

# Exploring the Language of Depressive Self-Disclosure amongst Young Adult Malaysian Twitter Users

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.909000385>

Received: 10 September 2025; Accepted: 16 September 2025; Published: 13 October 2025

## ABSTRACT

This study explores the language of depressive self-disclosure among young adult Malaysian Twitter users, focusing on direct and indirect disclosures and the use of affective language. Using a discourse analysis framework, 89 Tweets containing the term "depression" were retrieved between January and March 2023. Following a rigorous screening process to identify Tweets that qualified as self-disclosures, 21 Tweets were selected for analysis. Two key criteria guided the investigation: (i) the linguistic patterns associated with direct versus indirect disclosures and (ii) the frequency and patterns of affective or emotive language. Data analysis was conducted using AntConc, a corpus analysis tool, to identify recurring linguistic features and affective word usage. The findings shed light on the ways young Malaysians articulate depressive experiences in digital spaces, revealing distinctive patterns in disclosure types and emotional expression. This study contributes to the understanding of mental health communication in social media contexts and highlights the role of language in shaping self-disclosure practices online.

**Keywords:** direct disclosures, indirect disclosures, twitter, depressive language, self-disclosure.

## INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (2023), approximately 280 million people worldwide deal with depression and about 45 million are diagnosed with bipolar disorder. For the past decade, there have been efforts in handling issues regarding mental health, especially depression. These efforts include, introducing more mental health services as of 2020, to help people struggling with mental health issues (suicidal ideation, emerging depressive symptoms, anxious thoughts, etc.) during the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing the accessibility of mental health services and integrating mental health issues in policies (Hewlett, Takino, Nishina & Prinz, 2021).

The high prevalence of depression among young adults in Malaysia, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscores the need for further examination and discussion. In 2021, research indicated that 25.1% of young adult Malaysians have severe depression while 18.7% have mild depressive symptoms (Marzo et al., 2021). The study also revealed that these figures were calculated during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic and showed signs of increasing as the lockdown went on, which is a cause for concern. Furthermore, Shamsuddin et al. (2013) highlighted The National Health and Morbidity Survey III (NHMS III) findings, which reported that young Malaysians in the 16–24-year age group had the highest prevalence of acute and chronic suicidal ideation (10.0% and 26.0%, respectively) compared to other age groups. These statistics further emphasize the pressing need to delve deeper into the topic of depression in Malaysian young adults as the numbers continue to rise gradually. Given the increasing rates of depression among young adults in Malaysia, especially during the pandemic, it is crucial to engage in comprehensive discussions and investigations as it is without a doubt getting more serious than before.

Self-disclosure plays an important role in improving mental health issues. (Balani & Choudhury, 2015). According to Kim and Dindia (2011), self-disclosure is "revealing personal or private information about self

that is generally unknown and not available from other sources”. The research behind self-disclosure of one’s mental illness has been widely investigated and linked to trust and sense of belonging to an identity (Balani & Choudhury, 2015). Manikond and Choudhury (2017) agreed by stating that self-disclosure of mental health is a basic element in the attainment of improved mental health. The study also states that “self-disclosure facilitates a sense of resolution, which results in less rumination and eventually allows disturbing experiences to subside gradually from conscious thought”. These studies indicate that, with self-disclosure of mental health in social media, one can seek support from people in the same community and feel resolved from intrusive thoughts as they vent on social media platforms.

Depression and social media have been a topic of discussion by many researchers, especially when it comes to its communicative aspects of depression-related discourse. As an example, Lee, Buchanan & Yu (2020) found that self-disclosure of mental health on social media has both positive and negative effects, as they stated that there are higher engagements in mental health discussion, but cyberbullying may occur as disclosing information on the Internet can reach a broader audience. Not only that, but prior research findings showed that mental health professionals have utilized social media in spreading public-health oriented messages as well as supportive messages on the platform Instagram. (McCarthy, 2019). These studies demonstrate that, with the evolution of social media in our current world, its relationship with mental health patients are inevitable. With the involvement of social media in the field of mental health, many aspects can be delved into further such as, the kind of visuals they tend to post when self-disclosing, the kind of words they often use whenever mental health discussions are being talked about in forums, the use of slangs in the posts and so on. In this study, the social media site that was looked into was Twitter.

