Födandets sociala utformning
Språkliga och kroppsliga praktiker i förlossningsrummet

av

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Akademisk avhandling

Avhandling för filosofie doktorsexamen i svenska språket, som kommer att försvaras offentligt onsdag den 25 september 2013 kl. 13.15

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Abstract


This thesis explores the social construction of birth by analyzing the interaction between the participants present in the delivery room. The data is drawn from 79 video recordings of birth. Six are unedited research recordings and the remaining 73 were edited for pedagogical, documentary and entertaining purposes. The theoretical and analytical perspective is Conversation Analysis. With this microanalytic method, a detailed insight is given to the interaction in the delivery room which should be of linguistic, anthropologic and midwifery interest.

The thesis demonstrates how different situations are shaped during labor and the first 15 minutes after birth. It reveals how the identities child, girl, boy, mother, father, woman and man are constructed and negotiated in the unfolding interaction between the participants. In this sense, the thesis uncovers the construction of family roles in the delivery room during a delicate interaction between the private persons and the institutional representatives. The latter are charged with the complex task of safeguarding the physical wellbeing of mother and child while also promoting the development of parental identities. The thesis highlights the existence of a social birth work; the institutional interactants make use of a range of linguistic resources to demarcate the progression from second stage labor to birth and to position the newborn as an endeared social creature. Birth is an important liminal situation and is therefore forcefully spoken forth, and, as the thesis shows, enhanced with more or less ritual utterances and actions. Birth is also a matter of bodies, the body in labor, the supporting body of the partner and the appearance of the body of the newborn. The thesis gives insight into how these bodies are managed and stylized in interaction. Further the thesis makes visible the midwife’s use of interactional resources to instill strength into the body of the woman in labor. The results are discussed in light of the socio-cultural circumstances for hospital birth in Sweden.

Keywords: birth work, conversation analysis, membership categorization analysis, connection manoeuvres, identity, ritual and body in interaction.

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