

A Discourse Analysis of Menopause for Thai Women

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Abstract : The number of women approaching menopausal age in Thailand is increasing, making menopause an important health topic. In order to understand Thai women's different ways of interpreting menopausal experiences and the way they construct meaning relating to menopause, it is necessary to include the context in which meaning is constructed as well as the background of cultural attitudes to menopause existing in the Thai society. The aim of this study was to describe different discourses on menopause in Thailand that present themselves to menopausal women through the use of language and to analyze linguistic strategies used to represent such identity. This study adopts discourse theory and a close pragmatic analysis to examine the discursive construction of menopause for Thai women. Two hundreds and fifteen pieces of text under the heading or subject of 'menopause' or 'becoming a middle-aged woman', published from 2010 to 2019, were included. All material was addressed to Thai women, and consisted of booklets and informational material, articles from newspapers and magazines and popular science books. Five different discourses on menopause were identified: the biomedical discourse; the health-promotion discourse; the consumer discourse; the alternative discourse; and the feminist/ critical discourse. The biomedical discourse on menopause was found to be dominant, but was expanded or challenged by other discourses by offering different scopes of action and/or resting on different fundamental values. The discourses constructed and positioned individual women differently; thus, the women's position varied noticeably from one discourse to another. There are seven major linguistic strategies used to construct those identities. That is, lexical selection, presupposition manipulation, presupposition denial, the use of implication, the use of passive construction, using the cause and effect sentence structure, and rhetoric questions.

Keywords : discourse analysis, discursive construction, menopause, Thai women

Conference Title : ICDA 2020 : International Conference on Discourse Analysis

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : December 28-29, 2020