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Language and its Psychosomatic Clinical Meaning

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Abstract

The text proposes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding speech, language and psychosomatic phenomena, with an emphasis on psychoanalysis. Initially, it presents the main schools of thought in psychology - structuralism, functionalism, gestalt, psychoanalysis, behaviorism, humanism, and cognitivism - each offering different perspectives on human behavior and mental processes. Next, the focus falls on somatization, understood as a physical expression of psychic conflicts. The text highlights that psychosomatic symptoms often resist the classical physiological explanation, which requires a deeper look from psychoanalysis. McDougall classifies somatization into three forms: logical (neurotic), alexithymic (psychosomatic), and paralogical (psychotic). The concept of "organ thinking", especially in patients with psychotic or borderline conditions, is explored as a primitive and unconscious form of communication, in which the body "speaks" through symptoms. Bion contributes his theory of the alpha function, distinguishing alpha elements (digested thoughts) from beta (undigested) elements, which, when not transformed into language, can manifest as somatizations. Somatization can act as a defense against psychic collapse, functioning as a symbolic substitute for speech. The articulation between emotion, thought and body is fundamental to understand psychosomatic suffering. Finally, the text proposes the concept of "psychosomatic ness", essential to interpret why certain organs are chosen as the seat of symptoms, reflecting a logic of the unconscious - not rational, but symbolic, affective and mythopoetic.

Keywords: Language; Psychoanalysis; Psychology; Psychosomatic; Symptoms.

Introduction

The issue of speech and language has to be approached from the interdisciplinary clinic, taking into account psychoanalysis, phoniatry, speech therapy and occupational therapy. In the present work we will deal with psychoanalytic interpretations, mainly based on the psychosomatic approach.

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of thought in psychology offer unique insights into closure shape perceptions. the mind and how each perspective has shaped our understanding of human behavior and mental pro- Psychoanalysis: developed by Sigmund Freud, cesses.

frameworks or perspectives through which psy- sires in shaping personality and behavior. chologists understand human behavior and mental cal phenomena.

sights into psychology's theoretical foundations ing behavior. and practical applications.

Seven of the main schools of thought in psychol- thinking, memory, perception, ogy are:

processes into their basic components to under- around them. stand the structure of the mind. It relies on introceptions.

Functionalism: emphasizes the adaptive functions man behavior and mental processes. of behavior and mental processes in helping indiin everyday life.

Gestalt psychology: views the mind as organized ing down mental processes into their fundamental wholes rather than a sum of individual parts. It ex- components. amines how the organization of sensory elements

From behaviorism to humanism, the seven schools and the principles of figure-ground, similarity, and

psychoanalysis explores the unconscious mind and how childhood experiences affect behavior. It em-Schools of thought in psychology represent distinct phasizes the role of unconscious conflicts and de-

processes. These schools, such as behaviorism, Behaviorism: focuses on observable, overt behavpsychoanalysis, cognitive psychology, and human- iors and the environmental factors that influence istic psychology, offer unique theories, methods, them. It emphasizes learning through conditioning and principles to interpret and address psychologi- and reinforcement, largely ignoring internal mental processes.

Learning more about psychology's different Humanism: emphasizes the inherent goodness and schools of thought can help a better understand of potential for growth in individuals. It focuses on the range and complexity of human nature. Explor- personal experiences, self-actualization, and the ing the various schools of thought also offers in- importance of subjective perception in understand-

Cognitivism: focuses on mental processes such as and problemsolving. It examines how individuals process infor-Structuralism: focuses on breaking down mental mation, make decisions, and interact with the world

spection to analyze sensations, feelings, and per- These schools of thought represent different historical and theoretical perspectives in psychology, each offering unique insights into the study of hu-

viduals survive and thrive in their environments. It The structuralist school of thought was the first explores how the mind works to fulfill its purpose school of thought in psychology, founded by Wilhelm Wundt in the late 19th century. It aimed to analyze the structure of the human mind by break-

AJMCRR, 2025 Volume 4 | Issue 8 | 2 of 10 method of self-observation and reflection, to exam- nent than functionalism in popularity, its emphasis ine sensations, feelings, and perceptions. They be- on the practical aspects of psychology and the lieved that by systematically studying these ele-functionality of mental processes left a lasting imments, they could uncover the underlying structure pact on the field. of consciousness.

form more complex psychological phenomena.

lack of emphasis on observable behavior.

and theories.

adapting to their environment.

