FIGURATIVE POSITIONING IN MEDIA-WORTHY RADIO TALK

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Abstract: A current longitudinal research project explores how meaning is constructed discursively in troubled talk between sufferers and professionals in various help sites (e.g., internet forums, the radio and the hotline). Espousing discourse-oriented functionalist approaches (i.e, institutional conversation analysis, linguistic anthropology and narrative inquiry), the researchers show that troubled selves often construct their problems through stories as well as certain story-internal key figurative forms summarizing the main point of the problem. This project also shows that such narrative and figurative versions of the suffering self often enhance interpersonal communication. Espousing a discourse-oriented functionalist approach, and the Four World Model, the present study further explores troubled radio talk showing that in this public arena the effectiveness of organizing figurative language is often constrained by the ability of troubled selves to present media-worthy stories.

Keywords: figurative language; radio talk; positioning; media-worthiness; interpersonal communication.

1 INTRODUCTION

We live in an era when both the individual and the community are often threatened by complex and at times traumatic events, brought about by human beings and nature (URSANO; FULLERTON; NORWOOD, 2003). At such moments troubled humans often seek help and support in institutional (DREW; HERRRITAGE, 1992) face-to-face, telephone or digital sites where they can discuss their problems with professionals (e.g., psychologists, counselors and educators) or

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para-professionals (e.g., hotline volunteers) (KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 2005).

Current research shows that troubled selves often construct their problems through stories that are related to certain key figurative forms that summarize the essence of the story (ibid) and in this way establish global coherence (i.e., the central theme of the story) (LINELL; KOROLIJA, 1997; VAN DIJK, 1997). As a result, such organizing figurative forms enhance interpersonal communication in various sites of troubled talk (KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 2005).

The present study further examined troubled radio talk between lay callers and radio teams comprising a host and a psychologist who have to accomplish complicated discursive undertakings. While these interlocutors are faced with demanding tasks of problem presentation and negotiation of candidate solutions, they are also constrained by factors such as the tension between their respective goals and lack of shared knowledge and/or a time limit, which may undermine radio communication (MACDONALD, 2003). Accordingly, the aim of the present study is to focus on the discursive resources used by interlocutors when they attempt to accomplish problem presentation and negotiation in the specific context of troubled radio talk.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Self-construction in institutional troubled radio talk

Discourse-oriented functionalist approaches (SCHIFFRIN, 1994) view language resources (e.g., syntactic structures, figurative and non-figurative lexical items and phrases, pronouns, reported speech, etc.) as 'tools' used by interlocutors in the construction of interpersonal communication and self. Espousing institutional conversation analysis (DREW; HERITAGE, 1992) – the first functionalist approach – we micro-analyzed the sequentially organized turns in troubled radio talk to see how participants accomplish problem presentation and solution negotiation through the use of language resources.

In addition, following linguistic anthropology (DURANTI, 1997) – the second functionalist approach – we located the quest for meaning in a specific context. Accordingly, the analysis took into consideration the 'unseen-presence' of the overhearing audience and its influence on lay callers and the radio team (THORNBORROW, 1997, 2002; HERITAGE; GREATBATCH, 1992) in the public arena of radio discourse.

Finally, we aligned ourselves with current developments in narrative inquiry (see overview in BAMBERG, 2006a) which emphasize that self-construction is accomplished in narrative discourse (BRUNER, 1997) such as life stories (FREEMAN, 2006) or in small and often fragmented stories (GEORGAKOPOULOU, 2006). Accordingly, this study explored naturally-occurring stories which troubled narrators often produce and negotiate with help givers in situ and in vivo. Together, the three functionalist approaches advocate the micro-analysis of sequentially organized turns in troubled interactions to see how story internal language resources display and construct inter-personal communication and self-construction.

Labov's (1972) structural model of past tense stories has often been used by narrative analysts. The model comprises the following elements. An abstract summarizes the gist of the story. Orientation provides the background. Complicating action is the sequence of events creating a problem or an unexpected situation. Evaluation provides the narrator's attitude. Resolution shows what happened finally, and coda shifts the perspective to the present.

Drawing on Labov's (ibid) definition of evaluation, Georgakopoulou's (1997) subjectivity markers, and Bamberg's level-analysis of positioning (2004), we redefined the language tools presented earlier in this section as "discursive self-builders that display affective, cognitive, socio-cultural, and behavioral dimensions of the self" (KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 2005, p.28) and enable narrators to position themselves vis-à-vis others in order to clarify the meaning of their problems and negotiate possible solutions.

