Corpus Framework Analysis: Integrating computational linguistics, corpus linguistics, and clinical psychology to analyse online posts on personal recovery in bipolar disorder

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Introduction & motivation
Personal recovery in bipolar disorder

- Bipolar disorder (BD): severe mental health (MH) issue, characterised by extreme + changing mood states

- Clinical recovery: remove symptoms, restore functioning
- Personal recovery (PR): living a satisfying, hopeful, contributing life even with limitations caused by symptoms

Why study PR in BD via online forum posts?

- Peer online support forums: source of information, support, social contacts
- PR research so far: interviews, focus groups: retrospective, researcher influenced
- Online posts: insights into ‘an experience as it is lived rather than as it is enacted in the researcher constructed environment’¹
- Opportunity to include voices of people not in contact with services/researchers

- Reddit (reddit.com): large international online discussion forum, subforums (subreddits) for different topics, including MH/BD, all posts in public domain

Bigger picture - PhD thesis „Talking about personal recovery in bipolar disorder“

Personal recovery in bipolar disorder: Systematic review and "best fit" framework synthesis of qualitative evidence – a POETIC adaptation of CHIME (Jagfeld et al., 2021)

Understanding who uses Reddit: Profiling individuals with a self-reported bipolar disorder diagnosis (Jagfeld et al., 2021)

An exploratory analysis of posting patterns in peer online support forums and their associations with emotions and mood in bipolar disorder (under review)

Talking about personal recovery in bipolar disorder: A corpus framework analysis of peer online support forum posts (in progress)
Research question

What can online support forum posts reveal about the processes and experience of personal recovery in bipolar disorder in relation to the POETIC framework?
Methods:
Corpus construction & analysis
POETIC: Lived experience of personal recovery in bipolar disorder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th>Purpose and meaning</th>
<th>Meaning of mental illness experiences</th>
<th>Paid or voluntary work</th>
<th>Quality of life</th>
<th>Meaningful life and social roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Optimism and hope</td>
<td>Belief in possibility of recovery</td>
<td>Positive thinking and valuing success</td>
<td>Hope-inspiring relationships</td>
<td>Having dreams and aspirations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Self-management &amp; personal responsibility</td>
<td>Controversial role of medication</td>
<td>Control over life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tensions</td>
<td>Balancing acceptance with ambitions</td>
<td>Openness enables support, but also stigmatisation</td>
<td>Ambivalence around (hypo-) mania</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Rebuilding positive sense of self</td>
<td>Overcoming stigma</td>
<td>Dimensions of identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Support from others</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Peer support and support groups</td>
<td>Being part of the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethical issues

- Ethical approval by FHM Research Ethics Committee in May 2019
- Remove usernames, paraphrase quotes to protect users’ anonymity
- Feedback from people with lived experience throughout project

- Reproducibility: dataset + corpora will be made available to other researchers upon request and signing a data usage agreement
Dataset¹: Reddit users with a self-reported bipolar disorder diagnosis

- User account identification via self-reported BD diagnosis statements

Selecting Posts about PR in BD with an information retrieval approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Subreddit</th>
<th>Users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>AskReddit</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bipolar</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>funny</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>pics</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>todayilearned</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-reported BD Reddit Dataset
19,685 users, 21M posts

In BD subreddit & Mentions BD

Score with query: PR terms (n=562)

hope, forgive yourself, rebuild life, normalize, wife, marry, wellbeing, well-being, ...

