

ing favorable toward American advertising were (a) the enjoyment it provides personally, (b) the assist it gives to business in this country, and (c) the helpful amount of specific product information it contains.

On the other hand, the most salient reasons for others disliking advertising were (a) the large amount of it, (b) its intrusiveness, (c) the high level of bias or untruth, (d) the substantial annoyance or boredom factor, (e) the interruption of entertainment, and (f) the fact that many advertising messages are insulting to intelligence.

More students expressed personal favorability toward advertising than unfavorability.

These results may well be of interest to scholars and businessmen concerned with current cross-cultural perceptions of American institutions.

Comprehension and Interest of Radio Programs

By Osmo A. Wiio
and Kaarle Nordenstreng

► The readability of written messages has been the subject of many studies but little is known of the comprehension or listenability of spoken messages. The purpose of this study was to find out to what extent the structural characteristics of spoken language correlate with the comprehension of messages. The research method used was Wilson L. Taylor's "cloze procedure," in which parts of the messages are deleted and the subjects try to guess the missing parts.¹ Dickens and Williams² have shown that the cloze procedure is a useful and reliable

method of measuring the comprehension of spoken language. The most suitable technique for the study was chosen after a preliminary test with 24 university students.

Method

Thirty-five excerpts of about two minutes each were copied from most speech programs broadcast on two consecutive June days by the Finnish Broadcasting Corporation. Thus 35 test passages were obtained; in addition, there were 5 control passages, of which readability cloze scores (with student subjects) were already available.

Every eighth word was deleted, the total number of the deletions in each passage being 15 words, and substituted with a "white noise" of equal length. The subjects were to guess the missing words; in addition, they had to fill a special "connotative test," in which they were asked to evaluate the relative difficulty of each test passage according to a five-step scale. A similar scale was also used to test the interest aroused by the program.

The subjects were 54 students participating in a sound and picture controller course arranged by the FBC. A homogeneous group was selected because the main purpose was to study the comprehension of the types of messages regardless of the educational or occupational level of the subjects. This aspect was, however, included in the study as a separate experiment with 19 persons of lower education.

The tests were administered to the group of students in four 90-minute sessions. The passages were played three times, and 10 pauses of 5 seconds were inserted in the passages to give the subjects time to write down their answers. The experiment with 19 persons took place in one session, and it

¹ W. L. Taylor, "Cloze Procedure: A New Tool for Measuring Readability," *JOURNALISM QUARTERLY* 30:415-33 (1953).

² M. Dickens and F. Williams: "An Experimental Application of 'Cloze' Procedure and Attitude Measures to Listening Comprehension," *Speech Monographs*, 31:103-08 (1964).

included seven passages picked at random from among the 40 test passages.

Findings

The cloze scores, i.e. the number of the right guesses for each test and person, and the means of the individual cloze scores for each passage were computed. The means varied between 11% and 61% for the students and between 3% and 42% for the control group. The "total mean" of the mean scores of all the passages was 33% (on the average 5 words right out of 15) for the students and 20% for the control group.

Comparison of the comprehension estimates given by the cloze score with the judged comprehension score showed that the correlation was not significant for the students or for the control group. On the other hand, the correlation between the two judgments (comprehension and interest scales) was significant for both groups ($r = .63$ for the students and $r = .88$ for the control group).

The cloze scores were then correlated with five message variables, which were:

- 1) Number of sentences per 100 words.
- 2) Modification ratio (100 x adjectives + adverbs / nouns + verbs).
- 3) Long words, i.e. the number of the words with a root of 4 or more syllables per 100 words.
- 4) Easy words from a list of the 600 most common words used by Finnish school children.
- 5) Words per minute.

The following correlations were found between the cloze score means and the message variables (students):

Sentences	.03
Modification ratio	-.19
Long words	.00
Easy words	-.13
Words/minute	-.01

No significant correlations were found; the correlation between the cloze score and the modification ratio

was nearly significant. A similar but more significant correlation was found by one of the writers in the analysis of written messages. This means that the more adjectives and adverbs the spoken message contains the more difficult it is.

A regression analysis gave the variables the following order of relative importance: modification ratio, words per minute, sentence length, easy words, and long words. The formula does not, however, reach the level of significance, and listenability can not be predicted with the variables available.

The students and the control group comprehended the corresponding test passages in a very similar way; the control group reached a lower level of comprehension but the rank order correlation between the two cloze scores was .96.

Five experienced program editors of the broadcasting corporation also judged the 40 test passages through a connotative test. The original tapes without deletions were played to them. The correlations between their judgments and the cloze scores or comprehension judgments of the two test groups are not significant. On the other hand, the correlations between the interest judgments of the editors and those of the test groups are significant ($r = .48 - .64$). This shows that the program editors judge the interest aroused by the program quite well but can only poorly predict its comprehension by the listeners (both the *real* comprehension as measured by the "cloze procedure" and subjective *impression* of the comprehension as measured by the "connotative test").

Conclusions

In an earlier study (with a similar test and group), which was concerned with written messages, one of the writers found a correlation of .56 between the judged comprehension and the cloze score.³ In the present study the same correlation was not significant.

► Dr. Wiio is professor of organization theory at Helsinki University of Business Administration. Dr. Nordenstreng is head of research at the Finnish Broadcasting Company. Both of the writers are associated with Institute of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Tampere, Finland.

The five "control passages" also suggested that written and spoken messages produce different types of comprehension, because the readability and listenability scores did not correlate. It seems that there is a difference between spoken and written messages: a speaker may create a feeling of understanding without his message being really understood. In writing this is more difficult: written language is more denotative and less connotative than spoken language.