For example, using tense shift (i.e., shifting from the past tense to the present), narrators often indicate that they are extremely agitated, repetition indicates emphasis, rhetorical questions constitute a powerful protest and pronouns enable narrators to construct individual ('I') or collective selves ('we') or distance their self ('you') from the narrated

events (for overview of language resources as self-builders see KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 2005). The next section focuses on figurative language – a central self-displaying and positioning resource in troubled talk.

2.2 Figurative language as a positioning tool in troubled talk

The process of discursive positioning constitutes "a dynamic alternative to the more static concept of role" (VAN LANGENHOVE; HARRÉ, 1999, p.14) in the social sciences. Current definitions of narrative positioning (BAMBERG, 2004) integrate Labov's (1972) traditional concept of narrative evaluation with the requirement to incorporate the interactional dimensions of ongoing talk and the researcher's task into the analysis (CORTAZZI; JIN, 2000). Specifically, Cortazzi and Jin argue that the Labovian model focuses on evaluation 'in' the narrative (i.e., narrators' use of self-displaying evaluative devices), but does not relate to interactional dimensions of evaluation that are co-constructed by interlocutors (i.e., evaluation 'of' the narrative), nor does it relate to the researcher's task (evaluation 'through' the narrative).

Bamberg (2004) focuses on self-construction at three inter-related levels. At level one, the texts are explored in quest for language resources used by narrators to position themselves vis-à-vis significant others in the narrated past events. At level two, the researcher looks for language resources that interlocutors use to position themselves in relation to others in the present ongoing interaction. Levels one and two relate to interactional dimensions in the narrated past and in the ongoing conversation in the present.

At level three, according to Bamberg (ibid), the researcher shows how narrators actually locate themselves in relation to ideological positions – master narratives, imprinted upon the self by historical and social practices (BAMBERG, 2006b). In this way, Bamberg's third level constitutes an interpretive interface between micro- and macro-levels of analysis whose significance has been foregrounded in current studies (see overview in KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 2005). In other words, by highlighting the interactional dimensions of narrative discourse and explaining how the researchers can construct an interpretive interface, this model does relate to evaluation 'of' and 'through' the narrative.

In our attempt to explore effective troubled communication, we espoused Husserl's (1893-1917) definition of the past, present and future time continuum dominating Western cultures and Bamberg's (2004) level-analysis of positioning, and developed The Four World Model (KUPFERBERG, in press; KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 2005). This model emphasizes the centrality of the present moment – a unique feature of narrative communication and "the perceptual starting point of time experience" (EVANS, 2005, p. 25). Specifically, the present enables interlocutors in troubled talk situations to overcome the limitations of chronological time by narrating the meaning of past experience and sometimes co-constructing possible future worlds with others. In brief, in troubled radio communication, then, the present is defined as the interaction between callers and professionals in which the callers' past worlds are displayed and better future worlds are planned.

Adopting the model, in this study we examined figurative language attentively to see how help seekers and help givers use it when they position themselves in relation to each other during the radio problem presentation and solution negotiation phases. This action-oriented approach differs from theories and models which provide a priori and often decontextualized explanations for figurative language interpretation and production.

For example, cognitive semantics (LAKOFF; JOHNSON, 1980, 1999) views figurative expressions in everyday language as 'surface' linguistic expressions of underlying cognitive metaphoric constructions that determine how humans experience and conceptualize complex target topics in terms of more familiar embodied (i.e., determined by our body and mind) source domains (e.g., *Love is a deep ocean*; *War is a dark cloud*).

In this study, we examine radio troubled talk closely to see whether figurative language tools enable participants to accomplish their discursive tasks effectively as they position (DAVIES; HARRÉ, 1990) themselves in relation to each other. We were guided by the following questions: To which discursive resources do participants in troubled radio talk resort in order to accomplish their tasks? To what extent are these resources related to the interactional construction of problems and solutions?

