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A science of human communications and George Gerbner's theory

Yoshiyasu Uno

“The state of communication research” is far from ‘withering away’ as Bernard Berelson suggested in the Spring 1959 Public Opinion Quarterly. Instead, a new science of human communications is coming into being. The human communications are central processes of human interactions to which sociologists’ or social psychologists’ main concerns are directed.

George Gerbner suggests that there has been two types of concerns in communication research from its beginning. He calls these the tactical and strategic. The tactical concern revolves around ‘effectiveness’ as measured by conventional goals and standards. The strategic concern raises questions about nature of goals and standards themselves. The latter approach must be “critical, comparative, systems-oriented, historical in its insights, empirical in its assessment of the evidence, independent of any one social and industrial system in its policy and value orientation, and is concerned with an emergent aspect of the dynamics of human survival and welfare from a coherent and unique point of view”.

He also points out the humanizing functions of communication such as 1. the art function of communication, 2. the science function of communication, 3. the administration function of communication.