



History Section

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This abstract book includes original abstracts of papers scheduled to be presented at
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¹We have endeavoured to ensure that these are the abstracts of the papers that will be presented at the conference. Nevertheless, due to cancellations, additions and other factors, abstracts may be included here that will not be presented and abstracts that are presented may not be included.

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this context, the research here has stretched their involvement to the 1930s with their employment to operate the Powers-Samas accounting machines.

Regarded as only needing physical dexterity, the computer keypunchers of the 1960s were thought only as “lesser brains.”⁸⁰ But, responding to the question of the working with the “electronic brain,” Mabel Chong at the NCR Service Bureau stated in 1964: “Machines are very obedient...But, if you are temperamental, they’re temperamental too.”⁸¹ Critical to the imaginations of data colonial and post-colonial modernity women operators were featured alongside with both the increasingly glamourized advertisements of NCR machines as well as the new skyscrapers of banks and office towers of the 1960s. In computer historiographies, this endeavour represents part of the global efforts in restoring the forgotten local presence of women facing the new machines in history.

Keywords

Accounting machines, Malaya, data colonial modernity, Gendering computer historiography

Media discourse on scientific knowledge: the atomic bomb in Portuguese media - uncertainty or the lack of

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Submission ID

4084

Abstract

The scientific knowledge is one based on uncertainty, not only on its basis for research, its consequential discoveries but also on its communication. The mere definition of uncertainty and its connection to something that is inherently unknown, or at least unknown without a doubt, translates into the broad sense that the concept partakes, more so in scientific terms. As so “there has been [a] debate in science communication research and practice about how and to what effect uncertainty may be communicated”(Hendriks & Jucks, 2020: 401). Should scientific knowledge be communicated when it has any level of uncertainty? When communicated, does it leads to clarity or uncertainty?

Against the premise that uncertainty is part of the scientific knowledge and that the media are tools to share such information, this research aims to understand how uncertainty or the lack of it has prevailed in the coverage of Portuguese newspapers regarding the development and use of the atomic bomb in 1945 and its potential reach to the population.

When the Second World War outbreak Portugal was living under the authoritarian regime Estado Novo, lead by António de Oliveira Salazar. Throughout the conflict the regime used the country’s geographical position, old alliances, and ideological affiliation to guaranty its stance throughout its

duration shifting from "geometric neutrality" to "collaborative neutrality" (Rosas, 1998). A position that made Portugal a perfect ground for the propaganda of both sides of the war (Telo, 1990). Simultaneously, the regimes Censorship Office operated along with the Secretariat for National Propaganda to conveying the idea of what was truth or not, and regulate what was newsworthy (Ribeiro, 2014), creating "an alternative reality" on an overall "patriotic press"(Ribeiro, 2017).

At the same time, the social and economic context of Portugal in the 1930-1940's was that of a country highly agricultural, with an industry that represented less than 20% of its production levels (Pimenta et al., 2001) and vastly dependent on foreigner markets. Furthermore, a country where the population presented a demographic growth of 1,32% yearly until the end of the war (Rosas, 1998) but with literacy levels remaining under 50% despite governmental efforts (Candeias & Simões, 1999).

This background displays the reality of Portugal by the end of the war: a country that was indeed affected by the conflict, although not officially taking part of it, with a media ecosystem controlled by censorship and propaganda, and a population with scarce levels of literacy. Accordingly, the Portuguese public opinion or knowledge regarding the conflict and its development was considered as non-existent or controllable: "the phenomenon of public discussion of the conflict is reduced to small groups at dissonance with the majority of the population, without any political capacity, easily controlled and without any significant role in the equidistant measures that the head of government takes"(Barros, 1993: 9). In view of this context, one could wonder to what extent was it relevant to portray the development and impact of the atomic bomb in the media? At the same time, it can be speculated if the discourse was one that portrayed certainty or uncertainty or, even, if it was in line with the regimes propaganda of neutrality?

Against this backdrop, this research takes as primary corpus of analysis the newspapers O Século and Diário de Notícias (national publications with the largest circulation), Diário da Manhã (newspaper of União Nacional, the regimes party), Diário de Lisboa and Primeiro de Janeiro (local newspapers of the larger cities in Portugal). By selecting the news regarding the scientific discoveries, the launch and the aftermath of the atomic bomb in the months of August and September 1945 and through journalistic and content analysis, the research takes a comparative approach to understand how the coverage both in the national and local newspapers was conducted, how the narrative of scientific and military certainty fluctuates with that of uncertainty and how it is connected to the regimes agenda.

Preliminary findings have determined not only that the subject took relevance in the news coverage, but also that there is an attempt to create a national proximity to the event by reportage that conveys the importance of the Portuguese scientific discoveries to the final development of the atomic bomb. Although unclear about the true contribution of the Portuguese scientists, there is throughout the weeks a rise in uncertainty on the use of such weaponry. The preliminary analysis allowed us to identify a political assertion for the deployment of the atomic bomb, but an increase uncertainty of the legitimacy on its use, of its impact in the safety of the nations and the long term effect both on humans and the environment. As the weeks move on from the 6th and 9th of August, one can find an increase speculation of the use of the bomb and the scientific applications and impact of the

discoveries. From the certainty that the “the bomb doesn’t have durable radioactive effects”(Diário de notícias, 11th August) and a new era for humankind is arising with the atomic age, comes the uncertainty of the threat of an impending world catastrophe and of the political and safety consequences that can come from the atomic weaponisation of the nations.

Going back to the initial premise that uncertainty is inherent to scientific knowledge and correspondingly to the communication of the information it relates to, the reportage of the atomic bomb in the first months of its use shows not only a degree of scientific uncertainty that still prevails until today, but also an alignment with the governments agenda of neutrality and the allies political certainty and legitimacy for its use.

Keywords

Newspapers, Censorship, Estado Novo, Uncertainty, Second World War, Atomic Bomb

Toward Digital Linguistic Justice: A Critical Study of Data Practices in Latin American Language Technology Development

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4088

Abstract

The proliferation of language technologies, including chatbots, speech-to-text systems, and machine translation, has revealed significant biases adversely affecting speakers of minoritized languages, particularly in the Global South. These biases stem in part from technology development practices that prioritize languages with extensive digital textual representation, leading to digital exclusion for speakers of non-dominant and minoritized languages (Joshi, et al., 2021; Gururangan, 2022). Recognizing the roots of these inequities, scholars point to data collection, curation, and classification phases as critical junctures where biases emerge, often replicating colonial extraction processes and disregarding cultural contexts (Bird, 2020; Blodgett, et al., 2020; Dodge, et al., 2021; Lau, 2021).

This paper investigates these issues through a focus on Latin American Indigenous languages, utilizing a combination of archival research and ethnographic methods. The focus is on the question of how these minoritized languages become data in the first place, and what this means for linguistic diversity and language justice in the digital environment today. Research in archival collections documenting the transition from analog to digital methods in linguistic anthropology highlights the sociopolitical factors informing the transformation of Indigenous languages into digital data and early computational approaches to working with such texts. Ethnographic work examining the development of a digital repository of Mesoamerican language content builds upon this historical research to investigate the ongoing influence of historical data practices on