Rather than breaking down consciousness into individual elements, functionalists emphasized the con- Gestalt psychologists also studied other principles tinuous flow of experiences. They sought to under- of perception, such as proximity, similarity, clostand how various mental processes served practi- sure, and continuity, which describe how we group cal purposes in everyday life. This approach led elements together to form meaningful perceptions. them to investigate topics such as attention, memory, emotion, and problem-solving, aiming to The psychoanalytic school of thought in psycholouncover the adaptive functions of these processes.

Wundt and his followers utilized introspection, a While behaviorism eventually became more promi-

Today, concepts from functionalism continue to Structuralists focused on understanding the basic influence research in areas such as cognitive psybuilding blocks of mental experiences, such as sen-chology and evolutionary psychology, underscoring sations and thoughts, and how they combined to its enduring relevance in understanding human behavior and cognition.

While structuralism significantly impacted the de- The Gestalt school of thought in psychology focusvelopment of psychology as a scientific discipline, es on how people perceive and experience the it eventually gave way to other schools of thought, world around them as organized wholes rather than such as functionalism and behaviorism, which criti- just a collection of individual parts. The word cized its reliance on subjective introspection and "Gestalt" comes from German and roughly translates to "whole" or "pattern".

Nonetheless, structuralism laid the groundwork for Gestalt psychologists believe that our perceptions the systematic study of mental processes and paved are more than just the sum of their parts and that the way for future psychological research methods our minds naturally organize sensory information into meaningful patterns and structures.

William James introduced the functionalist school One of the key principles of Gestalt psychology is of psychology, which shifted the focus from simply the idea of "figure-ground perception." This princianalyzing the structure of the mind, as seen in ple suggests that we naturally perceive objects as structuralism, to exploring why mental processes distinct from their background. For example, when and behaviors exist and how they aid individuals in we look at a picture, we can easily distinguish the main objects (the figures) from the background (the ground).

gy was founded by Sigmund Freud, who believed

AJMCRR, 2025 Volume 4 | Issue 8 | 3 of 10 Freud suggested that much of our behavior is driv- na. en by unconscious urges and desires of which we may not be aware.

One of the central concepts in the psychodynamic internal thoughts or unconscious desires. model of mind is the idea of the id, ego, and supermands of the id, the superego, and the real world.

is characterized by a different focus on pleasure learned through associations. and conflict. The resolution of these conflicts during childhood shapes adult personality.

chewing, and conflicts during this stage might lead ishment. to issues with dependency or aggression later in life.

psychology, they have also been subject to criti- we act. cism and debate, particularly regarding their emphasis on sexual and aggressive instincts and the The behaviorist school of thought has had a signifilack of empirical evidence to support some of his cant impact on psychology by providing insights claims.

that unconscious thoughts and desires greatly influ- Behaviorism is a school of psychology that focuses ence human behavior. According to psychoanalytic on observable behaviors rather than inner thoughts theory, our minds are divided into three parts: the and feelings. It suggests that behaviors can be studconscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious. ied scientifically, just like other natural phenome-

> Behaviorists believe that our actions are influenced by our environment and experiences rather than

ego. The id represents the primal, unconscious part One of the key figures in behaviorism was Ivan of the psyche. The superego is the moralistic part Pavlov, who famously conducted experiments with of the mind that strives for perfection. Finally, dogs. He discovered that dogs could be trained to Freud believed the ego mediated between the de- associate a neutral stimulus, like the ringing of a bell, with food. Eventually, the dogs would salivate at the sound of the bell alone, even when no food Freud also proposed that personality is formed was present. This process, known as classical conthrough a series of psychosexual stages. Each stage ditioning, demonstrated how behaviors could be

Another important behaviorist was Burrhus Frederic Skinner, who introduced the concept of For example, the oral stage, which occurs during operant conditioning. Skinner believed that behavinfancy, is focused on pleasure from sucking and iors could be shaped through reinforcement or pun-

For example, if a behavior is followed by a reward, such as praise or a treat, it's more likely to be re-Psychoanalysis, the therapeutic approach devel- peated in the future. On the other hand, if a behavoped by Freud, aims to bring unconscious conflicts ior is followed by a negative consequence, like and desires into conscious awareness through tech- criticism or a timeout, it's less likely to occur niques such as free association and dream analysis. again. Skinner's work emphasized the role of consequences in shaping behavior, highlighting the While Freud's ideas have been highly influential in importance of the environment in determining how

into how behaviors are learned and influenced.

