Self-focused Language and the Reversive Impact of Depression in Negative Mood

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Abstract : The relationship between depression and self-focused language has been well documented. The more depressed a person is, the more "I"s, "me"s, and "my"s they will use. The present study attempted to factor in the impact of mood and examine whether negative mood has self-focused impacts similar to those of depression. For this purpose, 160 Iranian native speakers of Farsi were divided into three experimental groups of negative, neutral, and positive groups. After completing the BDI-II inventory and depression measurement, they were presented with pretested mood stimuli (3 separate videos to induce the target moods). Finally, they were asked to write between 10 to 20 minutes about a topic that asked them to freely write about their state of life, how you feel about it and the reasons that had shaped their current life circumstances. While the significant correlation between depression and I-talk was observed, negative mood led to more we-talk in general and seemed to even push the participants away from self-rumination. It seems that it is an emotion-regulatory strategy that participants subconsciously adopt to distract themselves from the disturbing mood. However, negative mood intensified the self-focused language among depressed participants. Such results can be further studied by examining brain areas that are more involved in self-perception and particularly in precuneus.

Keywords : self-focused language, depression, mood, precuneus

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