

Content warning: I will be referring to experiences of depression, self-harm and psychosis in this presentation.



UCREL CORPUS RESEARCH SEMINAR:

Narratives of Voice-hearers

18th October 2018

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Corpus Approaches to Health(care) Communication

Our newly funded research programme will extend the facilitative and transformative power of corpus methods to the study of health(care) communication, in the following areas:

- Language and mental health, including:
 - Communication about anxiety disorder
 - **Presentation and diagnosis of psychosis**
 - Depression in users of social media
- Communicating and diagnosing chronic pain
- Representations of obesity in the news
- English language assessment and training for medical professionals



Narratives of Voice-hearers

hearing the voice



Prof Elena Semino



Dr Zsófia Demjén



Dr Angela Woods



Dr Ben Alderson-Day



Dr Peter Moseley

Voice-hearing

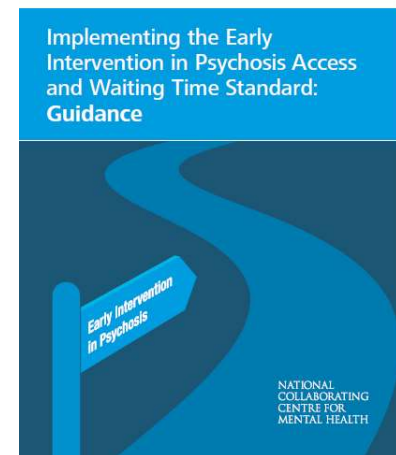
- Hearing voices that others cannot hear
- Auditory Verbal Hallucinations (AVHs)
- Typically researched in relation to psychosis, esp. schizophrenia
- AVHs feature in a wide range of mental health conditions
- 7.3% of a general population sample reported lifetime prevalence of AVH (1.01% reported occurrence 'several times a week') (Kråkvik et al., 2015)
- The societal cost of psychosis (based on healthcare costs, lost productivity, informal costs to families and carers) is estimated to be £11.8bn per year
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/mentalhealth/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2016/04/eip-guidance.pdf>

Kråkvik, B., Larøi, F., Kalhovde, A.M., Hugdahl, K., Kompus, K., Salvesen, Ø., Stiles, T.C. and Vedul-Kjelsås, E. (2015) Prevalence of auditory verbal hallucinations in a general population: A group comparison study. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 56(5): 508–515.

Hearing the Voice project

Aims to understand more about:

- the phenomenology of AVH in its early presentation
 - its development over time
 - its interactions with other important psychological and contextual factors
 - its impact on functioning
- Gathering longitudinal interview data from participants engaging with Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIP) services (<6 months, 12 months, 24 months).



Voice-hearing

- AVHs also occur as a positive and meaningful experience for voice-hearers, in the absence of any need for clinical care (Baumeister, Sedgwick, Howes and Peters, 2017).
- Spiritualists engage in mediumship: communication with departed spirits
 - “Many services also include a demonstration of evidential mediumship. This involves the medium relaying messages from the Spirit World to members of the congregation. This is not a form of entertainment, but a way of demonstrating the Spiritualist principle of *the continuous existence of the human soul*. It supports our philosophy, and encourages contemplation about the bigger Spiritual picture that God has provided for us” <https://www.snu.org.uk/Pages/FAQs/Category/spiritualism-qa>.

Baumeister, D., Sedgwick, O., Howes, O. and Peters, E. (2017) Auditory verbal hallucinations and continuum models of psychosis: A systematic review of the healthy voice-hearer literature. *Clinical Psychology Review* 51, 125–141.



Hearing the Voice project: Interview

Spiritualists

EIP Service Users

Semi-structured interview asked participants about:

- the terms they would use to describe their voice-hearing experience
- the qualities of the voice-hearing experience
- the onset of voice-hearing
- changes in the experience over time
- participants' beliefs about/understanding of the experience.