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tion, or unconscious processes, humanistic psychol- of the therapeutic process. ogy focuses on human experiences, feelings, and the individual's unique perspective.

ing the best version of oneself.

Humanistic psychologists believe all individuals behavior. have an innate drive towards self-actualization and personal growth.

awareness and self-understanding in shaping be- ment, process it, and then produce a response. havior and experiences. They believe that individuliefs.

external factors or unconscious drives, humanistic ize and interpret information. psychology strongly emphasizes the individual's in achieving personal growth and fulfillment.

Humanistic psychology has significantly impacted various areas of psychology, including therapy, ed-

The humanistic school of thought in psychology ucation, and personal development. Humanistic focuses on understanding and promoting human approaches, such as Carl Rogers's client-centered growth, potential, and self-fulfillment. Unlike other therapy, emphasize empathy, genuineness, and unschools of thought that emphasize behavior, cogni- conditional positive regard as essential components

The cognitive school of thought in psychology focuses on how people think, perceive, remember, One of the key concepts in humanistic psychology and solve problems. Unlike behaviorism, which is self-actualization, a term coined by psychologist emphasizes observable behaviors, cognitive psy-Abraham Maslow. Self-actualization refers to the chology explores internal mental processes, such as process of realizing one's full potential and becom- attention, memory, language, and problem-solving. Cognitive psychologists believe that understanding these processes is crucial for understanding human

One of the key ideas in cognitive psychology is the concept of information processing. This perspec-Another important aspect of humanistic psychology tive views the mind as a complex informationis the idea of the self and self-concept. Humanistic processing system like a computer. According to psychologists emphasize the importance of self- this view, we take in information from our environ-

als strive to maintain a positive self-image and to Cognitive psychologists study how we encode, align their actions with their core values and be- store, and retrieve information, as well as how we make decisions and solve problems.

Humanistic psychology also emphasizes the im- Another important aspect of cognitive psychology portance of personal agency and responsibility. Un- is the study of schemas and mental representations. like other schools of thought that might emphasize Schemas are mental frameworks that help us organ-

capacity to make choices and take control of their For example, we might have a schema for a "dog" own lives. This perspective highlights the im- that includes characteristics such as four legs, fur, portance of personal autonomy and empowerment and barking. These schemas influence how we perceive and remember information, as well as how we make judgments and decisions.

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cognition in behavior. For example, researchers rhea due to a pseudocyesis, resulting from a fantasy have studied how people use mental shortcuts, or of incest towards the analyst and, in the same paheuristics, to make decisions quickly and how cog-tient, sometime later, but in other circumstances, nitive biases and errors in thinking can lead to irra- amenorrhea was interpreted as a defense in the face tional behavior. The cognitive school of thought in of her difficulties at work (given the fact that the psychology has profoundly impacted our under- man does not menstruate and is considered strong, standing of human thought and behavior, influenc- in this phallocentric society), led to a better undering fields such as education, therapy, and artificial standing of its somatization in the patient. Howevintelligence (1-4).

It is very important to understand that the lack of principles of our physiology, and which would be knowledge about the intimate mechanisms of psy-more within the logic of the absurd. For this reason, chosomatic phenomena causes difficulties to psy- in addition to alerting colleagues to the therapeutic choanalytic treatment, as well as a transferential impasses (as Poci has already done), caused by withdrawal. This fact was observed during the anal- psychosomatic symptoms that are not very compreysis in which the patients, after interpretations hensible, we also decided to suggest a hypothesis reaching the core of the psychosomatic symptoms, about the various types of somatization (Panel 1). were able to obtain insight and then elaboration.

