Contribution ID: **355**   Type: **Poster**

Exploring Sex-Related Differences in Emotional Processing Through Verbal Analysis: A Study Utilizing the Toronto Structured Interview for Alexithymia and Natural Language Processing

Wednesday, September 25, 2024 2:10 PM (20 minutes)

The translation of emotional experience into words is associated with language style, as narratives fully reflect emotional processes. During narration, while a symbolic verbal dimension organizes the word sequence, a sub-symbolic verbal dimension influences prosody, meter, and rhythm. Therefore, the symbolic and sub-symbolic verbal analysis of narratives provided through an interview measuring the ability to identify and describe emotions - the Toronto Structured Interview for Alexithymia (TSIA) - represents a powerful tool for revealing emotional processing. On this basis, verbal analysis of narratives provided by men and women, interviewed through the TSIA, could be a potent tool for revealing any sex-related differences regarding emotional processing. In the present study, a small sample of healthy adult subjects of both sexes (12 men and 10 women) was recruited, and their ability to regulate, express, and identify emotions was analyzed using the TSIA and a series of self-report psychological questionnaires, such as the Attachment Style Questionnaire, the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, the Coping Orientation to the Problems Experiences, the Beck Depression Inventory, and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory-2. The Big Five Questionnaire was also administered for personality trait assessment. Transcriptions derived from the TSIA of men and women were analyzed using Natural Language Processing (NLP). The NLP technique allowed the extraction of various linguistic features to test the NLP actual differentiation ability between women and men based on their verbal expression of emotions. Using a Machine Learning approach, psychological assessment was then combined with linguistic results to better interpret the descriptive features produced by NLP

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Primary author: LARICCHIUTA, Daniela (Dipartimento di Filosofia, Scienze Sociali, Umane e della Formazione, Università di Perugia)

Co-authors: Dr TERMINE, Andrea (Laboratorio di Neurofisiologia Sperimentale e del Comportamento, IRCCS Fondazione Santa Lucia Roma); Dr FABRIZIO, Carlo (Laboratorio di Neurofisiologia Sperimentale e del Comportamento, IRCCS Fondazione Santa Lucia Roma); Dr PASSARELLO, Noemi (Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II); Dr PANUCCIO, Anna (Laboratorio di Neurofisiologia Sperimentale e del Comportamento, IRCCS Fondazione Santa Lucia Roma); Dr PIRAS, Fabrizio (Laboratorio di Neuropsichiatria, IRCCS Fondazione Santa Lucia Roma); Dr PICERNI, Eleonora (Laboratorio di Neuropsichiatria, IRCCS Fondazione Santa Lucia Roma); Prof. CUTULI, Debora (Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università Sapienza di Roma); Prof. PETROSINI, Laura (Laboratorio di Neurofisiologia Sperimentale e del Comportamento, IRCCS Fondazione Santa Lucia Roma)

Presenter: LARICCHIUTA, Daniela (Dipartimento di Filosofia, Scienze Sociali, Umane e della Formazione, Università di Perugia)

Session Classification: Lunch & Poster 3