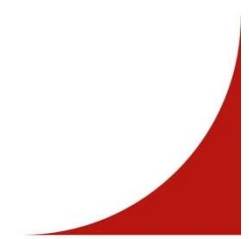
Data

Spiritualists

- 27 interviews
- 247 670 words of participant data
- Average: 9 526 words
- Range: from 5 237 to 14 394

EIP Service Users

- 28 interviews
- 153 989 words of participant data
- Average: 5 500
- Range: from 1 236 to 14 197



Keyness comparison



- 'Key' content determined by comparison with a third reference corpus
- Identifying shared and contrasting key semantic domains



UCREL Semantic Analysis System (USAS)

- An automated tagging process
- Each token is allocated to a semantic category
- Tokens: *n't, down_in_the_dumps*
- 21 general semantic domains;
232 more specific sub-domains

A general and abstract terms	B the body and the individual	C arts and crafts	E emotion
F food and farming	G government and public	H architecture, housing and the home	I money and commerce in industry
K entertainment, sports and games	L life and living things	M movement, location, travel and transport	N numbers and measurement
O substances, materials, objects and equipment	P education	Q language and communication	S social actions, states and processes
T Time	W world and environment	X psychological actions, states and processes	Y science and technology
Z names and grammar			

UCREL Semantic Analysis System (USAS)

E1 Emotional Actions, States and Processes

E2 Liking

E2+ Like *like, love, liked*

E2++ Like *prefer*

E2+++ Like *favourite*

E2- Dislike *hate, can_not_stand*

E3 Calm/Violent/Angry

E4 Happiness and Contentment

E5 Bravery and Fear

E6 Worry and Confidence

A general and abstract terms	B the body and the individual	C arts and crafts	E emotion
F food and farming	G government and public	H architecture, housing and the home	I money and commerce in industry
K entertainment, sports and games	L life and living things	M movement, location, travel and transport	N numbers and measurement
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Z names and grammar			

Spiritualists

EIP Service Users

SemTag	Domain
A14	Exclusivizers/particularizers
A6.2-	Comparing: Unusual
A6.2+	Comparing: Usual
A7+++	Likely
B2	Health and disease
E1	Emotional Actions, States and Processes
E3+	Calm
E4.1-	Sad
E5-	Fear/shock
N6	Frequency
Q2.1	Speech: Communicative
X1	Psychological Actions, States..
X2	Mental actions and processes
X2.1	Thought, belief
X2.5+	Understanding
X3.2	Sensory: Sound
X3.2+	Sound: Loud
X3.5	Sensory: Smell
X5.1-	Inattentive
X5.1+	Attentive

➤ Shared key categories

Shared key categories: Emotion

E1 Emotional Actions, States and Processes General

emotion	51
emotional	40
emotions	23
subjective	16
feel	14
emotionally	11
mood	7
tone	4

tone	19
mood	19
feel	12
moods	12
emotion	7
emotional	6
emotions	6
tones	5

Alex differences in the voices, like in the pitch and the **tone**

Hugh they're lighter in **tone**

Leah He has a very high **tone**

Orla sometimes it's just low, like a low **tone**

Ulrik They're just basically flat with no **tone**

Zara had a authoritative **tone**

Chris associates itself with aggression or anger the **tone** of the voice

Chris it's always in an aggressive **tone** or grouchy or frustrated



Shared key categories: Emotion

E1 Emotional Actions, States and Processes General

- The experience is highly emotional

Orange It's a full range of emotions, so it's never learned in any one way, but you can imagine that emotional space is, it's literally from bottom to top on the emotional scale and it can be right across the board.

Orange you can have a feeling of emotion, you know? So you can feel sadness, you can feel – but you're not feeling it in your brain, you're feeling the depressed state or the energetic state that come with those emotions as well.

Blue They're really intense, no matter what feeling – even to get from there, it's always a really intense – you don't just feel like a bit upset you don't feel a bit angry, it seems to bring out the peak of any emotion.