Cognitive psychology also emphasizes the role of The following examples can clarify better: amenorer, we also verified the existence of a certain somatization, difficult to explain within the deductive

Panel 1

LOGICAL SOMATIZATIONS		PARALOGICAL SOMATIZATIONS	
(Processes governed by Aristotelian logic)		(Processes governed by paleology)	
DIGESTIVE DISORDERS	ENDOCRINE DISTURBANCES	DIGESTIVE DISORDERS	VASCULAR DISOR- DERS
Anorexia, headache, vomiting, dyspepsia and hysterical diarrhea (due to rejection of supposedly toxic or infected food or boredom, due to conflict of situation). Bulimia (by situation factors: appetizing eating associated with annoyances justifiable by conscience). VASCULAR DISORDERS Hypertension and heart attack (due to stress, bulimia, rejection of a loved one or position, intolerance to frustrations, competitive anguish, etc.). Cephalalgia (bad thinking or fantasy causing guilt). Allergic rhinitis (eliminating something bad, e.g., envied penis). AGGRESSIVE-IMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR (marital conflict for reasons of situation) Physiognomic expression (smile as a communication of feelings).	Amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea and menorrhagia (by conflict with femininity, defending oneself by identification with the man who is strong because he does not menstruate), pseudocyesis (fantasy of incestuous relationship). Premenstrual tension (excess of estrogens, corticosteroids, aldosterone and antidiuretic hormones due to conflicts with the maternal imago). Frigidity and impotence (by conscious fantasies of a repugnant or dangerous object. Hypothyroidism - hypometabolic syndrome (drowsiness-fetalization). DEPRESSIVE STATES Reactive depression, psychogenic rheumatism, or masked depression (low: serotonin, corticosteroids, endorphins, enkephalins (?) due to guilty feelings of a situation associated or not with the unconscious problem.	Pregnancy vomiting (rejection of the fetus by the anatomically wrong route, the digestive route, when the vaginal route could be used, by abortion). Mental anorexia (as a form of thanatism by identification with a bizarre object). Gastroduodenal ulcer (digestively bad mother or bad object, internalized superimposed on the real image, wife or boss). Jaundice (unconscious and inadequately expressed envy). ENDOCRINE DISTURBANCES Idiosyncratic reactions to birth control pills (awakening from the lethargic object, imago from the evil mother). Frigidity or impotence (by fantasy of the persecutory "combined figure"). Transsexualism (penis is the representation of the "combined figure". Diabetes mellitus (inadequately expressed and unconscious envy, bulimia due to anguish, and thanatism). DEPRESSIVE STATES Self-mutilation (partial suicides). Suicide (increased: dehydroiso-androsterone, corticosteroids, and phenylglycol.	Malignant-spastic hypertension (due to identification with a bizarre object, intolerance to frustrations, predominance of the death instinct, or thanatism). Ozena (imago of parents as putrefied corpse). Lupus and other autoimmune diseases such as thanatism. AGGRESSIVE-IMPULSIVE BE-HAVIOR Amygdaloid core syndrome. Electroencephalogram positive temporal by: aggression directed at the individual himself by a bizarre object, intolerance to frustration and hatred of reality. Physiognomic expression (smile as evacuation of bad feeling).

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The language of the organs

on (6) and Von Weiszaecker (7) are, in our opin- es of psychosomatic diseases. ion, of the psychotic type, and this type is, in neurotic patients, much more frequent than is thought. There is often disharmony between thought consists of (8,9).

gans" seem, at first glance, to be daring expres- vidual becoming aware of such a mechanism. sions when approaching somatization. However, stand these expressions (6,8,10).

The broad concept of thought, which is mostly un- even before the secondary process; in this secondconscious from the descriptive point of view, is ary process, thought is cognitive and would correprobably the one that accounts for the concept of spond to the depressive position or the alphadeep structures of language that Chomsky de- element, respectively, of the Kleinian and Bionian scribed (11).

