

THOUGHT DISORDER IN SCHIZOPHRENIA: IS FORM OF SPEECH INFLUENCED BY CONTENT OF SPEECH?

M. R. Dodge, D. M. Barch

Washington University, One Brookings Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63130, USA

The present study examined the hypothesis that the topic of speech (content of speech) influences the level of formal thought disorder produced (form of speech) in individuals with schizophrenia. We examined speech produced by patients with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder during the discussion of delusional and emotional topics. We predicted greater thought disorder when discussing delusional topics compared with emotional or neutral topics. Specifically, we asked participants to discuss topics specific to their delusional beliefs, as identified in a SCID interview (First, Spitzer, Gibbon, & Williams, 1995), self-identified non-delusional positive topics, negative topics, and two neutral topics. Results will be discussed in terms of comparisons between overall levels and specific components of formal thought disorder (TLC; Andreasen, 1986) produced when discussing each topic. Ratings for overall symptom severity (PANSS; Kay, Fiszbein, & Opler, 1987) and specific delusion severity (PSYRATS; Haddock, McCarron, Tarrier, & Faragher, 1999) will also be examined as mediating factors in the relationship between content of speech and thought disorder.