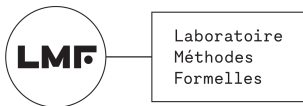


Natural language processing for subjectivity analysis in personal narratives

Gustave Cortal

Thesis director: Alain Finkel

Co-advisors: Patrick PAROUBEK and Lina YE



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supérieure —
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université
PARIS-SACLAY

Introduction

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We first address the *content* by classifying elements of personal narratives (e.g., characters and emotions). Then, we study the *form* through the concept of style

Introduction

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- ▶ Definition of objectives and scope using cognitive science

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- ▶ Formalization of style in personal narratives
- ▶ Automatic thematic analysis in mental health narratives

Definition of objectives using cognitive science

G. Cortal and C. Bonard. [Improving Language Models for Emotion Analysis: Insights from Cognitive Science](#). *CMCL, ACL 2024*.

Definition of objectives and scope using cognitive science

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- ▶ Different emotion theories lead to divergences in how to annotate them in the text
- ▶ Some linguistic and cognitive science theories are not considered
- ▶ There is no benchmark that evaluates the richness of the emotional phenomenon

Integrated framework for emotion theories

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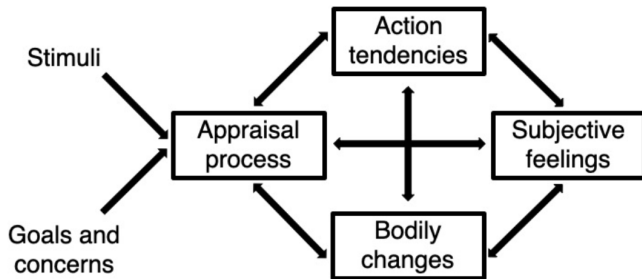


Figure: Emotional episodes are synchronized changes in four components (Scherer, 2022).

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→ Different emotion expression modes are more or less difficult to interpret

Construction of an emotion dataset

Available at [hf.co/datasets/gustavecortal/FrenchEmotionalNarratives](https://huggingface.co/datasets/gustavecortal/FrenchEmotionalNarratives)

G. Cortal, A. Finkel, P. Paroubek, L. Ye. [Emotion Recognition based on Psychological Components in Guided Narratives for Emotion Regulation](#). *SIGHUM, EACL 2023*.

French emotional narratives based on components

Goal: A more comprehensive understanding of emotional events

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Component	Answer
Behavior	I'm giving a lecture on a Friday morning at 8:30. A student goes out and comes back a few moments later with a coffee in his hand.
Feeling	My heart is beating fast, and I freeze, waiting to know how to act.
Thinking	I think this student is disrupting my class.
Territory	The student attacks my ability to be respected in class.

Chosen emotion: anger (possible choices: anger, fear, joy, sadness)

More than 1,000 narratives were collected during emotion regulation sessions

Training language models for emotion analysis

G. Cortal, A. Finkel, P. Paroubek, L. Ye. [Emotion Recognition based on Psychological Components in Guided Narratives for Emotion Regulation](#). *SIGHUM, EACL 2023*

G. Cortal. [Sequence-to-Sequence Language Models for Character and Emotion Detection in Dream Narratives](#). *LREC-COLING 2024*

Discrete emotion detection based on components

Component	Logistic Regression			CamemBERT		
	Precision	Recall	F_1	Precision	Recall	F_1
All	71.2 (2.6)	69.1 (2.2)	67.8 (2.3)	85.1	84.8	84.7
Without behavior	77.4 (2.3)	75.8 (2.4)	74.5 (2.6)	80.3	79.8	79.7
Without feeling	64.3 (1.9)	61.5 (1.2)	61.3 (2.2)	81.6	79.8	79.9
Without thinking	70.9 (1.8)	69.1 (2.0)	68.3 (2.2)	79.6	78.5	78.7
Without territory	64.3 (4.1)	64.5 (2.4)	62.3 (2.8)	78.7	78.5	78.6
Only behavior	52.1 (3.5)	54.6 (2.9)	51.7 (2.9)	68.4	67.1	66.6
Only feeling	69.6 (1.5)	68.9 (2.1)	68.4 (2.0)	67.8	68.4	67.7
Only thinking	50.1 (3.4)	53.8 (2.3)	50.6 (2.7)	70.5	70.1	70.1
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→ Some components benefit from contextual understanding and world knowledge (e.g., behavior and thinking)

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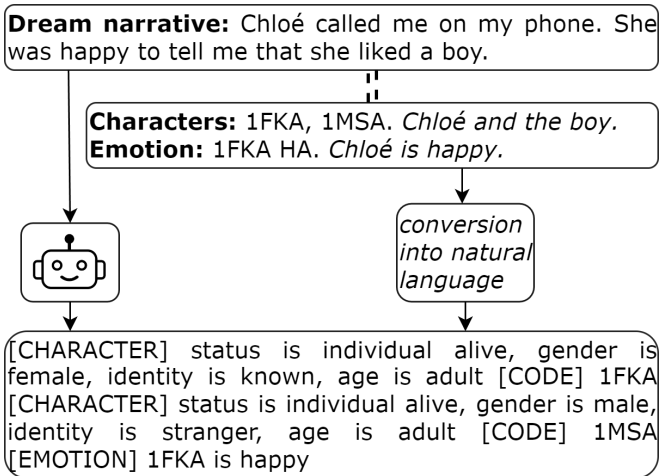
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How to automate the annotation process?

