception; we will just be indicating it. Among many different authors, Boaventura de Souza Santos (1989) made a lucid review of these issues, in addition to pointing to other possibilities to "make science" that inspires us here, specially a hermeneutic view.

This was a summary of the set of questions that will be the background for the reflections we are proposing here which, in turn, will not provide "definite" answers, but will rather be like a good practices guide for research in communication. Firstly, because we propose the notion of pertinence as part of an effort to try to avoid theoretical and methodological conceptions that might suggest something like a panacea for epistemological issues in communication investigations. Secondly, because thinking in terms of pertinence is to take a risk regarding

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what we advocate as being right, i.e., that the field of communication cannot be subjected to a single methodological guideline or to a theory unity claim.

Recognizing the diversity of possible methods and theories to explain and understand the field of communication does not mean that it is impossible to achieve heuristic unity. The latter, however, cannot be ensured if not from a proposition of research that is internally coherent. What stimulates us here is, thus, the idea that attributing coherence would be to achieve pertinence of methods, theories and results, developing an equation that should take into account the interconnections between the theoretical, empirical and analytical domains, as well as their particularities.

What we advocate is that the “objects” of any science do not exist in “pure state” in nature or society, they are rather constructs that acquire meaning and can either be or not pertinent as they are articulated around the theory-*empiria*-analysis triad, a process that involves the interaction with the researcher – an aspect we will discuss again later in this paper. According to Rosseti (2010), this is about breaking with the naïve empiricism, with the idea that the empirical reality of communication can be achieved. The articulation of the various empirical objects of communication – and their broad universe of phenomena, which range from

journalistic media to cinema, from advertising to the modes of organizational communication, among others – is always subject to theoretical perspectives, to different approaches and an institutional dimension.²

Therefore, what will ultimately define an “object” as communicational will be its construction as such, a process that is neither random or relativist, but rather articulated within what Luiz Eduardo Soares (1994), when working in another field of investigation, anthropology, calls the “rigor of indiscipline” which, by the way, is the title of book in which he criticizes notions such as relativism, something which, at first sight, our proposition could be accused of. Working from the perspective of the “rigor of indiscipline” is to recognize, in the first place, that the methods and theories of a given field of investigation are never ready, at the disposal of researchers, as a given that would ensure the good results expected at the end of the research work. It is also about not accepting as canons theoretical and methodological principles that, though widely used, do not correspond to the complex reality one is trying to understand. Above all, it is about recognizing that even in the alleged immutability of the “objects” of natural sciences, there is no such thing as static reality.

Thus, “indiscipline” becomes a kind of iconoclasm in relation to certain traditions that

2 Cf. Braga (2011a) and França (2007).

try to continue exclusively due to its alleged validity precisely because they would be part of unquestionable things. And rigor is exactly the process of constantly reinventing theories and methods which is able, by recognizing the wealth, complexity, dynamism and diversity of reality, to propose the proper directions to be taken in order to elucidate it.

The path that will be taken from now on starts first with the presentation of the articulation of the view of pertinence at every level of the theory--analysis triad. The separation is designed just to discuss in certain details each one of the dimensions, which should be always looked at as being interconnected. Then, the idea of pertinence will be discussed as a link between explanations proposed, which is a feature of natural sciences and the understanding, dear to humanities, according to the hermeneutic perspective of P. Ricoeur (1989) and his dialogue with epistemology.

2 Diversity and historicity of theories

Although theories and paradigms are no confused with one another, particularly because the former, even if at times are found in distinct problems and approaches, can bear the same paradigmatic matrix, in the sense that they are founded on identical or very similar world views, and from the methodological point of view, it is always necessary to check the pertinence of the theories used, trying to reveal the paradigms underlying them. By doing

so, researchers in communication will have the elements that will actually enable them to identify the historicity of the theories they deal with.

Historicity, from this point of view, is no longer just a chronological milestone, becoming part of the more comprehensive field of paradigmatic features, of a “spirit of time” which sometimes makes an up-to-date proposition contain world views which for a long time are no longer able to understand the new dynamics of the reality being examined. But the opposite also applies; “old” theories often add freshness and new perspectives to analyses of contemporary issues.

