

COSMIN GOIAN

**SEMANTIC ANALYSIS
OF THE DYNAMICS
OF THE SOCIAL WORK
LANGUAGE
APPLIED IN ROMANIA**



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INTRODUCTION

This book reports the findings of a research project concerned with the discourse populating the newly emerged profession of Social Work in Romania, and more specifically with the vocabulary used. The study involves both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the Romanian social work literature, Romanian legislation pertaining to social work, and the written as well as the colloquial vocabulary of the professional social workers. Parallel and multiple concepts, ambiguities in the specific professional language used by social workers in Romania are examined. The method of content analysis was used to analyze the professional literature and the Romanian legislation, interviews and questionnaires were used to examine the professional vocabulary.

This paper is based on qualitative and quantitative analysis of the realities of professional language of social work in Romania, based on a research conducted between 2006-2012.

The starting point that motivated our research was caused by the presence and use of parallel or multiple concepts from the specific professional language used by social workers in Romania.

Some ambiguities in the literature, legislation of the domain, empirical language of social workers have motivated us to perform an investigation of the professional community in all areas of national development.

The research conclusions have largely confirmed the assumptions made, and the negative situations for social assistance require solutions.

The partial results obtained after the mentioned steps have been presented at various conferences with international participation and have been published in two treatises. Also, the investigative approach received the support of the National College of Social Workers in Romania, involving 307 university-trained specialists in the field in our study (out of 960 active members nationally). We believe that in a later stage, the information obtained in our research will be a support for the first Dictionary of Social Work in the Romanian social space.

The study is divided into three phases of research:

Thus, in the first instance, to delimit the categories of concepts that were to be investigated, the method of content analysis of the literature was used (social assistance) in Romanian and the analysis of a body of law, deemed relevant to the actual legislation

In the second phase of the investigative approach, using the qualitative analysis, we tried to capture the differences between formal professional language (language used by the social worker in reports to various institutions, official acts performed by social workers, press releases) and informal professional language (discussions with other social workers, field communication, communication in interdisciplinary team work etc.). The study has been made in the Home for the elderly and The Center for the homeless- Night Shelter "Father Jordan" in Timisoara, 20 social worker reports, which may reveal the concepts and expressions used in official reports (formal) and 20 semistructured interviews which can reveal

concepts and expressions used in informal contexts. In the initial phase of this work we aimed interpersonal communication components of social workers and their clients, with different ages and different social needs.

In the third phase of the research, I called on a questionnaire survey method. For the quantitative dimension of the research, 550 invitations were sent to be completed online by social work professionals enrolled in the National College of Social Workers in Romania. The number was chosen by reference to the total number of registered social workers in CNASR in 2006 (960) and to achieve a sampling error of $e = \pm 2.7\%$ for a threshold probability of 95%.

In the first phase (December 2006 - January 2007), 172 questionnaires were completed. After a returning of the invitations to participate in our study, in the second stage (January-February 2007) we received another 141 questionnaires of which 6 were eliminated because they were not completed in part or at all. Thus, following the steps of sending the invitations, resulted in a number of 307 questionnaires. In these conditions the sampling error increased from $\pm 2.7\% \pm 4.61\%$ (below the admitted of $\pm 5\%$ in sociological studies).

This paper also refers to further research, conducted between 2011-2012 by analyzing works and recent legislative provisions.

Practical value of the work. The research conducted and presented can be used in drafting future dictionaries of social work (the literature of Romania did not have such an editorial issue). We propose that the language ambiguities resulting from the research to be presented in future - to reduce them – to the

professional and academic community of social work. In this direction, the partial results obtained were published (Goian, 2008 and Goian 2010) and presented in the scientific field and popularized to the social practitioners, proposing remedial steps in the legislative field, specialized work.

Based on analyzes conducted in this paper, we consider that even though they refer to the same reality, differences of language in social work exist, and they should worry the scientific and professional community. In interpersonal relations and written language between social workers in different areas of development of the country or from different areas of activity, they can ideational communicate with difficulty, due to terminological and even conceptual differences which are often only phonetic cover . (Ilut v. P. 2000, p 22)

Given the nature of the theme, we specify that for the elements of language of social work professional, we will hold besides the translation in English the original Romanian version, which will be put in parenthesis.

