

Presentations of Borderline Personality Disorder in the UK Press: A Corpus-Assisted Discourse Study

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Aim of the Project

- Corpus-assisted discourse analysis to explore how Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is presented in UK newspaper articles
- Focus on discursive creation of stigma against individuals affected by BPD



Borderline Personality Disorder

- Most common diagnosed personality disorder
- Estimated prevalence 0.7%-2% in the general population
- Women 0.6% twice as often diagnosed compared to men (0.3%) (NHS, 2011 factsheet) and overrepresented in the forensic population with 20%
- Most misunderstood, misdiagnosed and stigmatised of all personality disorders

Borderline Personality Disorder

DSM 5 “BPD” and ICD-10 “Emotional Unstable Personality Disorder”

- Broadly define marked behaviour tendencies indicating
 - emotional instability
 - disturbed patterns of thinking or perception
 - impulsive behaviour
 - intense but unstable interpersonal relationships

Corpus Linguistics

- “Corpus” comes from the Latin word “body” – plural “corpora”
- A corpus is a collection of texts
 - Not random
 - Purposeful
 - Sampled to be representative of subject investigated
 - Machine-readable for computer analysis
 - Spoken or written data

Corpus Linguistics

- Quick computerised processing of data
- Uses reliable statistics
- Counts lexical items
- Identifies quantitatively typical and atypical semantic patterns (coarse grain analysis)
- Provides an objective and balanced picture
- Provides contextual qualitative examples (fine-grain analysis)

Corpus Linguistics

- Quantitative and qualitative analysis of semantic patterns identifies:
 - Positive and negative connotations
 - Attitudinal and evaluative meanings
 - Impact on public beliefs and stereotypes towards mental illness

Sampling of Data

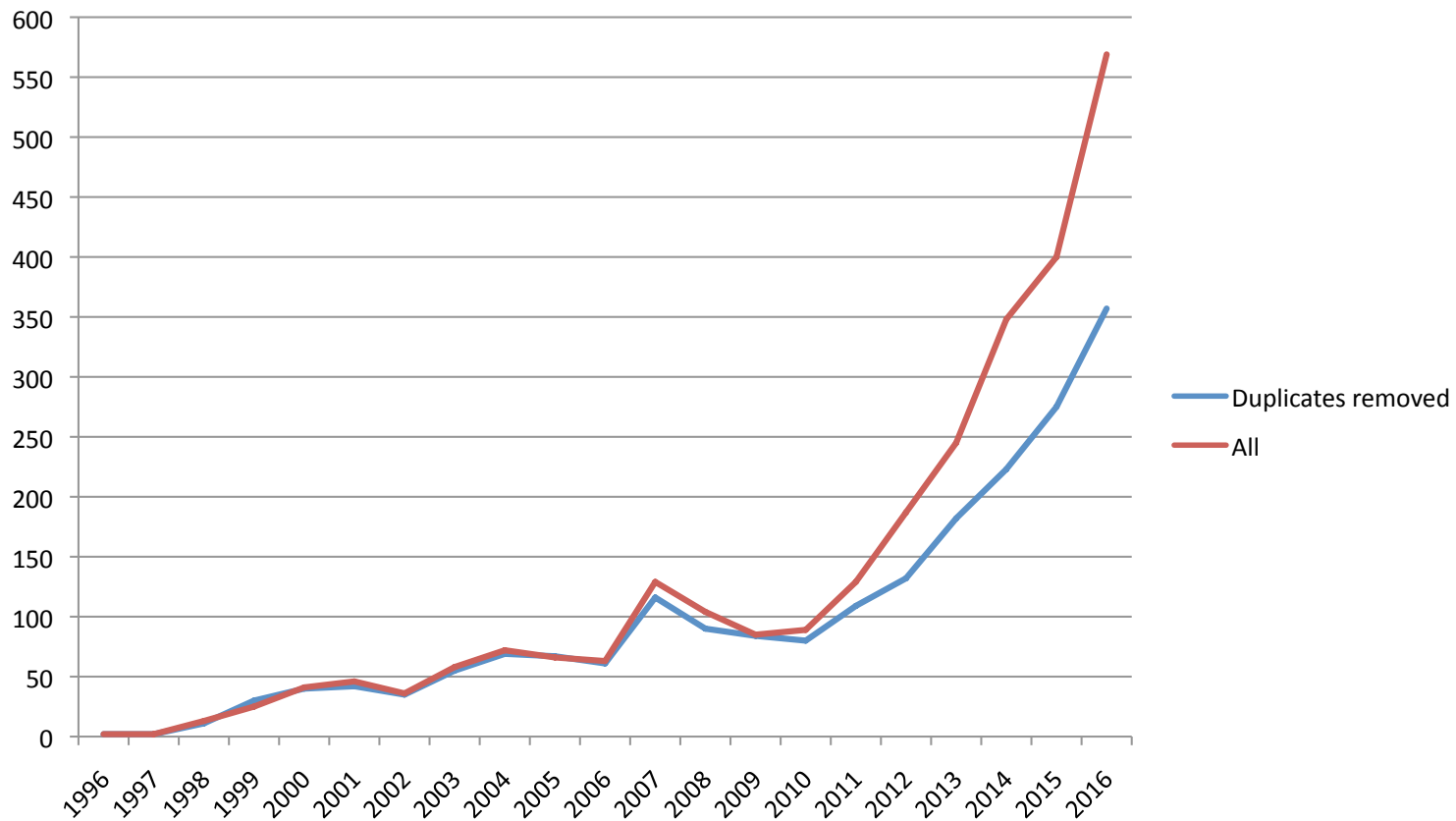
- UK broadsheet, tabloid and local newspapers (1996-2016)
- borderline personality disorder OR bpd OR emotionally unstable personality OR EUPD OR emotion regulation disorder OR emotional dysregulation disorder OR edd OR emotional instability disorder OR emotion impulse regulation disorder
- 2,709 articles with total count of 1,916,325 words

