Transparency report – June 2024

As a platform that shares research and fosters exchange, it is also our responsibility to create a discrimination-free environment to provide a positive space for all readers, authors, and people included in or affected by the published work. In Our Commitment Against Discrimination we clearly state our stance and values. Nonetheless, this does not mean that we are free of biases and making mistakes. We believe the impact we have matters more than our intentions. To make our mistakes and learning transparent, we decided to regularly publish transparency reports. Their aim is to share what we have learned, how we adapted, and what measures we are taking to decrease the likelihood of a similar situation to occur again.

We warmly invite you to contact us with any comments regarding this report or if you noticed anything we can improve on.

Actions:

The main aspect of the Cognitive Science Student Journal is our website and everything we publish there. Last year the website was newly developed and its accessibility influenced many decisions. When having a 'fresh' look at the website this year's website team noticed areas of improvement. In particular, the team worked on the website navigation, colors and contrast, and alternative texts for images.

When students noticed the antisemitic nature of the connection of an octopus with anti-capitalistic messages (see cases below) in the summer term 2024, we realized that the journal has had several instances of (unintended) discriminatory behavior until now. When talking about it we also noticed that we do have a standpoint and core values as an editorial team that impact our work. As a consequence we decided to put them into writing in Our Commitment Against Discrimination and establish this regular transparency report as a way to show our mistakes and learning, be accountable, and demonstrate how we react to changes/ new information.

Cases:

In 2023 Kamilla Mota Neiva published the paper "Construction, Incorporation, and Maintenance of Racism" in our journal. During the Reviewing and Editing process we noticed differences in the discourse of the topic of 'Racism' between German and English. In particular, there were insecurities regarding the capitalization of the words 'Black' and 'white'. For future submissions in this domain we will follow the discourse of the language the article is written in and we will ask for additional support from experts in the field (at University Osnabrück).

When first publishing the paper "Autism Beyond Deficits: Embracing Neurodiversity in Research" by Ibrahim Muhip Tezcan, we started our website introduction paragraph with a leading question that left it open whether Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is natural or not. While our intention was to start with a rhetorical question. Leaving room for readers to assume that this question is to be asked or internally 'reply' that ASD is not natural is harmful and wrong. When a student pointed this out to us, we changed the phrasing of the leading question.

Recently, we noticed that the use of an octopus alongside anti-capitalistic messages has been and is still used to be antisemitic. As we have chosen an octopus as mascot for the journal and have published (and likely will receive further submissions with) anti-capitalistic messages, we are in the process of finding solutions. Currently, we have addressed the connotation within the article and on our social media platform Instagram. Additionally, we are in the process of re-designing the image of the publication "Challenges with Digital Capitalism" by Anna Luise Backsen and are in the process of talking to experts in the field to find long-term solutions.

Notes:

It is worth to mention, that the success of our journal is not reflected a low number of points listed in this report. This viewpoint might actually discourage reporting and contacting us. In fact, we are aware that having no cases listed in this report does not equal that there are no cases. It only shows that we might not be aware of them yet. Regarding this transparency report, we define success by the means we took to address the cases and see this report as an opportunity to learn and grow.