1. Research objectives

General objective: To capture of the ambiguities of the specialized language (formal and informal) to create the premises for a terminological consensus within social work.

O1. Identification of the language ambiguities of social work, reflected in the relevant legislation.

O2. Discovering the existence of language ambiguities in the literature of social work.

O3. Determination of the preferences of specialists for using certain terms in light of editing the first dictionary in Romanian, folded on field realities.

O4. Indication of concepts that create blockings in the process of interaction between social worker-client and may also increase the marginalization of applicants for social services.

O5. Representation of the views of specialists relative to the region of origin, and activity sector.

O6. Capturing the professionals' attitudes towards the concepts with emotional load in terms of deviance amplification.

O7. Analysis of the professional community perception on the ambiguity of the specialized language

O8. Capturing the conceptual differences between formal and informal language in the interactions between social worker and client.

2. PHASE I

2.1. Social work legislation

Social work legislation has certain specific features determined by the steps that Romania had taken in the past twenty-two years. The situation was more complex because of Romania's adherence to the structures of EU in 2007, as resulted from a paper published in 2008. New realities resulting from Romania's membership of the European Community requires a comprehensive approach to the national legislation. Even if unification with the rest of Europe, primarily economic, does not prejudice the national sovereignty, yet the content of Community rules cannot be ignored. (Tomita 2008, p 94).

Because laws are developed by specialists who don't have a direct qualification in social work, there are some ambiguities and parallel uses of the concepts in the field.

Concept	Reference in social work legislation
Chapter.2. point 2.3 Handicapped persons assisted by family receive some social benefits from the state which most often are not fully accompanied by access to the actual physical environment and active protection measures.	<i>STRATEGY of September 29, 2005: for the protection, integration and social inclusion of handicapped people, in 2006-2013 period</i> <i>"Equal opportunities for handicapped people - towards a society without discrimination."</i>

	<p><i>ISSUER: GOVERNMENT</i> <i>PUBLISHED IN: OFFICIAL MONITOR no. 919 of October 14, 2005.</i></p>
<p>ART. 4 (3) Welfare clients are entitled to welfare canteen services based on social worker report (anchetă socială), according to the mayor.</p>	<p><i>LAW no. 208 of December 15, 1997: About the social canteens.</i> <i>ISSUER: PARLIAMENT</i> <i>PUBLISHED IN: OFFICIAL MONITOR no. 363 of December 17, 1997.</i></p>
<p>ART. 63 (1) Claims under Articles. 61 para. (3) are solved by the specialized court, in the council room, with the obligatory participation of the prosecutor. Presentation by the Direction of the social worker report (anchetă socială) regarding the child is mandatory.</p>	<p><i>LAW no. 273 of June 21, 2004</i> <i>the legal status of adoption.</i> <i>ISSUER: PARLIAMENT</i> <i>PUBLISHED IN: OFFICIAL MONITOR no. 557 of June 23, 2004.</i></p>
<p>ART. 6 f) Presents and supports documentation made in front of the authorities or competent authorities, acting with the priority to prevent child institutionalization or for the institutionalized</p>	<p><i>DECISION no. 205 of May 19, 1997: on the organization of local public administration authorities in the area of child protection.</i> <i>ISSUER: GOVERNMENT</i> <i>PUBLISHED IN: OFFICIAL MONITOR no. 100 of May</i></p>

<p>child's (copil institutionalizat) reintegration into a family environment by supporting its natural family or finding a substitute family for the child;</p>	<p>26, 1997.</p>
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<p>ART. 24 Social workers act with honesty and responsibility to the clients (beneficiari), institutions and society, in accordance with the rules of professional conduct, adopted by the professional community through the College.</p> <p>ART. 19 Main purpose of the social worker's activity is to assist individuals and communities in need, getting involved in identifying, understanding, correct assessment of social problems.</p> <p>ART. 20 (2) Social workers provide</p>	<p><i>LAW no. 466 of November 4, 2004: on the the social worker status.</i> <i>ISSUER: PARLIAMENT</i> <i>PUBLISHED IN: OFFICIAL MONITOR no. 1088 of November 23, 2004.</i></p>
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