Sampling of Data

- Duplicates were maintained!
- Linguistic research tends to remove duplicates with aim to focus on language patterns
- Psychological perspective:
 - What about the mere-exposure effect and illusory truth effect?
- Focus on unique editorial decision to maintain (rather than change/correct) stigmatising linguistic expressions

Chronological Development

Articles Published between 1996-2016



Frame Analysis

Corpus-assisted qualitative frame analysis (Touri & Koteyko, 2015; see also Atanasova, Koteyko, Brown & Crawford, 2017)

Frame Analysis

Frames influence human consciousness by selecting certain aspects of information of a perceived reality and making them more salient “in such a way as to promote a particular definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Identified Frames

- 'Legal' frame
- 'Mental Health services' frame
- 'Trauma and Abuse' frame
- 'Family' frame
- 'Stigma' frame
- 'Mental health literacy' frame
- 'Suicide and self-harm' frame
- 'Recovery' frame
- 'Bad and vulnerable women' frame

'Legal' frame

Presentation of individuals as vulnerable, violent, dangerous, callous, sadistic and abusive

- In other words, his symptoms - his addictions, his selfishness, his dysfunctional personal relationships, his sadism - suggest that he suffered from a recognisable condition, borderline *personality* disorder

Long-term concerns of mental health problems

- Under cross-examination by Paul Greaney QC, defending Rebecca Dormer, he agreed that there had been concerns in their family "for a number of years about Becky's *mental* health."

BPD for defence of diminished responsibility/capacity

- Robert Forrest, defending Young, said the teenager is very immature' and had been diagnosed with an emotionally unstable personality *disorder*.

'Legal' frame

BPD not a 'real' mental health disorder

- "But this is not serious enough to be a *disorder*," prosecution consultant forensic psychiatrist Dr John Sandford told Exeter Crown Court.

