

Health discourses as moral communication? Linguistic case studies from Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon.

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Summary

Our project zooms in on moral communication in Ivory Coast and Cameroon. It adopts a comparative perspective and engages with everyday moral talk in the domain of health. Since the articulation of ordinary ethics and language is still under-investigated, we aim to contribute to this rather new intersectional field of study by bringing forward a specific linguistic understanding of moral communication. We refer to constructivist and phenomenological conceptualizations of ethics assuming that there are no moral phenomena, but only moral communication about phenomena. According to such a view, conversationalists constantly and co-constructively bring about the moral meaning of a state of affair or an event. Our paramount aim is to investigate the interactive processes by which moralities emerge and are negotiated in communication. In order to study these relational and interactional aspects, we tackle two main, closely intertwined research questions: 1. Which are the forms and 2. Which are the functions of moral communication? In order to integrate both aspects we prioritise an empirical approach and resort to qualitative and interpretative methods by drawing on theoretical insights from Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics. We expect to contribute first to a better theoretical framing of doing ethics by focusing on its linguistic and communicative aspects and second to advance its empirical study by means of a comparative data-based analysis which targets its most prominent forms and functions in specific media and face to face settings.
