1. Record Nr. UNINA9910961350803321

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Titolo	The dynamic consultation : a discourse analytical study of doctor-patient communication / / Marisa Cordella
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Philadelphia, : John Benjamins Pub., c2004
ISBN	9786612160264 9781282160262 1282160265 9789027295187 9027295182
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (270 p.)
Collana	Pragmatics & beyond The dynamic consultation
Disciplina	401/.41
Soggetti	Discourse analysis Physician and patient
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. 221-234) and index.
Nota di contenuto	The Dynamic Consultation -- Editorial page -- Title page -- LCC page -- Dedication page -- Table of contents -- Preface -- Note -- References -- Acknowledgments -- 1. Introduction -- 2. Discourse, society and doctor-patient communication -- 2.1. A multi-disciplinary approach: Interactional socio-linguistics -- 2.1.1. Footing -- 2.2. Power, society and discourse -- 2.2.1. Discourse, power and simpatía -- 2.3. Everyday and institutional talk -- 2.4. Micro and macro realities of a socio-cultural group -- 2.5. Bio-medical and socio-relational approaches to doctor-patient communication -- 2.6. Doctor-patient communication: The medical and linguistic perspectives -- 2.6.1. Medical approaches to doctor-patient communication -- 2.6.2. Linguistic approaches: The doctor's perspective -- 2.6.3. Linguistic approaches: The patient's perspective -- 2.7. Sociological factors and doctor-patient communication -- 2.8. Conclusion -- Note -- 3. Doctor-patient communication -- 3.1. Discourse analysis: Interactional socio-linguistics and ethnographic approaches -- 3.2. Research design -- 3.3. Research questions -- 3.4. The Chilean health care system -- 3.5. The research site: The PUC Outpatient Clinic -- 3.5.1. The

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Sommario/riassunto

This book introduces a unique model of medical discourse that identifies the forms of talk - voices - that doctors and patients use during the consultation, and studies the dynamic interaction as it

unfolds particularly in follow-up visits. Natural recordings, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and ethnographic observations provide the data for the research, which was carried out in an Outpatient Clinic in Santiago, Chile. Using an interactional sociolinguistic approach, analysis of the data identifies doctor-patient communication as a micro-performance of broader socio-cultural realities, in which social status, power, knowledge and personal beliefs and values all find expression in the consultative setting. Importantly, while both doctor and patient voices are shown to contribute to an essentially asymmetrical exchange, the study also identifies the holistic and empathic Fellow Human voice, which places doctors and patients on a more equal footing. In connection with this voice, the Spanish concept of simpatía is also discussed.While the model in this study was developed within a specific socio-cultural framework, it is hoped that it will be adapted and modified more widely and contribute to a better understanding between doctors and their patients.