Prison or psychological treatment

- Reid will undergo *mental* health treatment for the next two years and must also complete 50 days of a rehabilitation activity requirement as instructed by the probation service.
- Rather than being sent to a *psychiatric* hospital, Petra was remanded in custody at New Hall Prison, Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

'Mental Health Services' frame

Hard to access

- MP Ben Bradshaw has raised his concerns about the two-year wait for treatment for some *mental* health sufferers in Parliament after the Echo highlighted the issue

Little help and failing patients

- Her mother, Karen, accused the National *Health* Service during the trial of "completely failing" her daughter by not providing proper care.

Promise of service and treatment improvements

- "These schemes include the further development of the low secure unit within Cefn Coed *Hospital* , together with the development of a borderline personality disorder service."

'Mental Health Services' frame

Responsible for patients' suicide and self-harm

- The 20-year-old died eight days after being found hanging in a bedroom of the East Willows ward in Cherry Knowle Hospital in Ryhope last August.

Irresponsible discharge of patients

- Paige Bell, 20, had been discharged from the psychiatric hospital just hours after she was dramatically pulled to safety by a policewoman from the wrong side of the railings of Wearmouth Bridge on August 6.

'Trauma and Abuse' frame

Childhood experiences of parental death or abuse

- This was amplified when her father Tom died of cancer when she was 18.
- "She had a serious *psychiatric* condition directly as a result of child sex abuse at age eight.
- "I'd had a really difficult childhood and turned to drink, drugs and self-harming.

Abuse by mental health practitioner or social worker

- A *psychiatric* nurse from Huddersfield has denied fondling a woman patient in her hospital room and asking to have sex with her after her discharge home.

'Family' frame

Bereaved family

- After her death, her mother and father, Anthony Kearney - who are separated - described her as "the most beautiful, intelligent and bright young girl with her whole life ahead of her".
- Her *mother* , Eleri Linden, said after the verdict: "Losing Ceri has left a hole in our lives which can never be filled and a pain in our hearts which will never heal.
- Older brother Ketan, 38, broke down in tears as he paid tribute to his father and described the impact his death had had on their *mother* Mradula, 56.
- Casey's *father* , Anthony, said: "We think the jury has come to the correct decision in convicting Bonser with the murder of Casey.

'Stigma' frame

Public perception about BPD and mental illness

- If more of us talk publicly about our experiences of psychosis, we might shift public perception enough to create a stronger social support system.

Stigma towards professionals with mental illness

- As a service-user researcher, there's no hiding your mental-health history and that means, says Mayes, that some staff may still react to you only as a person with a *mental* illness when you want to be seen as a fellow professional.

Helping others

- He has now made a film to encourage others to talk *about mental* health and seek help.
- Teenagers who battled *mental* illness among top charity fundraisers on Justgiving website.

'Mental Health Literacy' frame

Educating the public

- Given the incidence of mental illness in society, it would be highly surprising if we did not meet it every day, but how many people recognise someone with a *mental* illness?

Specifics about BPD

- She was suffering from emotionally unstable personality disorder, a psychiatric condition that can cause sufferers to act impulsively, have angry or violent outbursts and self-harm.
- She was suffering from a behavioural disorder due to the misuse of alcohol and was diagnosed with a borderline personality disorder.

Suicide information

- A person may be more likely to be suicidal if they have a mental health condition, such as depression; eating disorder anorexia nervosa; bipolar disorder; anxiety disorder; schizophrenia and *borderline* personality disorder.

'Suicide and Self-Harm' frame

Insight perspective

- She had talked to her 12-year-old son about hanging herself three days before her death, the inquest *heard*.

Mental health services

- AN ARSONIST who endangered neighbours by torching his Edenbridge home in a failed suicide bid had been repeatedly let down by mental health services, a court has been told.
- That the treatment of bereaved relatives by the authorities is dismissive at best, and that the number of teenage "self-harmers" being sent to prison where they are more likely to injure or kill themselves instead of receiving proper *psychiatric* care is growing.

Drug abuse

- After their 12-year relationship came to an end, her life descended further into alcohol abuse, drug addiction and *mental* illness.

'Treatment and Recovery' frame

Community services

- She has used the community provision to treat her depression and *borderline* personality disorder for the past 17 years.

New treatment approaches

- A NEW treatment for suicidal people with borderline personality disorder is being tested in a top *psychiatric* hospital.

