

Cultural background to the patient-therapist relationship: a study on the web pages of the associations for the handicapped, using the David Liberman Algorithm (DLA).

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Overview:

Supranational organizations issue recommendations on how to best handle the political, social, economic and therapeutic problems regarding the handicapped. Yet, countries make different choices that impact on attitudes towards handicap

Goal:

To study and compare the discourses on handicap that permeate the discourse of the handicapped and their caregivers, in order to provide therapists with cultural information that can facilitate the therapy process

Method:

David Liberman Algorithm (DLA) which detects drives, defenses and their state in discourse

Analysis perspective:

Speech acts in corpus
Narrations which imply scenes taking place in definite spatiality and actants whose roles and states relate to definite value systems

Sample:

Level 1: Supranational recommendations issued by organizations such as UN, as source of each country's regulations: 1 web document

Level 2: Regional documents issued by NGOs linked to international organizations such as Disabled People's International: 2 for each of the following regions: Western Europe, North America. 3 for Latin America: 7 web documents

Level 3: Local documents, such as researches, articles or conferences, issued by universities or units, independent, to an extent, from the government and the associations for the handicapped: 2 for each of the countries studied: France, Spain, Canada, United States, Brazil, Argentina: 12 web documents

Level 4: Associations for the handicapped: 4 web sites for each country studied: 24 web sites

Procedure:

For levels 1 through 3, analysis comprised the first chapter of the texts, at least 600 words each.

For level 4, analysis comprised verbal and non-verbal text of the web home page.

Analysis

1ST LEVEL OF ANALYSIS: SUPRANATIONAL DISCOURSE ON HANDICAP

Supranational recommendations (A2) are taken into account by local government regulations (A2). As a consequence local government regulations concerning

handicap are somewhat similar in the countries studied.

Table I: Drives and defenses present in supranational organizations

DRIVE	DEFENSE	STATE	FUNCTION
A2:	In accordance with the goal	Successful	Main

2ND LEVEL OF ANALYSIS: REGIONAL DISCOURSE ON HANDICAP

EU and North America: Discourse is informative (A2) and colorful, emphatic, sprinkled with exaggerations and examples to make it vivid, seductive and inviting (GPH) to share views and ideas about progress made and expectations for the future.

Latin America: Two types of discourse relative to the different profile of countries in Latin American

Latin America A: Problems are referred to in neutral language (A2) to imply formality and rigor. Emphatic expressions surface to attract attention, to persuade and rouse expectations), to stimulate adhesion to ideas (GPH).

Latin America B: Language is flourished (GPH) to exert a pull on the audience. In harmony with this drive, one of protest and denunciation of fund malversation (A1) surfaces together with the complaint of lack of responsibility of the government and a claim for just responses (O2). Complementarily, UPH drive is present in off-handed remarks that imply detachment from problems.

Table II: Drives and defenses in regional organizations of EU and North America

DRIVE	DEFENSE	STATE	FUNCTION
GPH	In accordance with the goal	Successful	Main
A2	In accordance with the goal	Successful	Complementary

Table III A: Drives and defenses in regional organizations in Latin America

DRIVE	DEFENSE	STATE	FUNCTION
A2	In accordance with the goal	Successful	Main
GPH	In accordance with the goal	Successful	Complementary

Table III B: Drives and defenses in regional organizations in Latin America

DRIVE	DEFENSE	STATE	FUNCTION
A1	In accordance with the goal	Successful	Main
GPH	In accordance with the goal	Successful	Complementary
UPH	In accordance with the goal	Successful	Complementary
O2	In accordance with the goal	Successful	Complementary

3RD LEVEL OF ANALYSIS: LOCAL DISCOURSE ON HANDICAP

France, Canada and USA local discourse: Though informative (A2) it's

Argentina local discourse: Alongside the informative style (A2) expressions of

animated and positive (GPH) to keep hopes high regarding change and progress.

Spain and Brazil local discourse: It's emphatic (GPH) but the highlighting of distinctive features is at the service of informing (A2) about progress made and projects for the future.

denunciation, accusations and revindication of rights (A1) are present combined with an emphatic engaging style intended to highlight and clarify main points in order to convince and enthrall the audience (GPH). As a complement, expressions to establish contact with the audience and to belittle the political discourse (UPH) appear.

Drives and defenses in the countries studied

FRANCE

DRIVE	FUNCTION
GPH	Main
A2	Complementary
DEFENSE	
In accordance with the goal - successful	

SPAIN

DRIVE	FUNCTION
A2	Main
GPH	Complementary
DEFENSE	
In accordance with the goal - successful	

CANADA

DRIVE	FUNCTION
GPH	Main
A2	Complementary
DEFENSE	
In accordance with the goal - successful	

USA

DRIVE	FUNCTION
GPH	Main
A2	Complementary
DEFENSE	
In accordance with the goal - successful	

BRAZIL

DRIVE	FUNCTION
A2	Main
GPH	Complementary
DEFENSE	
In accordance with the goal - successful	

ARGENTINA

DRIVE	FUNCTION
A1	Main
GPH	Complementary
UPH	Complementary
A2	Complementary
DEFENSE	
In accordance with the goal - successful	

4TH LEVEL OF ANALYSIS: DISCOURSE: WEB SITES OF ASSOCIATIONS FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Main drives and defenses in the associations for the handicapped studied

FRANCE

DRIVE	FUNCTION
A1	Denunciation
DEFENSE	
Functional disavowal of limitations - successful	

SPAIN

DRIVE	FUNCTION
IL	Banality
DEFENSE	
Foreclosure of the affect - successful / failed	

CANADA

DRIVE	FUNCTION
IL	Appeal for financing
DEFENSE	
In accordance with the goal – successful	

USA

DRIVE	FUNCTION
A1	Denunciation
DEFENSE	
In accordance with the goal – successful	

BRAZIL

DRIVE	FUNCTION
A2 + IL	Information + speculation
DEFENSE	
In accordance with the goal – successful	

ARGENTINA

DRIVE	FUNCTION
O2 + GPH	Enthusiastic, denies disability
DEFENSE	
Functional disavowal of limitations	

Discussion

1. In some countries there is no fracture between levels of discourse.
2. In the countries presenting a fracture, it can be observed between levels 3 and 4
3. Spain and Argentina present the mentioned rupture.
 - Spain: Information on progress conveyed enthusiastically in regional and local documents is not reflected in the lack of vitality expressed by the associations for the handicapped.
 - Argentina: Regional and local sociopolitical documents expressing accusation appear disconnected from the disavowal of limitations manifested by the associations for the handicapped.
4. Regional and local sociopolitical discourses (levels 2 and 3) are not *per se* indicative of the reality of the handicapped.

Implications for psychotherapy

This study suggests that:

1. Fluent communication among all sociopolitical actors involved with the subject of handicap is a predictor of physical and psychological assistance facilitation while fractures in communication indicate obstacles.
2. Fractures appearing between the local sociopolitical discourse and the discourse of the associations for the handicapped lead to infer that the reality of the situation of the handicapped can be assessed by analyzing the associations of the handicapped in each country rather than by analyzing the sociopolitical context.
3. Supranational and national documents generally used as a basis to devise therapy strategies for the handicapped are not representative of local realities.
4. A greater awareness of communication features in the associations for the handicapped can help define realistic psychotherapy practices and mental health policies to meet the demands and expectations of the handicapped in different countries.