Character and emotion detection in dream narratives



Results

Baseline is LaMini-Flan-T5 finetuned on 1823 dream narratives

Model	Status	Gender	Identity	Age	Character	Emotion
Baseline	82.87	78.02	76.17	86.21	64.74	75.13
No _{semantics}	71.37	56.54*	61.0	90.51	41.79*	75.79
No _{names}	80.66*	74.32**	74.2	83.95*	60.93**	73.04*
Size _{small}	78.35**	72.13**	70.25**	81.66**	56.79**	70.15**
Size _{large}	84.51*	80.3**	78.63**	87.29	67.63**	74.71
First _{group}	82.33	77.71	74.86	85.61	63.71	71.94
First _{individual}	80.59**	76.14	74.22*	83.87**	62.67	67.32
First _{emotion}	83.92	78.74	77.06	87.63	64.97	72.03
Conversion _{comma}	84.02**	79.84**	77.67**	87.08*	66.69**	73.68
Conversion _{marker}	82.39	78.45	76.53	86.09	65.44	74.36
Cross-validation	86.28	81.9	79.51	89.52	68.64	76.18

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→ Language models can effectively address character and emotion detection in dream narratives

Results

StableBeluga_i is a 7B model with in-context learning using i examples

Model	Status	Gender	Identity	Age	Character	Emotion
Baseline	82.87	78.02	76.17	86.21	64.74	75.13
StableBeluga ₁	43.95**	39.76**	31.25**	56.16**	15.65**	-
StableBeluga ₃	52.44**	46.49**	38.46**	63.88**	21.06**	-
StableBeluga ₅	55.89**	46.29**	42.61**	63.73**	24.86**	-

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→ Compared to StableBeluga, our supervised models perform better while having 28 times fewer parameters (248M vs 7B)

Case study on the war veteran

Group	Category	% Vet	% Total	Δ
Identity	known*	24.9	51.6	-26.7
	prominent	1.9	2.5	-0.6
	occupational*	22.4	8.0	14.4
	ethnic*	4.1	0.9	3.1
	unknown*	46.8	37.0	9.8
Gender	male*	56.2	43.0	13.1
	female*	24.1	33.1	-9.0
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→ The war veteran dreams more about *occupational*, *ethnic*, and *unknown* identities compared to other dreamers.

Formalization of style in personal narratives

G. Cortal and A. Finkel. [Formalizing Style in Personal Narratives](#). *EMNLP 2025*.

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We narrow the general definition of style: *a distinctive manner of communicating subjective experience in narratives*

Contributions

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3. A case study on dream narratives

Categorizing linguistic features

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Processes	Examples
Action: actions and events in the physical world.	[He] _{Actor} [takes] _{Action} [the valuable] _{Affected} [Members of my cult] _{Actor} [have made] _{Action} [1500 euros] _{Result} [I] _{Actor} [give] _{Action} [her] _{Recipient} [a chance] _{Range}
Mental: internal experiences such as thoughts, perceptions, and feelings.	[We] _{Senser} [believe] _{Mental} [women are the leaders of change] _{Phenomenon} [The moon] _{Senser} [sees] _{Mental} [the earth] _{Phenomenon} [He] _{Senser} [disliked] _{Mental} [Gilbert's writing] _{Phenomenon}
Verbal: acts of communication.	[David] _{Sayer} [said] _{Verbal} ["the corrupt, criminals and money launderers"] _{Verbiage}
State: states of being, having, or existence.	There [was] _{Existential} [a swimming pool] _{Existent} [John] _{Carrier} [is] _{State} [an interesting teacher] _{Attribute} [Hadrian's Wall] _{Possessor} [has] _{State} [something for everyone] _{Possessed}

Pipeline for our sequence-based framework

Clause	Process (symbol)	Participants
I wake in a dark room	Action (a)	Actor
I feel a cold wind	Mental (m)	Senser, Phenomenon
I tell myself to move	Verbal (v)	Sayer, Recipient
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Sequence: <i>amv</i> Substrings: {am, mv}		