Particularly in the context of certain theory fashions, we often come across attempts of explanations that do not hold after a more accurate examination of their paradigmatic origins, showing to be “outdated” in relation to the “objects” they aim at clarifying. Dealing with the historicity of theories also provides the possibility of identifying paradigms that act in the underground, taking here the proposition of authors who suggest that these paradigms are often difficult to identify, acting as hidden elements that “trick” researchers (Cf. SANTOS, 1989; HAGUETTE, 1997).

We should also bear in mind that in the construction of the field of research in communication, the (re)discovery of significant theoretical contributions, some of them before the beginning of the 20th century, show that

historicity, if not a mere chronological issue, points to theoretical exchanges of matrices from different time periods. In Communication, two important examples of chronologically “old” theories that help better understand the intricate processes of interaction and mediation implied in communication processes are the perspectives of pragmatism (POGREBINSCHI, 2005) and symbolic interactionism (HAGUETTE, 1997).

To the notion of historicity, which is important in order to avoid the temptation of theory fashions and also to suppress alleged updates of theories which are presented as historical constructions, sometimes established as explanatory possibilities when they actually no longer serve this purpose, we should add the various theories that can inform the field of communication research. The diversity of the theories has to do particularly with two conditions of the field of communication: the interdisciplinarity that marked its establishment and the almost infinite possibility of identifying “objects” from the forms of communication in copresence and the modalities that are mediated by interactional technical devices. In the latter case, social issues are added to complicating technology elements which sometimes blur the sight of the researcher, who surrenders to the fascination which increasingly sophisticated apparatuses can provide, generating confusion regarding social dynamics and the language actually involved in these processes.

This diversity of theories brings up some sensitive issues when they are considered in the framework

of pertinence. Facing so many possible theoretical paths, which one is the most adequate? Is a single theory enough to deal with certain “objects”? If we adopt more than one theoretical perspective to explain the same “object”, what are the chances that they are found to be impertinent?

The issue is made further worse by the fact that communication “objects” are almost always placed in two different domains: in the domain of interactional devices and in the domain of social relationships that take place there, always mediated by language, which in itself is a thorny issue. We are not proposing, and this should be emphasized again, to give methodological answers to these challenges, but rather pointing to the fact that they cannot be ignored when research in communication is conducted. Theories and methods should be coherent. Additionally, although it is very tempting to consider the possibility of a “theoretical ecumenism”, most of the times what is achieved is a claudicating attempt to establish a conversation between theoretical perspectives that are not amenable to certain dialogues according to the required pertinence.

No matter what the theoretical choices are, however, it is essential to avoid the temptations of the grand theoretical narratives which allegedly would account for, as metareports or metatheories, all domains of a given reality. As Jean-François Lyotard (1998) had already cautioned, the claim of the grand theories, under the conviction that they would explain reality in its entirety, did not manage

to achieve results other than compartmentalization and/or theoretical totalitarianisms which, besides not explaining what they claimed they would, generated political risks by excluding everything that did not fit the explanations proposed.

In Communication, even if we do not identify attempts to establish metatheories, certain endeavors that try to explain the globalizing aspects of the “objects”, such as simultaneously encompassing historical, technological and language dimensions involved in a given reality that is being examined, can rarely go beyond the descriptions of these different aspects, even when they are competently performed. One can hardly achieve theoretical explanations that possess the heuristic capacity to pertinently describe all elements in their alleged interconnections. In situations like this, the “objects” are considered pieces that can be manipulated according to the purposes of the researcher, subjected to theoretical explanations that not rarely are absolutely strange to them. It may also be the case, a not less evident risk, that theoretical formulas are repeated that condition results before any analysis is made, turning the latter into mere formality.

The most important thing is to admit that theories cannot intend to provide definite explanations to reality and, above all, recognize the dynamic nature of any reality under investigation which, on the other hand, should serve as an element for the recognition of the condition of historicity of theories. Thus, we have here double historicity, of theories and of the realities that challenge the theories that try to reveal

them. In the words of philosopher Karel Kosik (1986, p. 26, highlight by the author):

Theory is neither the truth, nor the efficacy of a non-theoretical way of appropriating reality; it represents its understanding which, in turn, exerts its influence on the intensity, truthfulness and analogous qualities of the corresponding mode of appropriation.

