Mobbning, intriger, offerskap
-att tala om sig själv som mobbad i arbetslivet

av

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Akademisk avhandling

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Abstract


This thesis is a study of bullying narratives, mainly co-produced in a process of ongoing interaction. The focus is on how narrators rhetorically organize their storytelling and identity work by using discursive resources. The empirical material consists of 12 interviews with, and 12 written stories by people who have been exposed to workplace bullying plus information from three websites about bullying, and previous research.

The overarching aim of the study is to identify how a bullying discourse is produced, reproduced, challenged and negotiated in bullied persons’ narratives. Specific aims are to determine how bullying is portrayed publicly, how narrators with experience of being bullied build their stories, how the narratives stand in relation to victimization, what makes it possible to talk about vulnerability and what are its limits, and finally to develop a narrative approach.

Theoretically and methodologically, the study has its basis in narrative analysis, discursive psychology, conversation analysis, and metaphor analysis. The study shows how the narrators categorize themselves as active, competent, and consensus seeking. They resist being victimized, but by their use of the interpretative repertoire and a standard story of bullying, they nevertheless become indirectly victimized. What’s at stake, in the narratives, is the question of guilt, which they rhetorically evade by the use of different metaphors. These metaphors depict bullying as a mystery, a lifelong source of suffering, a transformation, a learning experience, a battle, a contagious virus, and a trap. The narrators are constrained by the narrative conditions, the interpretative repertoire, standard story, and narrative form and content – a story of good and evil when creating their own story. The narrative conditions at the same time set the limit for expressing oneself in the identity work. This also means we are part of the production and reproduction of the bullying discourse when I, as a researcher, and the narrators use the repertoire and the standard story in mutual understanding.

Keywords: narrative analysis, discursive psychology, metaphor analysis, interpretative repertoire, rhetorical resources, victimization, workplace bullying, identity work.

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