Corpus Framework Analysis (CFA): Integrating computational linguistics, corpus linguistics & health research

1) Data familiarisation: read randomly sampled posts in threads
2) Generate key lemmas via #LancsBox 6.0¹: significantly overused² in PR-BD corpus compared to reference corpus of non-PR relevant posts, used by at least 5% (n=100) of users
3) POETIC framework analysis of 30 random concordances per key lemma
   a) Expected items: key lemmas that are in PR terms list
   b) New items: key lemmas that are not in PR terms list
   c) Collocation analysis for selected key lemmas (#LancsBox)
4) Consider absences³: PR terms underused/missing in the PR-BD corpus

² Log likelihood, p < 0.0001
Results
PR-BD corpus & reference corpus, key lemmas

**PR-BD corpus**: Posts in BD subreddits about BD and PR
- Posts: 4,462
- Words: 1,337,080
- Users: 1,982

**Reference corpus**: Posts in BD subreddits about BD but not PR
- Posts: 25,197
- Words: 4,700,834
- Users: 6,075

130 key lemmas used by at least 5% of users

PR score > 0.025,
59% precision in selecting PR relevant posts
(based on 38% PR-relevant posts out of 167 manually coded posts)

PR score < 0.013,
75% precision in selecting non-PR relevant posts
## POETIC framework analysis results

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<th>Meaning of mental illness experiences</th>
<th>Paid/voluntary work or formal education</th>
<th>Quality of life</th>
<th>Meaningful life &amp; social roles</th>
<th>Spirituality</th>
<th>Meaningful life &amp; social goals</th>
<th>Rebuilding of life</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not POETIC</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Symptoms</td>
<td>Genetics &amp; family history</td>
<td>Diagnosis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Frequency | 159 | 350 | 1000 | 1300 | 2000 | 4000 | 6500 |
Meaningful life or social roles (5,715): Reproductive decision making

- kid 57%, parent_n 53%, daughter 53%, baby* 53%, child 50%, son 47%, bear_v* 43%, raise_v* 37%, chance 30%, environment* 30%, decision 27%, mom 27%, grow* 23%, risk_n 20%, society 20%, father_n 20%, challenge 17%, develop 13%, perspective 13%, possibility 13%, capable 13%, life 13%, choice 13%, responsible 13% *new key lemma (not PR term)

- Genetic risk + manageability of parenting a child for parents with BD

- “I wouldn't wish bipolar disorder on my worst enemy, let alone could I bear to pass it on to anyone. I've got other reasons, too. I'm terrified of the thought of having to come off my medication for at least nine months, particularly with the hormonal changes and stress of parenting. I see my suicide risk going up and I'm scared I'd be so selfish and end my child's life as well. [...] I've considered it all and having kids just doesn't seem possible for me.”

Spirituality (1,153)

- god 70%, belief 37%, life 10%, teach* 10% *new key lemma (not PR term)
- Very personal, also controversial experiences
- (Hypo-)manic vs. religious experiences
- “I meditate and visualize angel wings enfolding me and being flooded with radiating loving light. I realise this sounds quite bipolar. Talking about this part of my inner world to a psychiatrist would require a lot of trust for me. I have always had this active imagination, as if there was another presence just out of reach. I think of it as a private activity. If it does not negatively affect my everyday life, it should be nobody’s business.”
Summary & outlook
Summary, implications & limitations

Summary
• Corpus Framework Analysis of online support forum data: innovative approach to study PR in BD
• POETIC framework captures PR experiences shared online well

Implications
• Practice: more awareness of relevant PR issues in BD
• Research
  • POETIC framework validation
  • Apply Corpus Framework Analysis to other research questions

Limitations
• PR terms list enabled but biased corpus construction
• Topic-like POETIC categories easier to capture with single terms than theme-like categories
Thank you – I’m looking forward to the discussion!

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With what meanings do Reddit users with a self-reported BD diagnosis use *recover* terms?