If our intention here is not to make an inventory of Communication theories, Kosik’s quotation is designed to encapsulate our concern about the relationship between theory and “object”, or reality, which we consider adequate as it even avoids misleading hierarchizations like “theory as that which can really explain reality, to which it would be inferior” or the opposite. Regarding inventories, some authors have for some time already addressed the theories of communication (ECO, 1976; WOLF, 1994, among others), with clarifying readings about the wealth of their theoretical contributions, as well as the constraints to which they have been historically subjected. We will not say anything about paradigms, except that they operate as a kind of world view that direct theories, often in ways we do not realize (SANTOS, 1989), and that they too are subject to historical flows as shown, in sciences in general by Kuhn (1997) and more specifically in the field of Communication, by Quéré (1991).

3 The empirical in its dimensions of material and theoretical *corpora*

The positivist heritage most persistent in the field of Social and Communication research is

certainly found in the inferiority complex they feel towards Natural Sciences, which are essentially empirical, which is understood specially due to the possibility of defining, with statistical rigor, a that can be manipulated and verified for results that can be valid or not based on control in the form of experiments that are replicated under identical laboratory conditions. Quoting Santos (1989) once again, this understanding of the scientific process was part of the possibility to establish sciences, in what the author calls “the first epistemological rupture”, which is roughly represented by the struggle against common sense and the religious thinking. However, even in natural sciences this model is no longer unanimous and can no longer support the complexification which has been experienced in the development of methods and theories lately.

According to Santos (1989), a second epistemological rupture is required, or a “rupture with the rupture”, so that common sense is revalued as it challenges science itself and its methods, but especially so that social and human sciences can now guide scientific processes. From this point of view, change cannot be just epistemological. The author proposes that the second rupture should be promoted based on hermeneutic foundations, favoring a criticism of the very limits and potentialities of epistemological postulates. Above all is the need that humans constitute the privileged focus of the new scientific conception, starting with the negation of the

established idea that humans should dominate nature, not by chance, the fundamental basis of the definition of empirical still widely used in practice by those working in Communication.

If we have a new conception of science in which the empirical comes to be seen from a new perspective, that of understanding, it seems to us that in the field of communication studies we have to find what are the conditions of pertinence to define, based on which, by the way, the research are established. First is the fundamental condition for us to understand the statistical foundations and the sampling objectives, except for some cases of reception research studies, for example, which are not necessarily the best ones in defining the empirical composition of communication research. From the pertinence point of view, there is even a reversal in logic: quantitative foundations will be given by the research problem and by the ambition of the investigation in terms of scope and approach, whether it is defined by time – for example, a certain period of journalistic coverage of a specific subject – or by other criteria.

A second condition is that if the logic of the scientific work is going through a process of transformation, in which “objects” should not be controlled by the investigation, then we should recognize that the endeavor is more modest, aimed at the interaction between researchers and the “object”, as we will discuss later. According to Santos (1989), the dedogmatization of scientific work goes through the recognition that we are

not able to make all-encompassing descriptions of the phenomena we investigate. This inability is an evident fact in the field of communication research for various reasons, ranging from the diversity of possibilities to establish “objects” to the essential factor that it deals with human products and processes which are, therefore, subject to throughout history, to amazingly dynamic transformations and, in one of its possibilities, mediated by interactional devices with a socio-technical basis.

This thorough procedure certainly has to recognize the limitation of the intentions of communication research which, instead of limiting its power to explaining the investigated reality, actually expands it. In such a case, putting things into perspective provides greater acuity. Another gain is the inevitable recognition that scientific explanations cannot account for the old conceptions of entirety, but only provide provisional clues about the investigated reality. A reality which, by the way, in an environment of reflection (GIDDENS, 1991), has in the propositions of science elements for future transformations, which in turn can also be investigated through the changes research itself cause in the “objects”.