3 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK: THE CORPUS, QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS, VALIDITY AND ETHICAL ISSUES

The corpus analyzed in the present study comprises 53 naturally-occurring recorded and transcribed telephone interactions in Hebrew that constituted one of the corpora of a longitudinal project (KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 2005). Following Ferrara (1994, p. 19), we define this corpus as interactions that "would have taken place anyway, whether or not we were present. In this regard, the speech analyzed can be regarded as authentic naturally-occurring language speech".

The telephone interactions were produced in a radio program entitled "the two of us together and each of us alone". In this program, troubled callers present their problems and discuss possible solutions with the program host and a guest psychologist. The average length of each call was 16 minutes. Broadly speaking, these interactions comprise a problem presentation phase, when relevant information is elicited from the callers, a solution negotiation phase, when the callers and the institutional representatives negotiate possible solutions, and a dismissal phase.

The theoretical framework presented earlier justifies the qualitative division of meaning construction into different levels, or worlds, which were finally interpreted by the researchers. Bamberg (2004) proposes to construct this interpretation at a third level of analysis, whereas the Four World Model (KUPFERBERG, in press) relegates the construction of an interpretive interface to a fourth world.

The analysis was conducted by a discourse analyst and a clinical psychologist in two stages. In the first stage, each researcher micro-analyzed the data independently in order to identify the participants' figurative language that was related to past, present and future worlds. The goal of the micro-analysis was to explore discursive resources including figurative language in order to see how troubled callers as well as the radio representatives co-constructed problems and solutions via evaluative devices. Then, the researchers co-constructed an interfacing and interpretive fourth world.

The micro-analysis was guided by "the next turn validation" (PERÄKYLÄ, 1997). This discourse-analytic procedure aims at the

discovery of preceding or following co-text (KOROLIJA, 1998) that provides confirming evidence that what one participant said had also been noticed and used by other participants. Then, guided by "multiple investigators' triangulation" (DOUGLAS, 1983) – another guiding methodological principle – we synthesized the micro-analyses constructed by each of the two researchers in an interpretive interfacing fourth world.

The researchers adopted Richard's (1936) definition of figurative language as linguistic forms in which some topic within a target domain is connected to and commented on by some vehicle within a source domain. For example, a metaphor asserts that the target topic is similar to the vehicle (e.g., *The situation is a time bomb*). A simile is a weaker version of a metaphoric expression (GLUCKSBERG; KEYSAR, 1993). The weakening effect is achieved by means of words such as 'like' or 'as' (e.g., *The situation is like a time bomb*). Formulaic phrases (HONECK, 1997; MIEDER, 1997) are summative expressions of wisdom (e.g., proverbs, slogans, and sayings) that are "generally learned and used as wholes" (HONECK, 1997, p. 79) (e.g., *To be or not to be*) and are used by interlocutors when they comment on a specific target domain.

The units of analysis used in this study are hierarchically ordered. Following Hymes (1972), a troubled telephone call is defined as a speech event in which sufferers unfold their problems and discuss them with other participants. Each speech event is further divided into turns and utterances, respectively. A turn is defined as the time when one party speaks until a change takes place and another party takes over (TEN HAVE, 1999). Utterances are speech units which are autonomous in terms of their pragmatic and communicative functions (QUIRK; GREENBAUM; LEECH; SVARTNIK, 1985).

The illustrative excerpts presented in this article were translated by a professional translator, a native speaker of English. Subsequently, two bilinguals read the Hebrew and English versions of the excerpts and evaluated the adequacy of the translated versions. The readers suggested several minor changes that we accepted.

The following symbols are used in the running text and the examples. Verbal description is indicated by double parentheses (e.g.,

((laughs))). Figurative language is emphasized by italics in the running text and the examples (e.g., *Am I their floor rag?*). The roles of participants are marked by the following letters: C (caller) and H (host). Finally, we follow Raviv and Abuhav's (2003) recommendations that are pertinent to the ethical codex of radio and cyber psychology. Accordingly, we stress that research based on media and internet data should eliminate details that may be detrimental in any way to the callers.

4 NARRATIVE AND FIGURATIVE VERSIONS OF THE SELF IN TROUBLED RADIO COMMUNICATION

Below we present examples illustrating the main findings of the study. Example 1 illustrates how a 35-year old woman whose brother died in an accident presents her problem to the radio host and psychologist.

