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LANGUAGE MODULATION BY HYPNOTIZABILITY

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Aim:

During upright stance that is an attention consuming task, subjects with high (Highs) hypnotic susceptibility have shown a similar ability at guided visual imagery, but a greater ability at somesthetic imagery than individuals with low hypnotizability (Lows). Aim of the study was to assess whether any sensory modality preferences can be observed in the language of Highs and Lows.

Methods:

Two corpora of written language (5.000 occurrences each) were manually annotated and automatically processed by means of: a) textual database management systems, b) a PoS (Part of Speech)-Tagger based on texts' morphological analysis and stochastic algorithms, c) the ontological structure of a lexical-semantic database.

Results:

The Highs' texts exhibited a greater percentage of adjectives with high imagery content (32% vs. 17%), a more frequent use of visual (14% vs. 9%) and tactile (9% vs. 5%) adjectives and a greater percentage of abstract nouns (42% vs. 32%) with respect to the Lows' ones. Also the use of figures of speech evoking sensory experience impressively, such as similes, metaphors, synesthesias, is more frequent in Highs.

Conclusion:

Preliminary results support the hypothesis that hypnotisability influences language, which might be relevant in psychotherapy and neurorehabilitation.

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