Findings: Counsellor Self Concept

1. Bilingual people have a sense of duality

'language is a way we describe the world to ourselves'

'I enter a different paradigm; without knowing I'm shifting the way I see myself in the world and everyone around' 'there will be a shift' 'into an old persona'

2. Release from previous cultural norms giving more freedom of expression in English

'I feel easier expressing my emotions in English.... where I grew up, there wasn't a lot of emotional expression'

'less inhibition whereas in Korean, I think we tend to be a bit avoidant and if I'm angry, I'm starting to think in English'

3. Some words and phrases that cannot be translated

'I like using these sayings, but you can't switch them over.'

'then I found myself in a difficult place, but interesting and challenging, where I had to find the fitting words ...'

'If I literally interpreted, that would be wrong because there would be another context.'

4. Most research subjects reported remembering things nonverbally

'Something that I have experience deeply and as [a memory] really in my body.'

'The thoughts are quite abstract in my mind. I don't think in words ... Almost like a symbol, some ideas, and then I express in in whatever language, I need to use.'

'If I have a memory it is more to do with the images than a language.'

5. Cultural and historical influences

'around being German, there was a lot of shame [for me] and still is around being German.'

'that it will still be uncomfortable too; being with the raw emotions in Korean because there has been so much social constraint' 'dealing with men as a more of a neutral person did help'

'But lately I feel there is something for me to be discovered in it ... there's something positive also in it that I have pushed away.'

6. Third space; not fully belonging to either group as time progresses

'... in another way, I feel like I am equally not proficient in either language.'

'[During covid]I tried to travel ... and there was a lot of especially legal stuff I couldn't really understand ... I realized these are all new words'

'Language does move on and some words, like slang words, I didn't know that they exist.'

'I would struggle ... I think that it's a cultural thing that rather than linguistic thing.

Examining the perceptions of bi and multilingual counsellors on the influence of language and code switching on the counselling process.



University Centre Weston Hor

Honours top up dissertation

Methodology

This is a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews interviewing 4 counsellors from the Czech Republic, Korea, Germany and Italy who have UK qualifications and came to the UK as adults. Participants come from random geographic areas and have never met.

Research limitations

Though saturation was reached a larger sample size would have been more definitive and potentially given access to a wider range of languages. The Italian participant gave some anomalies in the data which would have been interesting to follow up if there was more time by interviewing more Italian counsellors to see if it was personality, age or culture that made the difference.

Further resear

Language as a link to collective, generational and cultural

Consider the influence of age, reasons for leaving and second generation bilingual immigrant populations on results.

Potential differences between indigenous bilingualism (e.g. Welsh) and immigrant bilingualism.

Findings: Counselling

1. Authenticity

'authenticity is a really important aspect for me.'
'I access my sense of self ...in the context'

'I think 'me' is always 'me', really.'

2. Focus on the essence of a person or emotion rather than words

'you can sense the person'

'It's the sentiment that you're looking for rather than the actual verbalization.'

'So, I will question what a statement means ...what does this really mean? '

3. Communication

'You can communicate with people who are different.' 'a metaphor helps me to make a client understand the concept.'

'It's the tone of voice and more that counts.'

'You don't need to express everything with words.' 'The language so far has never been a challenge in a therapy room.'

4. Awareness, empathy and the and therapeutic alliance

'I feel more connected with the client when I'm listening and they talk and they know that I'm listening.'

'I just think the plus of being a foreign therapist is that there are less assumptions.'

'You have a broader spectrum of empathy because you try to understand that the client better and the background.'

Some key texts used

The aim is to add to the body

barriers and facilitators where

multilingual to aid counsellors'

self-awareness and choice

range of interventions and

expertise in a multi-lingual

the self concept of bi and

the impact language has in

their practice.

context. The study examines

multilingual counsellors and of

of knowledge regarding

therapists are bi or

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5. Boundaries

'The boundaries are the same, you are there as a professional.'
'If you asked me this question one year into my training, I would have said something else; I would say have said I am closer [to my home language clients] but not now.'
'The boundary has been always big part of my training, so I am consistent with that.'

6. Supervision

'If the person was the right fit for me, I think that would actually supersede the language.'

'What I'm looking for is that they understand my frame of reference... And that is has ... been in the UK.'

'If I had a number of Korean clients I would [look for a Korean supervisor].'

'I don't mind really, [language] is not important really. The communication is important and understanding.