Example 1 – Narrative and figurative self-construction:

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1    H    The two of us together and each of us alone. ((addressing the next caller)). Good evening. Go
2         ahead, please.
3    C    This feeling has accompanied me in many situations, but I would like to talk    about        a
4         specific case. About three years ago, my brother was killed in an accident ((pause)). Now, he
5         was missing for three weeks and ((pause)). They discovered the body, and ((pause)) there
6         was some sort of investigation ((pause)). But that's not the important part. He was my
7         younger brother, and ((pause)) it happened when I was 30 years old and he was 28, and when
8         we were children we were friends. That is we were very close to each other. That is, I was, *I
9         was really like a mother to him*. That is, I always saw to it that he did his homework  and
10        stuff. After I got married, our relationship was not very good, mainly because ((pause)) my
11        ex-husband did not really get along with him. The last time I saw him was when ((pause)) we
12        quarreled and ((pause)) I was very angry because he was so irresponsible and we quarreled
13        about all kinds of things. What I remember are the last words I said to him. He was very
14        angry and hurt, and it has nothing to do with the accident, but it was our last talk.
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Following the host's invitation, the caller presents her problem and positions herself in relation the host whose help she seeks in the present and in relation to her brother in the troubled past world. There are two discursive features that enable the caller to construct her idiosyncratic positioning: a personal story and self-displaying evaluative

resources. The story presents a detailed version of the suffering self and can be analyzed in terms of the Labovian (1972) structural model of analysis. Specifically, we emphasize the chain of events that creates a problem presented in the following utterances: "About three years ago, my brother was killed in an accident…They discovered the body" (lines 4 and 5).

However, the narrator emphasizes that "that's not the important part" (line 6), adding more information about the relationship between her and her sibling: "When we were children we were friends. That is we were very close to each other. *That is, I was, I was really like a mother to him. That is, I always saw to it that he did his homework and stuff*" (lines 7-9). These lines comprise repetitive utterances. Repetition is an important self-displaying resource (BUTTNY; JENSEN, 1995; KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 2005) in Example 1. This language tool constructs the relationship between the caller and her sibling, specifically emphasizing the caller's caring and responsible positioning in relation to her brother in the troubled past. At the same time, these repetitive utterances also position the caller in relation to the radio team whose help she seeks.

The main point of the story is summarized figuratively in a simile: *I was, I was really like a mother to him* (lines 8-9). This figurative form captures the gist of the caller's problem and enables her to position herself in two worlds simultaneously (i.e., vis-à-vis her brother in the tortured past and the radio team whose help she sought in the 'workshop of the present interaction').

To recapitulate, Example 1 shows that problems can be presented via detailed and summative formats. In other words, in addition to the detailed narrative version of the problem, the caller also summarizes it via a figurative form that we entitle "an organizing figurative form" (KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 1998) – a summative figurative version of the troubled self in naturally occurring discourse. The organizing figurative form encapsulates the essence of the caller's problem: She must have felt responsible for her brother's death and as a result must have developed guilt feelings (KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 2005). Example 2 highlights the connection between these versions of the troubled self, showing how an organizing figurative form summarizes the gist of the story:

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Example 2 – Two versions of the self:

bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla la la la la la la bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla
bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla la la la la la la bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla
bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla la la la la la la bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla
bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla *I was really like a mother to him* bla bla
bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla la la la la la la bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla
bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla la la la la la la bla bla bla bla bla bla
bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla bla la la la la la la bla bla bla bla bla bla
bla bla bla bla bla bla bla

Following this effective problem presentation (Example 1), the psychologist participating in the program answers the caller. The psychologist's response is illustrated in Example 3.

Example 3 – The psychologist redefines the caller's organizing figurative form:

1 It often happens that when we look back, we have a choice. Do we choose to look back at the last
2 words we said, or is our choice is to look at the other things you describe? That's a very courageous
3 relationship which you describe by saying that *you were to some extent like a mother to him*, and
4 brought him up, and you were very good and understanding to him. In other words, what do we
5 really it choose to remember? You can also look at all the other good things you shared with your
6 brother and say what a wonderful relationship was, and you are left with the choice.

In Example 3, the psychologist advises the caller to replace the negative experience that has been haunting her with more positive memories about the times she spent with her brother. Moreover, the psychologist summarizes the core of his answer to the caller by means of a revised version of the caller's simile: *You were to some extent like a mother to him* (line 3). The fact that the psychologist uses the caller's own figurative form indicates, in our opinion, that he must have noticed this organizing component in the caller's narrative contribution. In this way, the psychologist's turn validates (PERÄKYLÄ, 1997) the significance of the caller's figurative form for both participants in this interaction.