Writing and arts

- On her blog she explains: 'As I progressed through my recovery from *Borderline* Personality Disorder, I'd like to think that my blog now also provides people with hope, and determination.
- A Leyland woman who suffers from borderline personality *disorder* is finding ways to cope with her anxiety through her 3D artwork.

Successful recovery

- "The fact that I have a *mental* illness makes it more important that I work," says Alex Whitelaw, who now works at BHS in Walsall.

'Bad and Vulnerable Women' frame

- Why is this diagnosis given to so many women - it's mostly *women* - who are labelled as BPD because they self-mutilate?
- A woman who attacked two strangers with a knife had killed her mother six years before, the Old Bailey heard.
- Spears was sharing her son's *hospital* room and prosecutors believe the mother administered sodium through the boy's stomach tube.

Gender Differences

<u>word</u>	<u>frequency</u>
the	70,790
to	54,704
and	50,681
a	48,349
of	40,994
in	31,955
was	29,856
her	25,477
I	21,282
she	19,528
that	19,193
with	16,655
for	16,607
had	15,059
is	14,971
on	13,848
he	12,237
said	11,873
at	11,502
it	11,394
The	11,141
his	10,034
as	9,919
from	9,784

Feminine pronouns = 54,658

Male pronouns = 33,470

Log-likelihood ratio = 5144.32

$p < .000001$

% diff 63.30%

Gender Proportions in BPD

- Historically higher prevalence of BPD in women
- Women more likely to seek treatment vs. men
- Comorbid Axis I and Axis II differences?
- Higher prevalence of self-harming, PTSD, eating disorder – mental health settings?
- Men higher prevalence of substance abuse – prison settings?
- Feminist critique: Pathologising resistance of gendered abuse and oppression through anger outside of stereotypical women's discourse

Example of Verbal Collocates

- Arrest and sectioning
 - *admit* — 219.12% difference associated to passive in ‘she’ vs. ‘he’
 - “*she was admitted* to an inpatient facility”
 - “*he admitted* dangerous driving”
- *arrest* and *jail* — only to *he*
- Death and attacks — *die, kill, stab, attack*
 - ‘she’ can be both perpetrator and victim

Categories of Noun Collocates

- Existential — *life, death*
- Familial relationships — *mother, father, brother*
- Partner — *husband, wife, girlfriend, partner*
- Social relationships — *friend*
- Home environment — *home, house, car*
- Work environment — *work, client, career*
- Mental health — *condition, health, care*
- Criminal context — *victim, cell, release*
- Body — *head, hand, arm, body*

Example of Existential Theme in 'her'

'Life' (954), 'death' (865) and 'story' (114)

- Focus on suicide — 'take', 'end', 'jump'
- Life changing moments and attempts to rebuild and save her life
 - "to *turn her life* around"
- "her story" is mystified
 - "what makes *her story* even more tragic"
 - "has shared *her story* in a bid to help others"
 - "some people doubted *her story* immediately"

Example of Existential Theme in 'his'

'Life' (358) and 'death' (229)

- Marked absence of suicide
- Emphasis on saving 'his life' and preventing 'his death'
 - "Paramedics tried to *save his life* for 35 minutes"
- Death references serve to reconstruct events
 - "I know I contributed to *his death* because I *relive* it every day"

Future Developments

- In-depth description of the corpus
- Detailed analysis of sampling frame
- Comparison of key words and collocations between broadsheets, tabloids and local newspapers
- Diachronic changes across newspapers

Language, Discourse & Mental Health

Exeter's *Language, Discourse and Mental Health* book series is a unique resource to further knowledge and understanding of mental health from a pluralistically informed linguistic perspective.

Using qualitative and quantitative approaches to language-based analysis, the empirical and theoretical contributions will provide a compelling insight on mental health from a range of perspectives and contexts, including psychotherapeutic communication, public presentations of mental health, literary accounts of lived experiences, and language features and phenomenology associated with specific mental health problems.

To discuss your book proposal, please contact the series editors:

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