From this perspective, Santos (1989) states that one of the essential conditions for the second epistemological rupture lies in the interpretative stance towards the “objects” based on the interconnections between results

previously obtained in scientific investigations related to them and the occasional changes these results caused in the “object” which is now being investigated. Or, even if the investigation is into some “object” that has not been examined before, it is impossible to dismiss the interconnections between scientific, cultural and ideological conceptions (in the sense of social world views) that mark the reality being investigated.

As we can see, the establishment of an in communication research – constituted both of media products and interaction processes without the mediation of socio-technical devices – does not take place through the statistically justifiable perspective like in natural sciences, but through the application of the principle of pertinence which takes into account the reasonability of not aiming at the examination of a preexisting reality in its entirety. Criticisms will always be made regarding some aspect not approached by the research which, in the view of other researchers, should have included this or that variable. Research analysts could also direct their criticism to the superficiality of the analysis – reduced to description when faced with the gigantic nature of the endeavor.

There is an empirical dimension in investigations in Communication that is not always considered as such, but which has to be repositioned from a pertinence point of view. Except for more obvious situations, such as research studies whose

“object” is the theoretical apprehensions in the field of Communication, a kind of mapping, we are used to considering the set of theory texts we refer to as an element that is separate from . There is logic in this attitude, as we consider theory discussions as part of an effort to understand the “object” of research, but not as a component of the “object”. Under this perspective, the “object” does not contain the theory as part of its construction, but should rather be explained by it.

Considering the set of theory texts as part of , as we are suggesting here, is to reaffirm the recognition that methodologies are not constructed separately from the relationships of pertinence with the adopted theories. As proposed by Braga (2011b), there are at least four levels of utilization of theoretical assumptions in a research study: a) the choice of perspective; b) the exploration of previously established knowledge; c) theoretical tensions of the object; d) and finally, reviews and theoretical complements stemming from research results.

In the framework of pertinence relationships, each of these levels is greatly affected by the construction of the , and also provides the bases for its choice, limitation, description and analysis. The choice of theoretical assumptions is, therefore, part of the process of establishing the , constituting the initial dynamics of the research study (the definition of the base reference, of “established” theories), of the

analytical and interpretative movement (the use of some assumptions and the dismissal of others), as well as the research conclusion (which establishes a dialogue between all theoretical levels that have already been mobilized).

4 Analysis during the research process

Incompatibility between theories, methods and analysis, fragility, inconsistency, brevity and other issues are recurrent criticisms made to the inquiries into the “objects” made in theses and dissertations in the field of communication produced in Brazil. The causes seem to be concentrated on three areas. The overwhelming focus on theory-related discussions when compared to the analytical dimensions of research is certainly still the greatest challenge facing research in communication. Obviously, this is not only about a mere reversal of priority, in which the problem would be solved by favoring analysis. The issue is related to pertinence, since the excessive extension of theory-related discussions usually reflects, paradoxically, the lack of maturity of the analytical potential of the researcher.

Factors such as time to complete the research undoubtedly cannot be ruled out as one of the causes of this problem, if we consider the reality of funded master and doctoral studies and research that must be completed within

schedules controlled by graduate programs and funding agencies. The counterpart of the exaggerated extension of theory-related discussions is the excessive size of the . According to Braga (2011b, p. 22):

A mistake people sometimes make is to conduct a survey that is too comprehensive and diverse of poorly systematized data, which later cannot be interpreted or leads to an information chaos that is hard to order as to enable inferences to be made.

The imbalance seems to actually lie in the inability to size the research, for example, with empirical that cannot be properly analyzed within the available time or even in the extent of the work, considering the limits imposed to dissertations, theses and other types of research studies.

In addition to issues of sizing, there is also a mismatch between the underlying theory and the intended analysis, which leads to different types of impertinences. One of them leads, in addition to analyses that are not able to reflect the wealth of material available to the researcher, to analytical approaches that establish non-existing connections with theories. For example, by forcing the “object” to respond exactly according to the hypotheses raised in the beginning of the investigation, with the prevalence of linear, mechanical, sometimes even Manichaeian readings that are not able to develop an awareness of the cleavages, nuances and dark points of the materials being examined which the research endeavor should take into account.