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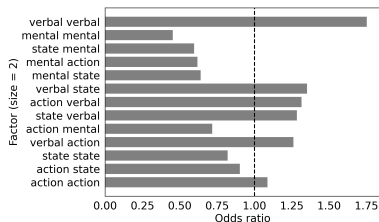
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4. We perform sequence analysis to identify patterns such as frequent substrings and representative sequences

Results on the war veteran

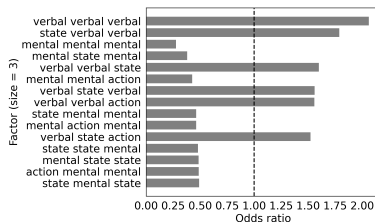
We compare the proportion of sequences containing a given substring

Results on the war veteran

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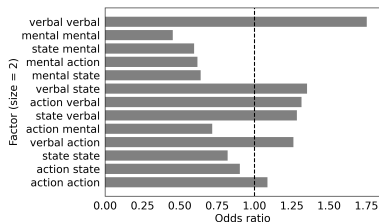


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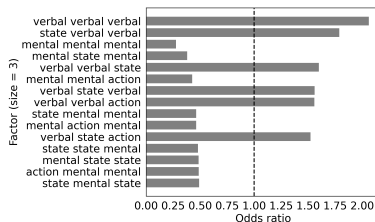
Figure: Top substring odds ratio between the veteran and the norm

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Figure: Top substring odds ratio between the veteran and the norm

We show a preference for the war veteran to remain in a verbal process, as indicated by substrings such as *verbal.verbal* and *verbal.verbal.verbal* with high odds ratios (respectively 2.00 and 1.75)

Results on the war veteran

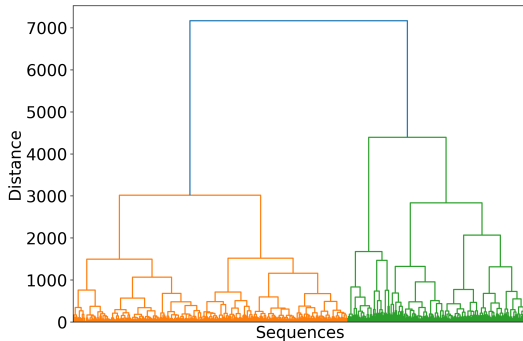


Figure: Dendrogram with Ward linkage and cosine similarity

Results on the war veteran

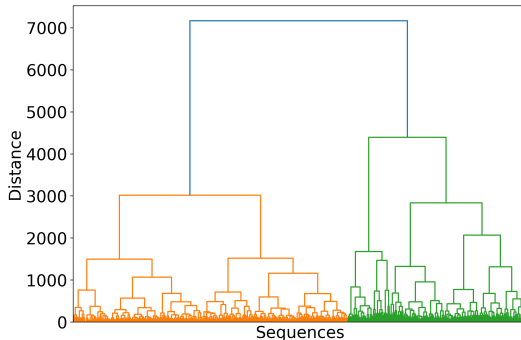


Figure: Dendrogram with Ward linkage and cosine similarity

Representative sequences: *savamasasaaamaasavvvaaaaaaavssaaaaa*
and *sssssavaavssvsavvvvsmasasaasasaamaamvmsss* with
a = action, m = mental, s = state, v = verbal

Perspectives

- ▶ Authorship profiling

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- ▶ Applying methods from complexity science and formal language theory

Conclusion

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- ▶ Definition of objectives and scope using cognitive science

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How to model subjective experience in personal narratives?

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- ▶ Construction of an emotion dataset
- ▶ Training of language models for emotion analysis
- ▶ Formalization of style in personal narratives

Appendix

Selected open-source projects

My research models are publicly hosted on Hugging Face and were trained using the Jean Zay supercomputer.

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[Oneirogen](#), a model for dream generation, and [Dream-T5](#), a model for emotion and character prediction in dream narratives.

Selected research papers

Constant Bonard and Gustave Cortal (2024). "Improving Language Models for Emotion Analysis: Insights from Cognitive Science". In: *Proceedings of the Workshop on Cognitive Modeling and Computational Linguistics*. Ed. by Tatsuki Kuribayashi et al. Bangkok, Thailand: Association for Computational Linguistics, pp. 264–277. DOI: 10.18653/v1/2024.cmc1-1.23

Gustave Cortal, Alain Finkel, et al. (2023). "Emotion Recognition Based on Psychological Components in Guided Narratives for Emotion Regulation". In: *Proceedings of the 7th Joint SIGHUM Workshop on Computational Linguistics for Cultural Heritage, Social Sciences, Humanities and Literature*. Ed. by Stefania Degaetano-Ortlieb et al. Dubrovnik, Croatia: Association for Computational Linguistics, pp. 72–81. DOI: 10.18653/v1/2023.latechc1f1-1.8

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