

Development and Validation of the Italian Dictionary for LIWC-22

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Introduction

The Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) is a widely adopted tool for the psychometric analysis of language in psychological, social, and clinical contexts. The recently updated LIWC-22 English version introduces new psychological categories, a more flexible hierarchical structure, and an expanded dictionary. However, the last official Italian version dates back to 2007—prior to major shifts in language use, particularly in digital communication. This study addresses this gap by validating the Italian adaptation of LIWC-22 for use in contemporary written language, with the goal of offering a reliable and context-sensitive tool for researchers in Italian-speaking settings.

Method

A semi-automated approach was used to translate LIWC-22 categories into Italian, integrating human expertise with digital linguistic resources (e.g., Reverso Context, Italian morphological dictionaries, Treccani). The resulting dictionary was evaluated on a diverse corpus—including fiction, film dialogue, social media posts, journalistic writing, and academic texts—assessing both lexical coverage and category distribution.

Results

Preliminary analyses indicate strong coverage across different linguistic registers and a robust capacity to distinguish between formal and informal styles, aligned with the hierarchical category structure.

Conclusions

The Italian LIWC-22 adaptation exhibits promising psychometric properties, including solid internal consistency and contextual sensitivity across varied genres. These results support its utility for psychological and linguistic research in Italian. Future directions include further refinement and broader validation across research domains.

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