Another important factor lies in the very definition of the type of investigation; the mistake is often made to think that simply because comparative analyses are performed, they will ensure a greater depth and better quality research. When a comparative analysis is proposed, the first check of pertinence relates to the possibilities of comparing materials that have elements in common. How can we compare printed and television texts, which among so many differences, present problems such as the physical dimensions of the printed text (total size occupied by the printed area) and time dimensions (the time dedicated compared to the whole television program schedule) in addition, of course, to all the nuances of language that separate them?

It is possible to make comparisons between the same types of media, such as, for example, a morning news program with a night news program, whose editorial propositions, audience and language are different. One can precisely look for these differences, but the risk will always be to face questions such as “but if this is already part of the comparison assumption, what is the contribution this research has to give”? Of course, it might be pertinent to carry out a comparative analysis of the coverage of a same subject by a sensationalist newspaper and a reference newspaper trying, for example, to understand the ethical dimensions involved in the interactions between journalists and the other social players. However, additional care

should be taken when looking for pertinence under these circumstances. One should never start a comparative analysis endeavor under the misleading argument that it would expand our knowledge of the phenomenon being investigated by automatically expanding the and the illusion that the comparison would guarantee heuristic amplitude.

Deciding on quantitative or qualitative analyses is the third challenge that seems to be important in our view, one that cannot simply be solved through the most obvious way, that of reconciliation between both, as if that would enable the methodological challenge to be overcome. Excellent descriptive research can be conducted with an exclusively quantitative basis when, for example, the intention is to establish a database, to find recurrences, by analyzing content (LEAL; ANTUNES, 2011) or in surveys that precede qualitative approaches, preparing the stage for better qualified research.

Therefore, we should be aware of both the potentials and limitations of the methodology adopted, not trying to make, for example, a content analysis to provide interpretations that can only be provided by a qualitative analysis. Likewise, we should bear in mind that even if it is just for practical purposes, quantifications and measurements are inevitable to build a , whether it is constituted of a cinematographic record (which will require a certain degree of editing) or a

set of focus groups (with an X number of participants) or even a of journalistic texts (from a given time interval or according to a Y number of issues).

Regarding qualitative analysis, the most common impertinences are usually related to the simplifying idea that they are mere speculations around the “object”, a collection of subjective impressions. It is commonplace to find in “research studies” on the influences of Brazilian television in the 1970’s and 1980’s, particularly on telenovelas that the latter had never been actually watched, so that ultimately all there was were biased “analyses” by someone who, behind the research mask, insinuates every sort of bitter remarks against a “low level cultural product, one that manipulates the ignorant masses”. Bad faith can be the loyal companion in alleged qualitative analysis, but thinking that “objects” are easy to read is not good either.

Since quantitative research has been met with strong resistance, particularly at a recent time in the field of communication studies, an illusion of qualitative research has been created as a panacea that will save investigations in communication. We should be cautious about this posture, recognizing that in qualitative research it is prudent to have a quantification that allows for a better visualization of the issue at hand. And the most important thing when we are dealing with qualitative analyses is that they

do not mean mere impressions, they are rather the result of a necessary skill and acuity to perceive the complexity of the “object” under investigation.

At all these levels and movements in the analytical framework of research in Communication, the idea of pertinence comes into play as an element that organizes procedures, one that could prevent the subsumption of inquiries to theory-related discussions, issues of sizing or inadequate management of different types of analyses.

5 To conclude, hermeneutics

Proposing to consider the issue of pertinence from the hermeneutic point of view means not so much to offer a methodological guide with preexisting categories – as Thompson (1995) did, in a movement that inevitably reduces what hermeneutics proposes – but rather to present a line whose function is to bring together the theoretical, empirical and analytical domains of research in communication so that the investigation process results in a productive synthesis of the heterogeneity of the elements that make it up, in such a way that the final fabric can show a clearer image or form of the “object” at hand.

