Reviewer’s report

Title: Using root metaphors to analyze communication between nurses and patients: a qualitative study

Version: 0 Date: 27 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Cornelia Mahler

Reviewer's report:

Dear Dr. Alvarez and Co-Authors

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to review your manuscript titled: "Use of root metaphors to improve communication between nurses and patients: a qualitative study".

This is a very interesting and novel approach to the analysis of communication in nurse-patient communication, which I think we can learn very much from. The manuscript seems to be result from a PhD thesis and I have the impression that too much information and too many different aspects are trying to be included in the one manuscript. It may be an idea to focus on only one aspect within this manuscript. I therefore recommend major revisions at this stage.

Here some suggestions and comments:

Title: The manuscript does not show how root metaphors can improve communication between a nurse and patients, it rather describes the analysis. I therefore recommend the following title: Using root metaphors to analyse communication between nurses and patients: a case study.

Background: The background describes very well existing challenges in patient-health provider communication and the role of metaphors. It would be helpful if some specific information on communication with chronic ill patients is added, especially in which way counselling helps in their self-management. It is otherwise not quite clear where the "categories mentioned above" (page 4, line 109) come from and why these may be relevant.

Research question: I recommend the research question/aim to be revised as the results do not show if the level of understanding has been improved.

Theoretical framework: I very much appreciate the description of this interesting theoretical framework. It would be helpful, if examples of the four different metaphors are illustrated with an example - maybe not from a medical perspective (table 2?).
Methods:

It would be interesting to have a description of the setting the interviews took place in - hospital, out-patient, home-care as well as data on the "selected nurse" who performed the interviews. What does "having … their own nursing practice" (page 6, line 150) mean?

Data collection: Page 6, line 165 "We interviewed …" . Who is we? I thought one single nurse interviewed the patients? Please elaborate on how the data of the interviews was collected - audio/ video recording, field notes, … It seems as if further ethnographic techniques were used. Please describe in the analysis section how these were included in the analysis.

Data analysis: In my opinion this begins on page 6, line 171. Please explain who was involved in the analysis. Why were the specific categories (or topics, themes?) chosen and how were they extracted - only inductively or also deductively.

It seems to me as if five themes were chosen and key-words were identified. It would be helpful if this was made clearer.

Tables 1 and 2 helped me understand the concept better. Maybe table 2 could help describe the framework (background).

Which language was the analysis performed in, considering the quotes are displayed in English? Please explain at what stage the translation was performed.

Results and Discussion: The results and discussion are a little "mixed up" showing discussion aspects in the results section and vice versa.

It would be good to have examples / quotes underlying the synthesis of the root metaphors demonstrated in table 3. In my opinion a good description with the underlying quotes for each metaphor would be sufficient in this manuscript (for example page 13, lines 342 - 355) if these results are discussed adequately afterwards.

I am not sure if figure 1 is needed. If so, it needs more explanation.

It would be helpful to describe how the different subheadings in the results section emerged.

I hope my comments are helpful in the revision of this interesting piece of work.

Kind regards

Cornelia Mahler
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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