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PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE AND NURSING DOMAIN

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When we come across a technical-scientific text, the terms used in its elaboration are the first traits that call our attention, because they reveal the *language of specialty*, that is, the language proper to the area of knowledge in which it was written. Although the *language of specialty* shares the morphological, syntactic and semantic aspects of the *general language*, what distinguishes it from the latter is lexical selection, which is why the terms included in it are its most evident feature.¹

In other words, the vocabulary typical of a particular professional group is equivalent to the *terminology* of the specialty, that is, to the set of terms used in professional practice and that configure the *language* proper to that area of knowledge.² It can be affirmed that the set of terms used by a specialized area delimits, circumscribes, indicates which are the phenomena that are in the knowledge *domain* of that specific area.

Each area points out the patterns, forms, and structures that guide it in creating knowledge. This process involves the explication of the philosophy that expresses the beliefs and values of this area of knowledge; and the explication of the concepts representative of the phenomena that delimit their *domain* of knowledge. The two aspects mentioned, philosophy and concepts, are materialized in the elaboration of theories that articulate, in testable propositions in the empirical world, the representative concepts of the phenomena that are in the knowledge *domain* of each specific area.³

With the creation of Nursing knowledge, it was not or is not being different because, as a result of the activity of assigning meaning to the *world of Nursing*, concepts related to phenomena of the *domain* of specific knowledge applicable to the different fields of practice have been identified and defined professional - teaching, care, research and management/administration of nursing care. Especially, these concepts have been interrelated in *theoretical propositions* that reflect multiple perspectives from which it is possible to express the beliefs and values of the area in relation to these

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phenomena, and that have determined innovations, evolutions and/or revolutions in the knowledge and in the making of Nursing – *nursing theories*.³

Resulting, therefore, from the professional effort to achieve the status of science, *nursing theories* organize the phenomena that are in the knowledge *domain* of the area around four *central concepts*, widely recognized as the most recurrent in the literature - nursing, human being), environment (physical, social and symbolic) and health, considered as the disciplinary matrix, or *metaparadigm of Nursing*.⁴

The four central concepts, as well as other concepts that articulate them in the theoretical propositions elaborated by the authors of the theories of the area, participate in the construction of the *special language of Nursing*, that is, the construction of the particular vocabulary used by the socio-professional group constituted by the professional and occupational nursing, in the face of common interest, or the common purpose of naming phenomena and activities relevant to the profession.³

Interrelating the four central concepts as organizers of other concepts that are in the *domain* of knowledge of the area, it is possible to emphasize as relevant for Nursing those that concern the interaction of the *person* with the *environment* and that can be influenced by acts of *Nursing* which aim at the best possible health of the *person* being cared for. In summary, the concepts that can be pointed out as relevant to Nursing relate to people's responses to life and health conditions (diagnoses); and the acts that Nursing performs to positively influence these responses (interventions), in order to achieve or maintain the best possible conditions of health and well-being (results) of the person.⁵

As already stated on another occasion,³ if we want to promote Nursing as a science, we need to make the language expressing it objective; to guarantee the understanding and the intersubjective recognition of the meaning of the concepts included in the *professional language*; and situate the terms that constitute it in a common universe of perception and communication – the universe instituted by the Nursing culture.

Ensuring the understanding and intersubjective recognition of the meaning of the concepts included in the *professional language* is, in our opinion, a fundamental aspect, since it increases its potential of practical applicability, be it in teaching, research or assistance, assuming a fundamental role in the creation and organization of knowledge, in the conformation of the *domain* of knowledge and in the visualization of Nursing practice. It is essential, therefore, to watch for its evolution and to apply this knowledge in our daily practice.

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