In the present study, the correlation between interest and comprehension was significant, while in the previous tests with written messages it was not so. It seems that it is more difficult to separate the two things—interest and comprehension—in a spoken message than in a written message, and it becomes even more difficult when persons with lower education are concerned. The results support those obtained by Trenaman through a study of the comprehension of television programs of the BBC.⁴ He found out that as for persons with a high level of education the linguistic elements of the message are important for comprehension while for persons with a lower level of education the content factors are of greater importance. For persons with low education the degree of dramatisation and concreteness are the most important elements of comprehension.

The results also suggest that the program editors seem to value the interest aspect of the message so much that they misjudge its comprehension.

³ Osmo A. Wiio, *Readability, Comprehension and Readership* (Acta Universitatis Tamperensis, Ser. A, 1968).

⁴ J. M. Trenaman, *Communication and Comprehension* (Longmans, 1967) p. 110.

One Man's Philosophy

► If McLuhan doesn't believe in the printed word he should leave books to hell alone.—ERIC HOFER.

Conflict-Cooperation Content in 14 Black Newspapers

By John D. Stevens

► Black newspapers in the United States emphasize racial harmony more than racial conflict. They stress cooperation both among blacks and between the races.

A content analysis confirmed these findings. Four issues of each of 14 black newspapers published during the first quarter of 1970 were sampled.¹

General news stories of a relational nature were analyzed, adopting techniques and categories developed by Edward R. Cony in a study of the conflict and cooperation content of five metropolitan dailies.² A relational story is one whose main concern is a report on the activities of individuals or groups, when these activities bring them into contact with others.

The news story was the unit of analysis, but all calculations were based on column inches devoted to the story, headline and any illustrations. Categories were designed to be mutually exclusive; each story was assigned to one category only. Stories were not included in which racial identity of the participants was not clear.

Definitions of categories were:

Economic—Conflict and cooperation within or between groups and individuals which is primarily economic in nature.

Political—Conflict and cooperation of a partisan (e.g., Democratic, Democratic versus Republican) nature.

Governmental—Conflict and cooperation within government at any

¹ Papers in the sample were the Birmingham Times, Chicago Courier, Chicago Defender, Cleveland Call and Post, Detroit Michigan Chronicle, Durham Carolina Times, Los Angeles Sentinel, Milwaukee Star, New Orleans Louisiana Weekly, New York Amsterdam News, Norfolk Journal and Guide, Philadelphia Tribune, Pittsburgh Courier and Washington Informer.

² Edward R. Cony, "Conflict-Cooperation Content of Five American Dailies," JOURNALISM QUARTERLY 30:1 (Winter 1953) pp. 15-22.

TABLE 1

Conflict-Cooperation Emphasis in 14 Black Papers, Measured in Column Inches

	Conflict				Cooperation				Grand Totals
	Bl-Bl	Bl-Wh	Wh-Wh	Total	Bl-Bl	Bl-Wh	Wh-Wh	Total	
Economic	147	790	49	986	1485	1777	8	2670	3656
Political	158	473	69	700	486	490	0	976	1676
Governmental	111	1537	88	1736	239	1007	28	1274	3010
Social	1000	3360	125	4485	3374	3537	116	7027	11512
Int'l.	88	102	97	287	127	222	0	349	636
TOTALS	1504	6262	428	8194	5711	6433	152	12296	20490

TABLE 2

Percentage of Space Devoted to Conflict-Cooperation in 14 Black Papers and in 5 Metropolitan Dailies

	Black	Metros
Economic	17.8%	16.3%
Political	8.2	13.7
Governmental	14.7	16.7
Social	56.2	39.6
International	3.1	13.7
TOTALS	100.0%	100.0%

level or between such governmental units and individuals or groups.

Social—Conflict and cooperation in education, welfare, personal and family relations, science and the professions, juvenile problems and crime.

International—Conflict and cooperation in which more than one nation is involved.

Major findings are shown in Table 1.

The almost total lack of interest in all-white news and in international news of any kind is understandable, considering the audience for and the supplemental nature of the black newspaper. Presumably, those readers who want such information can get it from the non-ethnic media. More surprising is the attention on interracial stories, compared with all-black stories. There is nearly four times as much space devoted to black-white conflict as to black-black conflict, but there also is more space given to black-white cooperation than to black-black cooperation.

Of the total space devoted to re-

lational stories in the 14 newspapers, three-fifths stressed cooperation, while the rest emphasized conflict. Cony, using the paragraph as his unit, found almost exactly the reverse emphasis in the metropolitan dailies; three-fifths of his paragraphs emphasized conflict.

Among the black newspapers, there was more space devoted to cooperation than to conflict in four of the five categories, the exception being governmental. Most of this conflict (and cooperation) was interracial. That is understandable enough, considering the relatively small percentage of public officials who are black.

Table 2 compares Cony's findings for the five categories with similar figures for the 14 black papers. The similarities in content are more striking than the contrasts. The heavier emphasis in the metropolitan papers in political news may reflect the fact that Cony's study covered the late spring of a presidential election year while the black papers were surveyed during a quiet political season.

The most obvious difference is that the black papers carried 15 per cent more social category news than did the dailies. This was predominately crime news in both studies. Black papers have been criticized for their sensational treatment of crime news, but the papers cover news from inner-city areas where crime rates are high. Perhaps their content is an inevitable re-

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