Social and psychological benefits of self-dislosure

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Abstract

The analysis of the concept of "self-disclosure" and implicitly, of the benefits it has upon the psychological and social dimension, reveals from an epistemic viewpoint the need for a theoretical and practical foundation well outlined from a scientific viewpoint. Thus, a comparative study at the theoretical level, but also at the level of inter-subjective practice transposes the results obtained over time in the area of psychological and social consequences and effects. Moreover, such epistemic results acquire epistemic validity in the inter-subjective field and space insofar as we can see, from our point of view, a series of (affective, cognitive) benefits related to the interpersonalrelationships or to the therapeutic relationship between the patient and the physician (analyst).

Keywords: *self-disclosure, inter-subjectivity theory, inter-subjective field, reciprocity norm*

Introduction

The communication understood as a global paradigm of the interpersonal relationships (Mucchielli, 2005) places the human being at the level of the discursive understanding. In fact, the communication itself means transmitting and expressing a relational-social paradigm. The meaning of this term refers to the ontological and etymological dimension of the word *cominecare* (which highlights a religious connotation equivalent to the phrase "to share from") or of the word ("comunico", "communication" - from Latin), as both the conceptual dimensions highlight at an explanatory level expressions such as "to notify", "to be in contact"/"in connection with". Under these conditions, to communicate, to share means to convey something about oneself to someone, it means to give up a part of one's intimacy for a period of time, it even means to lend someone something of one's own person (thoughts, moods, feelings, and so on).

However, to receive communication can stand for receiving what one can call *the self-disclosure* from the other and an acceptance of one's own emotional states. The self-disclosure understood and explained from the forecasting and anticipation perspective (Baxter, 1990) or the perspective of *the intentional verbal disclosure* (Cozby, 1973), perceptible *as a pragmatic model of*

communication (García-Jiménez, 2014) or *relevant technique* (Knight, 2009) or seen as *an attributenecessary to the concept of formal plan* in psychiatry (McGahey, Waghom, Lloyd, Morrissey, Williams, 2014) transposesat the level of the intersective field a pre-established conformity, anchored between potential and cryptic. That is why, whatever form is created, voluntary or involuntary (Greenson, 2016), *one of its benefits lies in the very relational asymmetry* (carefully analyzed by SándorFerenczi when proposing to reconsider the countertransference in terms of self-disclosure from the perspective of the inter-subjective theory) *which it should imply in order to protect the person whoperforms the self-disclosure and the personwhoperforms the analysis*.

The self-disclosure and the reciprocity

Even if the process of self-disclosure itself highlights the potential subsequent nature of the social contact with the other (Farber, 2006), one can appreciate the role of the affective dimension in the structure of the human personality. Thus, beyond the cathartic function of the transmitter, the self-disclosure is a process of communication. In terms of relational psychoanalysis one can talk about the relationship between analyst and patient.

The dynamics of the social and mental life clearly show that at least one person gains in communication. In the case of the self-disclosure, the broadcaster becomes a winner precisely because he or she assumes such an attitude. One can even admit that such an attitude also expresses the qualitative relational type towards the person to whom it is revealed.

On the other hand, the reorganization of the experience is done by facilitating the understanding, as well as by assimilating the inter-subjective space, a state of fact that positions the analyst in a beneficial situation to the process of intercommunication with the patient.Moreover, from the perspective of the social psychology, the self-disclosure acquires a special character, especially in the personal area (Jourard, 1964; Eşi, 2015) or inthe gender differences (Hill, Stull, 1987) or when it is extended in the dimension of the interpersonal attractions (Jones, Gordon , 1972).

At the same time, we specify, in this context that the way in which *the self-disclosure* and *the concealment* materialize reveals a form of communication confined to the dimension of conviction and of persuasion.The issue is how onecan correlate the attitude of the sender, whoperforms the self-disclosure (the sender) with the attitude of the one who receives the disclosure (the receiver).

The analysis of self-disclosure from the perspective of the attitude, but also from that of opinion, money, taste, interest, work, personality, body (Jourard, Lasakow, 1958) *reveals, among others, the benefits related to the knowledge of social norms or family or differences between gender and race*.

The self-disclosure and the interpersonal relationships

In the process of self-disclosure, trust prevails, and to trust the other means to appreciate the type of relationship between the sender and the receiver of the "self-disclosure", sometme with humour (Eşi, 2017)

And the trust translates very well into this dimension of attitude and interrelationship with the other, as well as the amount of information revealed on the basis of reciprocity, also called "dyadic effect" (Jourard, 1959). Therefore, *the self-disclosure based upon reciprocity* highlights a certain way of being in relation to the other, through which the emotional state of both is connected by the very state of trust.

Trusting someone means appreciating the degree of comfort that exists at the time and after the process of the self-disclosure. Moreover, the degree of relational comfort expresses the very quality of interpersonal relationships, as well as of the information revealed (Jourard, 1959; Eşi, 2014).The self-disclosure itselfflies precisely in and through this way of participation in a communication process, of a social nature.

Thus, the performance of similar behaviors through the "reciprocity norm" (Derlega, Harris, Chaikin, 1973), a concept to which Gouldner (1960) devoted a thorough analysis and whose effects have been very well summarized by some specialists in the field (Burger ,Horita, Kinoshita, Roberts, Vera, 1997; Eşi, 2013), is a quantified form of the process of rendering and transposing information by the fact that "self-disclosure generates more self-disclosure" (Boncu, Turliuc, 2016).Therefore, such an assumption pragmatically transposes the role that evaluation and description have as forms of self-disclosure, from a psychological point of view, in the social plan.

The self-acceptance to express the self-disclosure also implies a state of self-assessment thatis done consciously. At the same time, the assessment implicitly involves a process of description in an intimate, affective way.Thus, the decrease of mental discomfort becomes more than obvious as the negative emotions are replaced by the positive emotions.

In this way, positive affective states only illustrate a state of well-being for the human being. In other words, the transposition into an area of the manifestation of extroverted behavior can be a beneficial result of the process of self-disclosure.Such an image illustrates the pragmatic nature of the attempt of self-knowledge.

We can also notice this time *the pragmatism of the self-disclosure in the sphere of interpersonal relationship psychology, especially if the affective states are of a positive nature.* An example in this sense can be given by the important role that relational self-disclosure has – different from the personal self-disclosure – at the level of communication.

Although the psychological resistance becomes evident in the case of self-disclosure, the relationship of subordination of the second (the self-disclosure) to existing social norms *makes a relevant contribution in the process of understanding the interpersonal intimacy* (Pleşa, 2017). Moreover, such an identifiable situational process in the area of comprehensibility of relational aspects reveals only the reciprocal relationship between the two actors participating in the act of self-disclosure.

Conclusions

By summarizing the ideas presented in this paper we can deduce the following:

- One of the major benefits of the self-disclosure is given by the cathartic function itself which expresses people's desire to reveal themselves in times when they do not feel good emotionally/mentally;
- The second benefit, which we can highlight, is that the repression of some frustrations at the mental level can be diminished and even removed through the process of self-disclosure;
- A third benefit is that in the case of the self-disclosure, the interpersonal knowledge acquires positive affective valences and the connections between people can coagulate.

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