

## **Triennial Report: Research and Teaching Activities (2000-2003)**

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In the triennial period 2000-03, our research has focused on three main research threads.

1. A first thread has investigated issues relating to *modalities of communication* in relation to the various expression forms of expression adopted: written, oral, and the transformation of production norms in connection with the adoption of new technologies in this connection. In particular, the relationship between the semiotic nature of the medium supporting such forms of expression (i.e. writing vs. orality, writing vs. multimedia technologies), and the actual systems of social and interpersonal norms that regulate canonical forms of communication in these media. There are especially two discursive regimes in which this problem occurs with particular regularity and centrality: in popularizing scientific discourse and in science pedagogy and teaching. In both these cases transmission and communication of knowledge is bound by a double system of norms: that of the socio-cultural community of reference (eg rules of discourse defined as 'scientific' or the parameters of pedagogical discourse) and those more specific norms related to the semiotic organization of a given discourse register (the scientific text, multimedia communication, interaction via the Internet, etc.).

On these themes a number of articles and a volume edited by the author have been published in the course of this triennial period. The research project, which is continuing with particular focus on issues regarding the integration of new communication technologies in educational and training settings: in the development and evaluation of new curricula, study programs, teaching materials and teaching forms in digital virtual environments, was started up already in 2003 and is to be incorporated in 2004 into the Online Degree Course in Communication and Marketing.

In the near future it is mainly in this area that our research is to be focused, extending our analysis of the transformation and development of systems of norms for scientific communication to cover phenomena that arise with the integration of new digital communication technologies in higher education settings of this kind.

2. Alongside this main line of research, we have also carried out in-depth studies of issues relating to forms of *social communication in traditional and new media* (journalism online). In particular, we analyzed a case of media treatment of a sports conflict, comparing how discursive perspectives on one and the same event on the part

of three different media cultures (Italian, Swedish, Danish) were constructed. This work is part of a larger research project in a combined socio-semiotic and cultural semiotics framework aimed at examining in depth institutionalized forms of social communication in different European cultures (in particular northern Europe vs. Mediterranean countries).

A further development of this line of research is to be a project, at present in an initial programming phase, aimed at examining the semiotics of institutional and corporate organization, with particular focus on the internationalization of domestic institutions and companies, especially small and medium-sized local enterprises.

3. A third line of research has addressed problems of a more theoretical character, examining the theme, much discussed today, of the *mind-body-environment relationship*. In contemporary thought, this problem lies not only at the heart of the broader semiotic debate, but also of discussions in various philosophical domains, and also in the cognitive sciences and neurosciences. In semiotics in particular, this theme has initiated a series of reflections on the roles of embodiment, perception, and sensibility in the construction of meaning. This research in particular takes account of the contribution of the philosophical and cognitive semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce, deemed crucial for a fruitful theoretical definition of this particular problem.

## **Publications**

2001, (ed.), *The Semiotics of Writing: Transdisciplinary Perspectives on the Technology of Writing*, Turnhout: Brepols.

"Introduction", in 2001 Coppock (ed.), *The Semiotics of Writing*, Turnhout: Brepols: 7-35;

"Identity, audience research and writing," in Coppock, 2001 (ed.), *The Semiotics of Writing*, Brepols: 37-62

2002, "Charles Sanders Peirce and the Mind-Body-World Relation, VS 92/93 2002: 135-167, also published online, as Research Report 03-4, of the Department of Social Sciences, Cognitive and Quantitative, Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia

2003, "Semiotica dei nuovi media e nuove modalità di formazione" 94/95/96 VS, 2003: 71-82, also published online, as Research Report 03-13, Department of Social Cognitive and Quantitative Science, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

In press, "Parliamo di Jens: il trattamento mediatico d'un conflitto di interesse sportivo" in *Guerra di Segni*, Proceedings of the National Congress of the Italian Association of Semiotic Studies,

Castiglioncello, 8-10 November 2002. Also online, as Research Report 03-11, Department of Social Cognitive and Quantitative Science, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

### **Participation in research projects and conferences**

In 2001 participated with Sandro Rubichi and Cesare Fantuzzi (Faculty of Engineering, Reggio Emilia) in development of an industrial research project on communication and human-machine interaction in cooperation with the enterprise New Holland, Modena.

In 2002 participated in development of an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the launch of a European Network of Excellence: CONVERGENET, convergence of old and new media and social development and culture. Coordinator: Universitetet i Oslo, Norway.

In 2002 championed the development of an application for European funding for a feasibility study for a European Joint Master in Social Communication, with Høgskolen i Agder, Norway, Universidad di Valencia, Spain, Universitet Posnan, Poland.

In 2004 participated in preparation of an application for research funding for the national COFIN research project "Semiotica del turismo" coordinated by the University of Bologna, in cooperation with the Universities of Bergamo, Palermo, Rome and Siena.

Has also participated, with presentations or as discussant at the round tables in several national and international conferences held at the Universities of San Marino, Bologna, Messina, Trondheim Norway, and at Castiglioncello, Rimini and Rossena.

### **Courses Taught:**

In the academic year 2000/2001 taught (contract) courses in Semiology of Cinema and audiovisual media (70 hrs) and Theories and Techniques of New Media (without remuneration, 60 hours) and semiotics (supplemental, with remuneration, 70 hours) for the Degree Course in Communication Science at the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy (Reggio Emilia), UNIMORE; in the academic year 2001/2002 taught Semiotics (60 hours) for the Degree Course in Communication Science at the Faculty of Communication and Economic Science (the Reggio Emilia), UNIMORE; in the academic years 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 taught Semiotics (60 hours), both for the Degree Course in Communication and Economic Science, and for the Degree Course in Communication and Marketing of the Faculty of Communication and Economic Science (Reggio Emilia), UNIMORE

### **Organizational Responsibilities:**

In the academic years 2001-2003: Delegate for International Relations for the Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Economic Science; has served on various faculty committees ( 'rules and norms', stage, library). At present member of the Collegiate Committee of the Doctorate in Theoretical and Applied Social Sciences; and supplementary member of the Examination Board of this same Doctorate. President of the polling station for the election of representatives of university researchers and currently representative for university researchers on the Faculty and Departmental Boards.