The example shows that the psychologist uses the caller's figurative form as 'a bridge' that enhances interpersonal communication in a time-bound telephone call between participants who do not know each other. It also attempts to move the focus of the problem from a troubled past to a better 'future landscape' where the caller may use the insights gained in the program. Did the psychologist's modified figurative form succeed in changing the caller's guilt-charged positioning vis-à-vis her dead brother? We will never know for sure. Interviews

conducted with other troubled selves who sought help in the same radio program and agreed to be interviewed indicate that callers thought the program was effective (KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 2005).

But troubled callers did not always fare well in the public arena of the radio. In Example 4, a young man presents his problem coherently via two organizing figurative forms:

Example 4 – A tedious caller:

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1    C    Since I was a child, I have been a book-loving person. There are three thousand books in my
2         library. Most people are exactly the opposite of me. They are totally earthly. Therefore life is
3         like a jail. I am a prisoner, and they are my jailers. They guard me, all those earthly people
4    H    What will be in your books? What will you write?
5    C    Theoretical books, philosophical books, historical books that span the disciplines. That's my
6         dream. That's my fantasy. I dream about a spiritual world, a huge temple in which everyone
7         is wearing white clothes and discussing philosophy.
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The psychologist who listened to the caller's presentation, and noticed his organizing figurative language must have found him rather tedious and certainly not rating-oriented, and therefore chose to ridicule the caller and his organizing figurative language as illustrated in Example 5:

Example 5 – The psychologist ridicules the caller:

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1    As you were talking, I had a lot of questions in my mind, and I was calculating three thousand
2    books. It's interesting to calculate how many pages there are in your library? And what's the
3    average number of pages in each book? And how many lines are there on each page? The fact
4    that you have three thousand books, and that you declare that you are a spiritual man, and you
5    said that you're imprisoned in some sort of a small jail, you are also transmitting a feeling of
6    superiority over us. We are earthly people. We are less important than you.
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To recapitulate, Examples 1-5 show that when troubled callers present their problems via two versions of their troubled selves - detailed stories and story-internal organizing figurative language -, the latter often enhances interpersonal communication when professionals notice these forms. However, in the public arena of problem talk callers are obliged to prove that they are "media-worthy" (KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 2005). Otherwise, the institutional representatives disregard their detailed and summative self-presentations and terminate the interaction in order to look for more rating-oriented callers.

5 DISCUSSION

The questions guiding the study are presented below: To which discursive resources do participants in troubled radio talk resort in order to accomplish their tasks? To what extent are these resources related to the interactional construction of problems and solutions? Qualitative analysis showed that callers often produced stories and organizing figurative forms which enhanced inter-personal communication with the radio team. This finding is supported by current research that focuses on face-to-face, telephone and cyber troubled talk (GREEN; KUPFERBERG, 2000; KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 1998, 2003, 2005; KUPFERBERG; GREEN; GILAT, 2002) and it is summarized as a data-driven claim below. Lay troubled selves often present their problems through detailed narrative discourse as well as succinct story-internal organizing figurative forms such as metaphors and similes – discursive resources that constitute two interrelated versions of the troubled self.

In response to the second question, we see that in the public arena of radio communication the effective interactional use of self-displaying stories and organizing figurative forms by the institutional representatives was constrained by media-worthiness, defined as "a gift comprising assertiveness, readiness to argue with the media representatives, and good story-telling skills including the ability to focus on the essence of the problem by means of figurative resources" (KUPFERBERG; GREEN, 2005, p. 168).

This finding is also supported by previous research emphasizing that the emotionally charged public confessions made by lay persons often empower the rating-oriented talk-show hosts, who use the dramas unfolded in their programs to advance their aims without solving the lay sufferers' problems (MACDONALD, 2003). Accordingly, we formulate the second data-driven claim. The figurative and narrative resources of self-construction that are employed in public radio interactions are used, and sometimes abused, depending on contextual resources that are relevant to the specific interaction (VAN DIJK, 1997).

