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A Study on Convergence, Divergence and Maintenance in OCD Patients

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to verify if patients with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) adopted self-referential and non-adherent interactive modalities, during face-to-face conversation, to a higher extent as compared with subjects who did not have a diagnosis of OCD. For this purpose, four subjects with OCD and four age, sex and education matched Normal Controls (NC) underwent a semi-structured interview. The video-taped records have been evaluated and coded by means of the Initiative-Response Analysis system (I-R). The interview allowed us to obtain indexes of interactive strategies, namely, convergence, divergence and maintenance, which have been interpreted in the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) framework. Subjects with OCD, as compared with both NC and interviewers, mainly used Maintenance strategy, indicating a non-adherence to turns and an over-reliance on their own turns, thus neglecting the partners' contribution. This kind of strategy exclusively correlated with the scores of the Y-BOCS compulsion subscale. Results are consistent with the hypothesis that communication in subjects with OCD relies on particular strategies and support the view that communication is strongly correlated with "personological" variables. This hypothesis may be incorporated (not being incompatible with) in the CAT framework.

KEYWORDS

CAT; Communication; Clinical Psychology; Personality Disorder; Initiative-Response Analysis; OCD; Y-BOCS; DSM IV-TR

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