Brain phenomena are closely related to peripheral for Bion, is accompanied by the distancing of the modifications, whether muscular, hormonal, enzy-sensorial (in the sense of the use of the mind under matic or immunological, which is why both theo- the principle of reality) which is intimately linked ries of thought (central or peripheral) do not satis- to memory and desire, as well as possessive (the

McDougall classifies somatization as: neurotic each other; it would be the psychosomatic theory

(would correspond to the concept of alexithymia) We will have to see man not only as Homo sapiand discourse of the psychotic body (would corre- ens, but also as Homo mythicus or phantasiosus, that is, governed not only by Stoic, Aristotelian and modern logical reason, but also directed by paleological principles (10,12) that guide unconscious These thoughts of the organs in the patients of Bi-fantasies; and these are, in our view, the main caus-

We must, therefore, study psychotic communica- (predominant elaboration of the cortex and the pretion more and more in order to decode it in order to frontal region) and emotion (visceral brain), generbetter understand patients. Freud already said: "The ating somatizations. Other times, somatization bebody mixes with conversation". In our view, the haves as a defense; in order not to suffer from a whole question is to know what this conversation greater evil (psychosis), we prefer lesser evil, that is, an evil object fixed in an organ, under control. It is the apparent mind-body dissociation. Certain "The spoken body, the language of the organs, the psychosomatic aspects of the personality are dislanguage of the organs or the thought of the or- placed to an organ or apparatus, without the indi-

the introductions of the studies of the origin of According to Freud, the formation of thought thoughts by the Freudian school, associated with would be linked to the primary process, that is, to knowledge of other authors, will allow us to under- the experiences of satisfaction and, therefore, to vital needs (expression of emotion) (9). We know that emotions are expressed through summation, schools. The origin of thoughts we find in the infant in rudimentary form. The arising of thought, fy; however, together, they would complement sensorial conspires with possessiveness, not giving

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space for thinking) (13,14).

sensitive data and these emotions) and are neces- providing a means of restricting action (9). sary for intelligence, memory, dreaming and distinction between the conscious and the uncon- Bion thinks that some kinds of thought, existing in ments are formed that would correspond to the (16). primitive phase of development. These beta elethoughts, but they can be used in projective identi- development of thinking and the ability to think. fication and are important in the production of acthere, thought would originate. For the Bionian hurts". conception it is the primitive notion of the nonobject or absent object, which is the first thought.

Thinking was originally unconscious to the point that it rose beyond mere ideation and turned to the Bion (15) calls the alpha function the activity that relations between the impressions of objects and has the property of acting on sensory impressions became endowed with further qualities, which and emotions, to the extent that the alpha function were perceptible to consciousness through their is successful, alpha elements are produced, capable connections with the traces of the memory of of producing thoughts, (because they digest these words. Freud attributes to thought the function of

scious. If emotions and sensations are not digested, the beginning, would be related, such as ideograms that is, if the alpha function is disturbed, beta ele- and vision, rather than with speech and hearing

ments do not lend themselves to use as dream The inability to tolerate frustration can obstruct the

tion (and, as we will see, in somatizations). With In view of the concepts presented and discussed in beta elements, there is no distinction between ob- order to understand psychosomatic diseases, espeject and representation. The beta elements, alt- cially when talking about communication at the hough they are stored, are not memories, but undi- psychotic or pathosomatic level, the spoken body, gested facts and therefore not usable. They must be either by communication through logical somatizaevacuated through the eyes, mouth, anus, touch, tion (within the psychopathophysiology governed etc., and may constitute somatizations. The baby's by Aristotelian, Stoic or modern logic) or by pafirst thoughts are treated by projective identifica- ralogical somatization (in which the language of tion or evacuation, as if they were responding to an the organs is incomprehensible or incoherent withaccumulation of stimuli. The affections (first repre- in the experimental Aristotelian logic, but govsentations) would correspond to a state of frustra- erned by paleologic or magic) or schizophrenic tion, to a sensation of absence of breasts, to a sen-language of the organs or thought at a pathosomatsation of emptiness; to get out of this sensation, the ic level or crazed affect, we consider it indispensababy uses proto-thought. On a second level, the ble to apply the concept of psychosomatic state, appearance and ability to think would depend on otherwise we will not be able to interpret the reathe possibility of tolerating frustrations, that is, of son for the choice of an organ or system when afenduring this emptiness left by the absence of the fected by the same cause. We will be like this with breast, in thought. In the Freudian conception, the Shakespeare (Sonnet 73)... "But concentrated prejabsent object that hallucination uses and, from udice. And with them it is seen that thinking

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Conflict of interest

None.

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