What are the theoretical, methodological and practical implications of the study? Theoretically speaking, the study shows that in naturally occurring troubled radio talk narrative and figurative self

presentations enhance interpersonal communication. However, the communicative advantage of these versions of the self depends on non-linguistic characteristics of the interaction. At a methodological level, the Four World Model enabled us to examine figurative forms at a micro level and relate them to macro levels in our interpretive interface. The study also shows that a 'marriage' between psychology and discourse analysis may generate intriguing results. As for the practical perspective, the insights gained from the study can 'lubricate' troubled talk in different settings whenever participants attempt to negotiate solutions with professionals.

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Título: Posicionamento figurativo na fala radiofônica com apelo midiático

Autor: Irit Kupferberg

Resumo: Este trabalho é parte de um projeto de pesquisa longitudinal em andamento que explora como o significado é construído discursivamente em falas problemáticas entre clientes e profissionais em vários espaços de aconselhamento (e.g. fóruns na Internet, programas de rádio e disque-ajuda). Combinando abordagens funcional-discursivas (i.e. análise da conversa institucional, antropologia lingüística e pesquisas

sobre narrativa), os pesquisadores demonstram que os sujeitos problemáticos frequentemente utilizam histórias para construir seus problemas, assim como certas formas figurativas centrais internas para sumarizar o ponto principal do problema. O projeto também mostra que essas versões narrativas e figurativas dos sujeitos problemáticos auxiliam a comunicação interpessoal. Neste artigo, combinando uma abordagem funcional-discursiva com o Modelo dos Quatro Mundos, investigamos a fala radiofônica problemática, mostrando que nessa arena pública a eficácia da organização da linguagem figurativa é frequentemente circunscrita pela habilidade dos sujeitos problemáticos em construir histórias que tenham apelo midiático.

Palavras-chave: linguagem figurativa; fala radiofônica; posicionamento; apelo midiático; comunicação interpessoal.

Titre: Place figurative dans le parler radiophonique avec appel médiatique

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Résumé: Ce travail fait partie d'un projet de recherche longitudinale en cours qui étudie comment la signification est construite discursivement dans les parlers problématiques entre clients et professionnels en plusieurs espaces de conseils (*e. g.* groupes de discussion sur Internet, émissions de radio et «aide par téléphone». Associant des abordages fonctionnels discursifs (*i. e.* analyse de la conversation institutionnelle, anthropologie linguistique et recherches sur le récit), les chercheurs démontrent que les sujets problématiques s'en servent souvent des histoires pour construire leurs problèmes, ainsi que certaines formes figuratives essentielles pour abréger le point principal du problème. Le projet démontre aussi que ces versions narratives et figuratives des sujets problématiques aident la communication interpersonnelle. Dans cet article, associant un abordage fonctionnel discursif avec le Modèle des Quatre Mondes, nous enquêtons sur le parler radiophonique problématique, démontrant que dans cette arène publique l'efficacité de l'organisation du langage figuratif est souvent circonscrit par l'habilité des sujets problématiques dans l'élaboration des histoires qui ont un appel médiatique.

Mots-clés: langage figuratif; parler radiophonique; place; appel médiatique; communication interpersonnelle.

Título: Posicionamiento figurativo en el habla radiofónica con apelo mediático

Autor: Irit Kupferberg

Resumen: Este trabajo es parte de un proyecto de investigación longitudinal en funcionamiento que explora como el significado es construido discursivamente en hablas problemáticas entre clientes y profesionales en varios espacios de aconsejamiento (e.g. foros en la Internet, programas de radio y llamadas-de-ayuda). Combinando abordajes funcional-discursivos (i.e. análisis de la conversación institucional, antropología lingüística y pesquisas sobre narrativa), los investigadores demuestran que los sujetos problemáticos frecuentemente utilizan historias para construir sus problemas, así como ciertas formas figurativas centrales internas para sumariar el punto principal del problema. El proyecto también muestra que esas versiones narrativas y figurativas de los sujetos problemáticos auxilian la comunicación interpersonal. En este artículo, combinando un abordaje funcional-discursivo con el

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Modelo de los Cuatro Mundos, investigamos el habla radiofónica problemática, mostrando que en esa arena pública la eficacia de la organización del lenguaje figurativo es frecuentemente circunscripta por la habilidad de los sujetos problemáticos en construir historias que tenga apelo mediático.

Palabras-clave: lenguaje figurativo; habla radiofónica; posicionamiento; apelo mediático; comunicación interpersonal.