Preparatory study: code meaning of 8 most frequent wordforms of recovery in the dataset (=*recover* terms): recovery, recover, recovering, recovered, recovers, recoveries, recoverable, unrecoverable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>% total (n=377)</th>
<th>% BD subreddits (n=50)</th>
<th>% MH subreddits (n=50)</th>
<th>% non-MH subreddits (n=277)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MH recovery</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical recovery</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal recovery</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot determine</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life event</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MH issue</th>
<th>% BD subs (n=50)</th>
<th>% MH subs (n=50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addiction</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BD</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating disorders</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major depressive disorder</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borderline personality disorder</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety disorder, PTSD, psychotic disorder, self-harm, multiple, unknown</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recovery is not a good search term! Only BD subreddit posts mentioning BD
Creating the PR terms list

• Manual selection of overused keywords from:
  • POETIC review articles (n=12, 75,553 words) vs. excluded articles (n=80, 409,877 words) that fulfilled all inclusion criteria except PR focus
  1
  • Quotes from included POETIC articles from each POETIC domain vs. quotes coded in all other domains
  2
  • MH recovery posts manually coded in preparator study as as PR (n= 26, 6,368 words) vs. clinical recovery (n=89, 13,790 words)
  1
  • + Terms informed by clinical knowledge, spelling variants
  • PR terms (n=562): hope, forgive yourself, rebuild life, normalize, wife, marry, wellbeing, well-being, ... (automatically lemmatised via spacy)

1 Log likelihood, p < 0.001
2 Log likelihood, p < 0.01
Determine PR score cutoff: Manual coding of PR relevance

- Does the post indicate that the user can be regarded as being in personal recovery, i.e. do they share experiences relevant to their personal recovery in the post?
- Moderate agreement (Cohen’s kappa (k) = 0.51, 77% observed agreement) for GJ & CH coding 100 posts
- Good agreement (k = 0.71, 87% observed agreement) for 62 posts where both had ≥3/5 confidence
- Calculate precision & recall for various PR score cut-offs of manually coded posts
Absences: What is missing online?

- Underused or missing in the PR-BD corpus: 13% (55/423 unique PR terms (lemmatised, no pronoun/spelling variants))
- Underused: 8 PR terms
  - Log ratios between 0 and -0.7, 5 PR terms significantly underused w p < 0.0001
  - Topics – expect that these are underrepresented in a corpus about PR
    - Mania: mania, manic, high mood
    - Medical MH professionals: doctor, pdoc, psychiatrist
    - Symptom: sleep
    - Race: race_n (identity) overused (LR 1.3) but race_v (running) underused (LR – 0.5)
- Missing in PR-BD corpus (zero frequency): 47 PR terms
  - All terms also do not appear in the reference corpus
  - Topics
    - Characteristics of the recovery journey (12: recovery journey, growth process etc.)
Overview of the data: analyse 50 random posts in their threads

- 34 (68%) PR-relevant: ask question/share own experience
  - Romantic relationship advice, bad professional/family support, reproductive decisions, spirituality
- 16 (32%) not PR-relevant:
  - 9 (18%) give advice/general comment without personal experience
  - 6 (12%) vent about/discuss/seek advice for symptoms
  - 1 (2%) genetics: family members with MH issues
Tf-idf weighted cosine similarity

- Given a vocabulary of size $N$ with $i$ representing one term of the vocabulary, a post $p$ is represented by the vector $x$ of length $N$ according to its bag of words with one hot encoding: $x_i = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if vocabulary term } i \text{ appears in } p \\ 0 & \text{else} \end{cases}$

- Analogously, the PR terms are represented by the vector $y$, also of length $N$: $y_i = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if vocabulary term } i \text{ appears in the PR terms list} \\ 0 & \text{else} \end{cases}$

- The PR score of the post $p$ is calculated as the cosine similarity between the tf-idf weighted vector representation $\bar{x}$ of the vector representation $x$ and the tf-idf weighted vector representation $\bar{y}$ of the PR terms list vector representation $y$: PR score $(x) = \cosine(\bar{x}, \bar{y}) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{N} x_i y_i}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{N} x_i^2} \times \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{N} y_i^2}}$

- The tf-idf weighted vector representation $\bar{z}$ of a vector $z$ and a particular post $p$ is calculated by multiplying the vector entry for each vocabulary term $i$ with its associated weight $w_{i,p}$: $\bar{z} = w_{i,p} \ast z_i$

