Analysis of discourses in a health care context

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Discourses within palliative care

The study was based on an analysis of discourses concerning palliative care. Focus was on the way in which certain discourses become dominant in a particular domain and cultural context and on those who benefit from this Hegemony (5).

Data consisted of:
- documents,
- observations,
- Interviews

Analysis of discourses

Analytic focus

Everyday discourse

Abstract discourse

Discourse analysis

Analysis of discourses

Nursing as a subordinated profession

Dialectical relationship between the discursive practice and the social discourses illustrates that laws and statutes are affected by changes in society. Images of nursing profession vary dependent on the type of discourses, and by whom and under what circumstances these images are presented.

Data: laws, reports recruitment campaigns, popular culture, "soap operas" in a health care context (6).

Discourses of the core concept of environment in classical nursing theories

The aim was to review and analyze the concept of environment in classical nursing theories. Discourses are historically specific, socially situated signifying practices. By mean of analysing the content in nursing theories it was possible to reveal the discourses imbedded in those theories.

Data: Nursing theories from 1859 to 2000, originated in Western cultures (in progress)

Discourses in guidelines for health care of children with diabetes type 1

In paediatric diabetes care, parents' engagement is a significant positive determinant to the outcome of the child's wellbeing and health. The health care professionals are supposed to support the parents and the families in their everyday life with the disease and carrying out their work, the staff is assisted by national guidelines Hence, it is valuable to analyse discourses in those documents in order to reveal how discourses facilitate and limit, enable and constrain parents in their ways-of-being.

Data: National guidelines for care of children with diabetes type 1, actively used by professionals in Sweden, Norway and Denmark and the analysis was performed guided by Willig's six stages (6).

(in progress)

Implications of DA for health care

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) bring together a variety of critical social theories i.e. Foucault, Bourdieu, Habermas, Gramsci.

Language cannot be analyzed out of context, but is situated within the specific context of social practices of which it is a part. Focus of analysis is on the relationship between language and power. CDA focuses on power in the interaction.

This provides a comprehensive discussion of the texts and can be illustrated as “We do not speak the discourse, the discourse speaks us” (4, p.280).

Possibilities and limitations

To analyze discourses is not just a scientific method; it is rooted in social constructionist and is both a methodology and a method (8).

To analyze discourses is to be concerned with scrutinizing texts on a macro sociological level and to emphasize interdependency between the discourses, institutions and practices. It is not interested in processes within individuals or data in texts. Actually “The texts are not descriptions of the object of research; they are the object of research” (2).

Claiming there is innumerable versions of reality and that reality is created in discourses raises a main issue:
- Is there such a thing as the extra-discursive

Relativists point out there could be no extra-discursive, if it were so there would be a real truth by the bottom-line which could not be challenged.

Critical realities, highlights that our knowledge of the world is constructed through language but there are underlying structures and mechanisms generating phenomena (4).

This poster is in itself a discursive construction based on the experiences of the authors and these experiences have influenced the analysis. Likewise, those who directed the media, those who wrote the guidelines, and the informants in the interviews; the data in the analysis, were probably not aware of the identified discourses in the studies. This assumes and is supported of the socialconstructionist ontology there is no single version of reality and no version remains dominant forever.

References