Shared key categories: Emotion

E1 Emotional Actions, States and Processes General

- These are not the Spiritualists' own emotions; nevertheless, they define the experience

11987 what I do tend to feel is the emotions and feelings of the person I'm talking with

11988 the emotion is not mine [...] it's not my emotion when I'm recounting it although it appears to be [...] the emotion is their emotion

11989 I do get a lot of emotion [...] and that's how I know that that person's in my energy field

11990 coming with a departed spirit, who was so emotional, that I know that they were there for either of these women

11991 they project an emotion of the sensitivity of, and you'll feel love or anger or all these emotions, even, which register and sometimes they'll use my experience of, of a same situation to shortcut, or I'll say you're just giving me an emotion which I don't understand [...] and they'll elaborate on that, they might say 'oh it was a divorce'

Shared key categories: Emotion

E1 Emotional Actions, States and Processes General

- Spiritualists need to manage emotions; this is a mark of experience and professionalism

11780 sometimes ah, it can make you feel a little bit emotional. Even if that person in the spirit world is coming over with a lot of emotion, a lot of love, for instance, for the person in front of you. Or, and you, sometimes you do have to ask them to just rein it back a bit.

11781 if you become too emotional as a medium, you can't see you can't convey that properly. I'm not saying you don't get emotional as the medium but you can't be having your eyes out on the platform [...] so you have to be quite careful how you control it.

11782 A message at the weekend was very, very emotional, and I had to say, you know, you need to back off a little bit, because I don't want to start kind of weeping up with tears in front of a room full of people. Or, so it, it's managing it and it's a cooperative relationship.



Shared key categories: Emotion

E1 Emotional Actions, States and Processes General

- Spirits can also support Spiritualists in managing their emotions

Q1278 while I am scared standing in front of an audience, my mother figure will make me feel, 'It's alright, I've got your back' sort of thing

Q1280 there would be people I didn't know that I have a rapport with, um, emotionally, and if I was um upset [...] then I would call on um one of the more angelic energies that I perceive [...] Or if I was in angry mode, then maybe I would have to call on someone who could calm me down more



Shared key categories: Emotion

E1 Emotional Actions, States and Processes General

- **Service Users:** 'Moods' are changeable and can be influenced by others

Bill They're it **chooses** which **mood** it puts me in. It chooses how I act and
Bill emotionally, it can completely **dictate** which **mood** I'm in.
Dan it really like **impacts** my **moods** I'd say, definitely.
Orla friends have noticed when I'm speaking and when me **mood** can **switch** like that instantly
Zara took one of them for a walk and obviously me **mood** **started to lift** by then
Chris it can **change** my **mood**, it's just kinda there.
Chris I just felt like it **affected** my **mood**, I just didn't really want to do anything.



Shared key categories: Emotion

E1 Emotional Actions, States and Processes General

- 'Moods' endure and affect behaviour

it was when I was in a really bad mood
 Erm, when I'm in like a bad mood,
 I know if I'm in a bad mood
 especially if I was in a better mood
 But when I'm normally in a happy, calm mood,
 if I'm you know in one of my really down moods,
 if I'm on a right faster mood,
 But erm when I'm in a good mood,
 but when I'm in a good mood,
 If I'm in a good mood,
 if I'm in like a general happy mood
 definitely get worse when I'm in just like a low mood
 me reacting to it because I'm already in a low mood
 or they can sense that I'm in a low mood
 When I'm in like a meh{?} mood,
 Erm{.} I think it depends a lot on my mood,
 Like I'm kind of in that sort of mood

it was **when I was in a really bad mood**
 Erm, **when I'm in like a bad mood,**
 I know if I'm in a **bad mood**
 especially if I was in a **better mood**
 But **when I'm normally in a happy, calm mood,**
if I'm you know in one of my really down moods,
if I'm on a right faster mood,
 But erm **when I'm in a good mood,**
 but **when I'm in a good mood,**
If I'm in a good mood,
if I'm in like a general happy mood
 definitely get worse **when I'm in just like a low mood**
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 Like I'm kind of in that sort of **mood**


it was when I was in a really bad mood
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 Like I'm kind of in that sort of mood