The adoption of the pertinence perspective means, for us, from the point of view of an epistemology of the field, to promote a dialogue between the explanation propositions, coming

from natural sciences, and understanding propositions, from human sciences. A hermeneutics committed to interpreting the world, as P. Ricoeur would say (1989) does not share a dualism or monism regarding these two processes. Taking this approach as a basis, we understand that investigations in the field of Communication should aim at explaining communication phenomena and processes, but also make an effort to understand them in their complexity, closing what the author calls the “hermeneutic loop”.

Understanding our “objects” is, on the one hand, the non-methodical moment that precedes and sets limits to explanation, bringing intersubjectivity to the scene. On the other hand understanding is also “entirely by the set of explanatory procedures it precedes and follows” (RICOEUR, 1989, p. 211, highlights by the author). Explanation, in turn, makes understanding advance by using the legs of objectivity. While the former mobilizes intersubjectivities, common sense, preconceptions and even sensations and affections to conduct our research, from the choice of the “object” and theories to observation, the latter weighs all these elements in the scale of reasonability and validity.

Therefore, it seems to us that only by adopting the idea of pertinence as the cornerstone of our research, by constantly comparing and modeling their different scopes and movements,

we will be able to understand the dynamics of communication processes and explain them without totalizing and megalomaniac intentions. In the words of Ricoeur (1989), who takes the paradigm of reading to discuss the hermeneutic perspective as an epistemological alternative to humanities, “one interpretation should not only be probable, but more probable than another one” (RICOEUR, 1989, p. 203). This means that we cannot expect to develop an undisputed interpretation of the “objects” we choose, we should pursue the one that fits best, the one which, therefore, is pertinent, to the nuances and regularities of communication processes.

Therefore, hermeneutic virtuosity lies in the integration of theoretical, empirical and analytical dimensions involved in every research gesture, providing the interactional dynamics in which objects lose their quotation marks – which were used so far to indicate a certain hesitation regarding their real meaning – precisely because they are recognized as subjects in a constant dialogue with the researcher and not simply targets of gross manipulations.

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Pela adoção da perspectiva da pertinência em pesquisas comunicacionais

Resumo

Este artigo, de natureza ensaística, propõe a noção de pertinência como elemento balizador em pesquisas comunicacionais. O ponto de partida é que se, há pouco tempo, desafios como a definição do “objeto da comunicação” pareciam indicar os principais percalços para as pesquisas comunicacionais, hoje é a escolha dos melhores caminhos metodológicos a trilhar que permanece em aberto. Se à primeira vista, no entanto, um titubear metodológico pode parecer negativo, visto sob outro prisma, o da riqueza e diversidade das pesquisas comunicacionais, as questões de método aparecerão positivamente como o amadurecimento da área, inclusive quanto a quais são seus “objetos”, afinal, múltiplos e exigindo variadas abordagens metodológicas. A noção de pertinência que aqui desenvolvemos deve ser entendida como parte do esforço metodológico de compreensão da comunicação e suas problemáticas, a partir de três dimensões interconectadas: teórica, empírica e analítica.

Palavras-chave

Pertinência. Comunicação. Pesquisa. Hermenêutica.

La adopción de la perspectiva de la pertinencia en las investigaciones comunicacionales

Resumen

Este artículo, de naturaleza ensayística, propone la noción de pertinencia como un elemento orientador para las investigaciones en Comunicación. El punto de partida es el siguiente: si hace poco tiempo desafíos tales como la definición de “objeto de la comunicación” parecían indicar las principales dificultades para las investigaciones comunicacionales; hoy, la elección por los mejores caminos metodológicos a seguir permanece abierta. Sin embargo, si a primera vista, un titubear metodológico puede parecer negativo; visto desde otro prisma, el de la riqueza y diversidad de las investigaciones comunicacionales, los cuestionamientos sobre el método aparecerán positivamente indicando cierta madurez en el área, incluso en relación a cuáles son sus objetos – que son múltiples y exigen variados abordajes metodológicos. La noción de pertinencia que aquí desarrollamos debe ser entendida como parte del esfuerzo metodológico de comprensión de la Comunicación y sus problemáticas, a partir de tres dimensiones interconectadas: teórica, empírica y analítica.

Palabras claves

Pertinencia. Comunicación.
Investigación. Hermenêutica.

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