- The weights consist of the multiplication of the term frequency $tf_{i,p}$ of vocabulary term $i$ and the inverse document frequency $idf_i$ of term $i$: $w_{i,p} = tf_{i,p} \ast idf_i$, where the frequency of term $i$ that appears $\text{count}(i, p)$ times in a post $p$ is defined as follows:
  $tf_{i,p} = \begin{cases} 1 + \log_{10} \text{count}(i, p) & \text{if } \text{count}(i, p) > 0 \\ 0 & \text{else} \end{cases}$

- The inverse document frequency of term $i$ that appears in $df_i$ posts out of a collection of $M$ posts (traditionally called documents) is $idf_i = \log_{10} \frac{N}{df_i}$
Outline

1) Introduction & motivation
2) Methods
   i. Corpus construction
   ii. Corpus framework analysis (CFA)
3) Preliminary results
4) Outlook
**Frequency of top 10 *recover* terms in the dataset**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>recovery</td>
<td>32425</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>recover</td>
<td>15459</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>recovering</td>
<td>10399</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>recovered</td>
<td>7178</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>recovers</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>recoveries</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>recoverable</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>unrecoverable</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>recovery[suburladdress]</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>recovery[SUB]</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subreddit Posts in subreddit (n) | Posts in subreddit (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subreddit</th>
<th>Posts in subreddit (n)</th>
<th>Posts in subreddit (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stopdrinking</td>
<td>5969</td>
<td>9.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AskReddit</td>
<td>5233</td>
<td>8.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipolar</td>
<td>2689</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BipolarReddit</td>
<td>1294</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPD</td>
<td>1031</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OpiatesRecovery</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raisedbynarcissists</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depression</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REDDITORSINRECOVERY</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reddit users who disclose a BD diagnosis

- ... are mainly between 18-49 years old
  - 30-49: 48%
  - 18-29: 30%
  - 13-17: 16%
  - 50-64: 7%
  - 65+: 0%

- ... have a balanced gender distribution*
  - 52% Feminine
  - 48% Masculine
  - * non-binary gender not considered due to lack of natural language processing methods

- ... live predominantly in the USA

- ... often report additional mental health diagnoses
  - Any additional diagnosis: 51%
  - Major depressive disorder: 30%
  - Anxiety disorder: 16%
  - Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: 13%
  - Borderline personality disorder: 8%
  - Post-traumatic stress disorder: 7%
  - Obsessive-compulsive disorder: 4%
  - Autism spectrum disorder: 2%
  - Eating disorder: 1%

- 82% USA
- 6% Great Britain
- 5% Canada
- 2% Australia
- 1% Germany
- 1% Sweden
What’s new: 15 not PR-term key lemmas

Often general terms that blend in well with PR terms, few surprises:

• Peer support: support_n (1238), **attend** (123), **network** (114)

• Relationships: family (1988), relationship (1777), parent_n (1275), mom (845), healthy (811), father (435), son (387), member (307), daughter (297), sexual (184), religious (180), **married** (96), **fulfill** (79), vulnerable (73), **sibling** (72), **divorce** (70), rebuild (64), **boundary** (63), value_v (51)

• Meaningful life and social roles: family (1988), parent_n (1275), child (1243), kid (1146), mom (845), decision (566), father (435), choice (433), son (387), daughter (297), responsibility (284), responsible (156), **married** (96), **fulfill** (79), **adopt** (76), parent_v (63)
Connectedness: navigate family & friend support & conflicts via boundaries

- Relationships (4359): relationship (1777), healthy (811), father (435), son (387), daughter (297), sexual (184), religious (180), married* (96), fulfill* (79), vulnerable (73), divorce* (70), rebuild (64), boundary* (63), value_v (51) (*not PR terms/new key lemmas)