Shared key categories: Emotion

E1 Emotional Actions, States and Processes General

- Service Users are not (/less) in control of their emotions. This is realised syntactically:



makes us feel angry.
 makes us feel angry and confused.
 makes us feel down, really down and angry.
 makes us feel happy because when other people, when like
 makes us feel like I'm weak, you know, weak-minded
 makes us feel like happy and like I don't feel alone, like
 make us feel, like Michael makes us feel angry and confused.
 make us feel low. Erm{.} upset maybe and angry sometimes.
 makes us just feel so you know kinda, full of energy but not like

- Even when the experience is positive, Service users' emotions are dictated by others.
- 

Transcript

[Blurred transcript text]

making me a little bit –
made me aggressive before
Makes me angry
make me angry.
makes me angry??
make me better, erm,
make me do whatever they want to do
make me doubt my progress
makes me doubt my reality and what is correct
makes me doubt what's real in me head
makes me, gets me down.
makes me go cold from head to toe.
make me go to sleep, then I don't know
makes me ignore it more,
making me ill, it's not, it's not a nice
made me like closer to them.
makes me more anxious.
makes me most confused and most disorientated.
makes me panic attack and then that's when I
making me paranoid, it's making me unhappy,
makes me question myself and I ca yeah,
makes me question who I am and and kind
makes me quite depressed.
making me so upset. That doesn't work.
make me speak to myself,
makes me think that I can trust the voice,
make me to say actually.
making me unhappy, it's making me ill, it's not,
made me very aggressive anyways. Very aggressive.
makes me want to just go to sleep!
make me, what they did to me is like,
makes me worse, so it's always the?? yeah
made me, you know, put holes while I was



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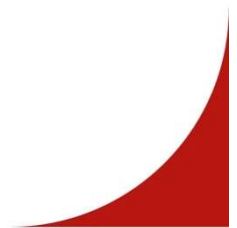
making us - Like I went to the cinema with me sister a
making us angry.
make us anxious
make us cry.
made us curious.
makes us cut meself.
making us do it again, do whatever he wants us to do
makes us do things
makes us go and hurt meself
make us hurt.
made us ill, mentally ill, aye having psychosis now.
made us jump and look around
made us keep walking, don't stop walking, go and do it,
make us laugh and stuff.
makes us laugh.
made us like really paranoid.
making us like sit down all the time
makes us like think there might actually be something there
makes us like, if you think about it
made us look at little bit more mental health issued than I
make us look to me left.
make us quite eh, fidgety and in people, that annoys people
makes us sound really odd(?).
makes us stay up.
made us ten times worse, because you've got ne security or anything
makes us think like is it just in me head?!
made us think like, God, so some people have got that,
make us think that is well because of what the doctors and consultants have told us
made us think there was actually cameras in the house.
makes us think, did I do anything?
makes us very, very shaky
makes us worse
make us worse
makes us worse, it makes the anxiety worse

Shared key categories: Emotion

E1 Emotional Actions, States and Processes General

- Nevertheless, Service Users take ownership of their (bad) moods

I was having, I have a lot of problems with moods as well.
 like I say I have these sort of mood swings
 I get these other moods where I'm like quite well, you know
 Yeah, I've always been moody because of this situation going on.
 Yeah, I can get angry, I can get moody at any time.
 Well, but, but my moods and my anger, my happiness, well,
 but I think it's just, my moods, it's just horrendous sometimes.
 my low moods get on where as thinking
 I should probably like try and change my mood, but I'm like not in that mindset for it.
 like I don't trust myself when I'm in a bad mood.

