

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Jamaican and Trinidadian News Articles about D/Deafness

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Abstract : Utilizing a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology and a theoretical framework based on disability studies, how Jamaican and Trinidadian newspapers discussed issues relating to the Deaf community were examined. The term deaf was inputted into the search engine tool of the online website for the Jamaica Observer and the Trinidad & Tobago Guardian. All 27 articles that contained the term deaf in its content and were written between August 1, 2017 and November 15, 2017 were chosen for the study. The data analysis was divided into three steps: (1) listing and analysis instances of metaphorical deafness (e.g. fall on deaf ears), (2) categorization of the content of the articles into the models of disability discourse (the medical, socio-cultural, and superscrip models of disability narratives), and (3) the analysis of any additional data found. A total of 42% of the articles pulled for this study did not deal with the Deaf community in any capacity, but rather instances of the use of idiomatic expressions that use deafness as a metaphor for a non-physical, undesirable trait. The most common idiomatic expression found was fall on deaf ears. Regarding the models of disability discourse, eight articles were found to follow the socio-cultural model, two were found to follow the medical model, and two were found to follow the superscrip model. The additional data found in these articles include two instances of the term deaf and mute, an overwhelming use of lower case d for the term deaf, and the misuse of the term translator (to mean interpreter).

Keywords : deafness, disability, news coverage, Caribbean newspapers

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