

UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

Are you talking about me? A pilot investigation of how gender modulates the effects of self-relevance and valence on emotional feelings

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8d79j7x5>

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 43(43)

ISSN

1069-7977

Authors

Lebel, Madison Marie
Doan, Tiffany
McCrackin, Sarah D
et al.

Publication Date

2021

Peer reviewed

Are you talking about me? A pilot investigation of how gender modulates the effects of self-relevance and valence on emotional feelings

Madison Marie Lebel

University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Tiffany Doan

University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Sarah McCrackin

University of Waterloo, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Stephanie Denison

University of Waterloo , Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Roxane Itier

University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Abstract

A pilot study (n=68) investigated participants' emotional valence after reading sentences that varied in self-relevance (referring to the participant/someone else), valence (positive/negative), and the gender of the person expressing the sentence (man/woman). Positive sentences induced more positive emotion than negative sentences. Self-relevance enhanced the emotional response, with positive self-relevant sentences rated more positively than positive other-relevant sentences, and negative self-relevant sentences rated more negatively than negative other-relevant sentences. Gender impacted these responses. First, the difference in emotional valence felt in response to positive versus negative sentences was larger for women than men – women responded more positively to positive sentences than men. Second, self-relevance enhanced the positive emotion in response to positive sentences more strongly when the sentence came from the opposite gender. These findings suggest that women may have stronger responses to emotional sentences and that processing biases may exist to prioritize positive self-relevant information from the opposite gender.