- Support from others (3447): support_n (1238), social (599), support_v (464), supportive (421), resource (283), educate (204), active (141), network* (114), spouse (110), religion (110), acceptance (99), loving* (96), uncle (95), christian (76), vulnerable (73), boundary* (63), atheist (61)

- Both: family (1988), parent_n (1275), mom (845), member (307), sibling* (72)

- Having bipolar doesn't somehow make every emotion I have now illegitimate. If someone tells me to "take my meds" in an emotional situation, my response is usually not good. People in my life know not to use that as a weapon or to ask me if I've taken them if I seem emotional for whatever reason. It's not an open topic for discussion and I've set that boundary w everyone in my life.

- My boundaries change from moment to moment, so I always have to tell my husband that cuddles are fine for now.
Spirituality (444): hardly discussed in POETIC

- religious (180), belief (177), faith (176), spiritual (144), religion (110), practice* (88), meditate* (80), church* (78), christian (76), atheist (61)

- Relationship of (hypo-)mania and spirituality

  It kind of makes me sad that the de facto assumption for thoughts / feelings relating to the spiritual, while bipolar, are automatically assumed to be psychosis.

- Religious/spiritual beliefs hindering treatment

  I realized that I had a prejudice towards mental illness and taking medication, though I had previously thought I was so understanding of those with it [...]. I thought if I followed all my church rules, I wouldn't get it or be unhappy in any way.

- Spirituality aiding recovery through faith & self-management

  I personally like meditating [...] or praying if you're religious in the "western" sense. But even atheists can meditate. Quite honestly, becoming a Buddhist has helped my BiPolar II more than any medication or therapy ever did. It does not stop the urges to be mad or irritable, and it does not prevent mania or depression, but it's been good at alleviating anxiety and reducing future-future-thinking delusions that cause the most problems in my social life. I never thought religion/philosophy would help me so much, but it did.
Reddit as data source

**My favorite recovery song**

Facing the sun by fritz kalkbrenner. I love this song, good times and bad times and I think the lyrics tell a lot about myself.*

https://reddit.com/r/bipolar

*Made-up post to protect users’ anonymity
Quality of life (2,634): Meeting basic needs

- hobby 70%, improve 40%, money 23%, parent_n 17%, marry 17%, enjoy 13%, social 10%, exercise_v 10%, activity 10%, husband 10%, manage 10%, job 10%, wife 10%, degree 10%, adult* 10%, quality* 10%
  * new key lemma (not PR term)
- Meeting basic needs barely came up in POETIC review: no one reported financial struggles - no US studies, mainly UK + EU
- “I have a great job in a pharmacy I like, but some days (most, actually) I just can't get out of bed. My boss had to stop my health insurance about 9 months ago because I was working less than 20 hours per week. I don't know why I can't get out of bed. I don't know why I can't get out of bed. My alarm rings and I'm just like ‘not today, don't feel like it’. But without health insurance I can't see a doctor. Well, I could pay out of pocket, but then I can't because I work so few hours. A vicious cycle.”
Online posts offer candid and in the moment experiences

Disclosing secret behaviours (Purpose & Meaning: Spirituality)

I meditate and visualize angel wings enfolding me and being flooded with radiating loving light. I realise this sounds quite bipolar. **Talking about this part of my inner world to a psychiatrist would require a lot of trust for me.** I have always had this active imagination, as if there was another presence just out of reach. **I think of it as a private activity. If it does not negatively affect my everyday life, it should be nobody’s business.**

Posting during a manic episode (Not POETIC: Symptoms)

**Update:** Yesterday I posted here about the realization that I've entered a manic episode. I drove 600 miles to see an online friend after breaking up with my boyfriend. I told no one where I was going. Aside from my family and this guy, I've destroyed all my relationship in the past days. I hate it - when I get this way, I become so impulsive and insensitive, and I end up feeling super guilty afterwards. I would love to feel normal one day! **Positive note: I am safe.**

* Post quotes paraphrased to protect users’ anonymity