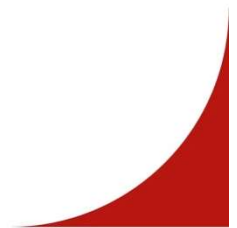


Shared key categories: Emotion

E1 Emotional Actions, States and Processes General

- It feels like punishment, perhaps, it's just emotionally reacting and it's quite hard to cope with
- It's like being hostage to your own brain, emotions I think

- Service users on the one hand, accept the blame for their negative emotionality but on the other hand, position Others (even their own brain) as the ones who (can) bring about change



Shared key categories: Emotion

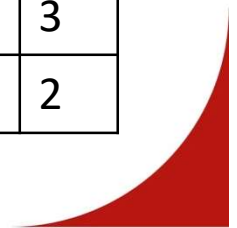
E3+ Calm

- For the **Service users**, there seems to be an onus on restoring calm
- **'Calm'** is relative to some form of distress: 'once I'd calmed down from that'
- **'Calm'** often occurs with **'try'**

- For the **Spiritualists**, being in a state of calm facilitates the experience
- The voice/energy is often described as 'calm[ing]/gentle', 'coming in softly'
- The experience itself is 'calming', 'comforting'

calm	20
relaxed	15
peace	11
gentle	9
calmness	7
comforting	7
softly	4
calm_down	3

calm_down	16
calmed_down	9
calm	8
comforting	7
calming	4
peace	3
relaxing	3
gentle	2



Shared key categories: Emotion

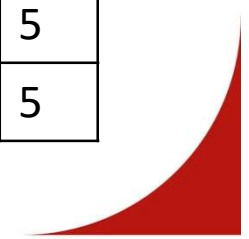
E4.1- Sad

- **Spiritualists** avoid 'cry[ing]' as a mark of professionalism
- Spiritualists are also concerned about 'upset[ting]' their recipients
- It is typically others who are 'grieving'

- **Service users** discuss 'being depressed' and 'having depression' (also '**my** depression')
- 'Upset' is more overtly their own: 'I was upset', 'this upset **me**'

upset	34
grief	14
cry	13
sad	8
grieving	7
desperate	5
depressed	5
traumatic	4

depression	41
upset	36
depressed	18
upsetting	7
self-harming	6
cry	6
sad	5
crying	5



Shared key categories: Emotion

E5- Fear/Shock

- **Spiritualists**: it is others who experience 'fear'
- 'Fear' is often negated or allayed: 'nothing to fear', 'I wouldn't feel frightened', 'make them less fearful'
- 'Fear' is associated with a lack of understanding:
 - 104LT** And at that point I still was a little bit **fearful**, but just as I found I got more understanding, it very quickly you know disappeared
- 'Fear' is an obstacle to effective spiritual communication and education is the solution:
 - 132DL** Erm most people you can **educate them away** from those **fears** with, if you've got good knowledge.

frightened	27
fear	19
scared	12
afraid	9
frightening	8
shock	8
terrified	7
fearful	6

scared	46
panic	21
scary	19
fear	6
frightened	6
scare	6
panicked	6
freaks_out	6

Shared key categories: Emotion

E5- Fear/Shock

- Service users discuss their own fears:
‘I was scared’, ‘it terrified us’
- Experiences are often characterised in terms of ‘fear’:
‘It was creepy’, ‘it’s frightening’,
‘which is why it’s so scary’
- ‘Fear’ is habitual, deindividuated:
‘I get scared’, ‘it scares you every time’,
‘you’re having panic attacks every day’

frightened	27
fear	19
scared	12
afraid	9
frightening	8
shock	8
terrified	7
fearful	6

