

Patient Information Leaflets

Cultural Influences in spite of uniform European guidelines

A corpus analysis of PIL's from the Netherlands, Belgium and France combined with an experiment to explore the effects of the culturally determined differences in PIL's on elderly readers.

Key message:

- ✓ Culture defines textual features of Patient Information Leaflets (PIL's).
- ✓ Textual features define readers' preference and intentional medication use.

There is an urgent need to combine cultural and textual features in designing PIL's.

Corpus analysis: effect of culture on textual features in PIL's

• Theoretical background:

Table 1. The culturale dimensions and their values (according to Hofstede, 2001, on a scale from 1 to 100, where 1 is low and 100 is high) for the Netherlands, Belgium and France

Cultural dimensions	the Netherlands	Flanders	Wallonia	France
Power distance	38	61	67	68
Uncertainty avoidance	53	97	83	86
Individualism	80	78	72	71
Masculinity	14	43	60	43

•Method:

❖ Corpus:

5 PIL's for painkillers containing Ibuprofen from each country

❖ Procedure:

- length of the text
- presentation of risk information
- structure of the text
- use of medical terms

•Results:

Table 2. Results, differences in mean (completed in whole numbers) between PIL's from the Netherlands, Flanders and France

Number of:	words	risks	structure indicators	medical terms
The Netherlands	989	50	45	11
Flanders	1340	78	78	43
France	1473	70	99	17
Difference	F(2,14)=3,894 p=0.5	F(2,12)=4,16 p=.05	F(2,12)=9,67 p=.01	F(2,12)=5,72 p=.05

•Conclusion:

Uncertainty avoidance influences the text of PIL's.

Experiment: effect of textual features on readers

•Method:

❖ Material:

Dutch PIL and Flemish PIL with altered brand and substance name.

❖ Respondents:

Elderly (65+) : a special risk group in medication use;
EU-interest: ageing-problem (the Netherlands: N= 25, Flanders: N=21)

❖ Measurements:

- preference
- intentional medication use

❖ Procedure:

Questionnaire in a face-to-face interview.

•Results:

❖ Citations:

Dutch PIL: "If all PIL's were this short, I would always read them", "You don't have to read a whole bible, do you?", "This text doesn't have a lot of difficult words"

Flemish PIL: "You get nervous of too much information", "If you are in pain, you don't want to reach this much information"

But: The Flemish PIL leads to more adequate intentional drug use. (Difference between Dutch and Flemish PIL is $X^2(1)=8.24, P<.01$)

•Conclusion:

Length of a text and language use influences readers' preference. Intentional medication use is influenced by contents of a text.

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