scared	46
panic	21
scary	19
fear	6
frightened	6
scare	6
panicked	6
freaks_out	6

Spiritualists

SemTag	Domain	Words
S1.2.5+++	Tough/Strong	strongest
G2.2	General ethics	objective, objectively, ethics, principles
S1.2.5++	Tough/strong	stronger
A3	Being	phenomena, phenomenon
X3	Sensory	sense, sensing, sensation, sensed,
A7++	Likely	clearer
A11.2-	Unnoticeable	subtle, subtly, faint, subtleties
S9	Religion and the supernatural (^)	spirit, spirit_world, church, spiritual, ..
L1+	Alive	life, lives, alive, live, bio-science
W1	The universe	world, universe, planet, sun, planets, star,..
S1.2.3+	Selfish	ego, assertive, pushy, egotistical, selfish,..
A1.5.2-	Useless	no_point, , it_'s_no_good, pointless
I3.2+	Professional	professional, professionally, professionalism
A1.6	Concrete/Abstract	philosophical, abstract, practical, intangible
Q1.1	Linguistic Actions, States and ..	message, mean, messages, meant, means
X5.2+	Interested/excited/energetic	energy, interesting, energies, interested,..
Q3	Language, speech and grammar	words, word, reading, read, language, accent
X3.2-	Sound: Quiet	quiet, deaf, muffled, quietly, silence, stillness
X4.1	Mental object: Conceptual object	thought, thoughts, vision, idea, point_of_view
S3.2	Relationship: Intimacy and sex (v)	love (77), that_way (32), embrace (3), ..
X7-	Unwanted	spontaneous, rubbish, intrusion, spontaneously
T1.1.3	Time: Future	'll, will, going_to, wo, one_day, gon, shall,..
X2.2+	Knowledgeable	know, remember, information, aware, knew, ..
N6-	Infrequent	rare, rarely, once, occasionally, now_and_then

SemTag	Domain	Words
X3.2++	Sound: Loud	louder
X5.2++	Interested/excited/energetic	manic, obsessive
X3.2--	Sound: Quiet	quieter
S1.2.4-	Impolite	talk_back, talk_back_to, curse, talking_back_to
A5.1--	Evaluation: Bad	worse
Q2.1-	Speech: Not communicating	keep_quiet, shut_up, kept_quiet, shuts_up
X2.5-	Not understanding	confused, confusing, lost_me, n't_know_what..
W2-	Darkness	dark, darkness
E3-	Violent/Angry	angry, aggressive, threatening, hit, anger, ..
X9.1-	Inability/unintelligence	dickhead, idiot, arsehole, unable, special_needs
X8+	Trying hard	trying, try, tried, struggle, struggling, attempt..
B2-	Disease	hurt, paranoid, crazy, psychosis, panic_attack
S1.2.6-	Foolish	stupid, ridiculous, silly, irrational, sucker,..
E6-	Worry	anxiety, stress, distressing, anxious, stressful,..
A11.2+	Noticeable	out_loud, obvious, distinctive, evident, sticky_out
X3.4+	Seen	noticed, notice, noticing, looking_outside, ..
T3---	Time: New and Young	recently, lately, youngest
Q1.3	Telecommunications	phone, ring, rang, ringing, phone_call, phoned,..
A5.1-	Evaluation: Bad	bad, terrible, crap, pathetic, badly, horrendous,..
E2-	Dislike	hate, hates, hated, hatred, was_n't_for, been_against
B3	Medicines and medical treatment	hospital, medication, tablets, drugs, doctor, doctors, ..
B1	Anatomy and physiology	head, sleep, back, face, brain, ear, eyes, wake_up, body
A13.6	Degree: Diminishers	a_bit, less, a_little_bit, a_bit_of_a, slightly, a_little, ..

Conceptual model

“Achieving parity of esteem for people with mental health needs is one of the NHS’s core priorities and is written into the Health and Social Care Act”.

- Empowerment
 - Epistemic authority: claims to knowledge and evidentiality
 - Self-Efficacy: “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organise and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997: 3)

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W. H. Freeman.

NICE National Institute for
Health and Care Excellence

NHS
England

Implementing the Early
Intervention in Psychosis Access
and Waiting Time Standard:
Guidance

Early Intervention
in Psychosis

NATIONAL
COLLABORATING
CENTRE FOR
MENTAL HEALTH

Therapy

- AVATAR Therapy
- Talking With Voices: Voice Dialogue
- Relating Therapy: role-play

“The therapist [...] facilitates a dialogue in which the voice-hearer gradually gains increased power and control within the relationship” (Craig et al., 2018).



Avatar therapy for schizophrenia

Craig, T. K. J., Rus-Calafell, M., Ward, T., Leff, J. P., Huckvale, M., Howarth, E., Emsley, R. and Garety, P. A. (2018) AVATAR therapy for auditory verbal hallucinations in people with psychosis: a single-blind, randomised controlled trial. *Lancet Psychiatry* 5: 31–40.