Twitter is a popular networking site (SNS) with 166 million daily active users worldwide (Petrosyan, 2023). The platform is used to talk about day-to-day activities, share opinions and spread news (Makita, Mas-Bleda, Morris & Thedwall, 2020). Due to the versatility of Twitter, many discussions have been held amongst users regarding issues on politics, economy, world news, crime and even mental health. (Veltman, 2022). In short, Twitter allows users to communicate in “statements” also known as Tweets up to 140 characters in length. Throughout the years, many users have used Twitter to vent out their feelings or opinions on the platform, making it a suitable medium for researchers to use in examining self-disclosure of mental health. This matter has been agreed by Mas-Bleda, Morris and Thedwall (2020) who pointed out that Twitter offers additional possibilities for exploring how people make meaning in relation to health and illness issues. So, it is evident that, other than being a suitable medium, Twitter also is a site that allows several mental health discussions to take place.

In this study, we examined the use of direct and indirect disclosures when one self-discloses their depressive disorder and the types of affective/emotive language used in the Twitter posts.

Malaysian youths are one of the most affected individuals in the topic of depression. Subsequently, they are also the biggest demographic in utilizing social media in their daily lives. Alongside this trend, mental health discourse on social media has also emerged as a prominent avenue for individuals seeking support, advice, and information (Pavalanathan & Choudhury, 2015). Thus, social media sites, like Twitter, may play an important role in mental health self-disclosures, as most youngsters would use social media to do so. As such, it is crucial to investigate the discourse surrounding mental health, particularly depression-related issues, as individuals, especially young users, turn to social media to self-disclose their struggles and seek guidance. By examining this phenomenon, we can gain a better understanding of the significance of social media in contemporary society, especially in Malaysia where there is a substantial user base but limited research on this topic.

### **Research Objectives:**

1. To explore how young adult Malaysians disclose their mental health status in tweets with the word “depression”.
2. To study what affective/emotive language are used more often in self-disclosing depression posts on the Twitter platform.

## Research Questions:

1. How do young adult Malaysians disclose their mental health status in tweets with the word “depression”?
2. What are the common affective/emotive words found in self-disclosing depression posts on the Twitter platform?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Definition of self-disclosure

The various definitions presented highlight the diverse nature of the study of self-disclosure, showcasing its multiple interpretations and perspectives. Luo and Hancock (2020) defined self-disclosure as “any message about oneself that an individual communicates with other people. On the other hand, the definition stated by Joinson and Paine (2009) is more specific, in which they defined self-disclosure as “the telling of the previously unknown information so that it becomes a shared knowledge, the process of making the self-known to others”. This definition was further specified as Joinson and Paine (2009) claimed that self-disclosure has a variety of purposes, depending on the context e.g., self-disclosing to your partner to make the relationship stronger. This was agreed by Kim and Dindia (2011) who described self-disclosure in a deeper way in which they defined it as “revealing personal or private information about self that is generally unknown and not available from other sources”. In their study they also claimed that self-disclosure consists of self-representation in which it means “selectively presenting aspects of oneself to control how one is perceived by others and is concerned with impression management” (Kim & Dindia, 2011). These different definitions demonstrate that the study of self-disclosure is diverse and can be interpreted in many ways.

### Past Studies of Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure has been a common topic amongst many researchers, not only in terms of mental health, but also in other related fields. As an example, Choudhury and De (2023) conducted a study on the relationship between self-disclosures and anonymity on the site Reddit whereas Vandecreek, Janus, Pennebaker and Binau (2002) talked about self-disclosures in prayers. In both studies, the researchers found that self-disclosure is a tool for people to feel connected to another entity and a way to express their hardships in order to ease the burden on their shoulders. This matter can be supported with Manikonda & Choudhury (2017)’s statement in which they claimed that self-disclosure is a therapeutic ingredient and is linked to improved physical and psychological well-being. All in all, most studies have summed up that self-disclosure, by any means, is a coping mechanism for certain mental health issues.

### Mental Health and Emotional Self Disclosures on social media

In terms of language, the study of self-disclosure has been done to discover the types of words, phrases and sentences used by users to self-disclose their personal issues (Makita, Mas-Bleda, Morris & Thedwall, 2015). According to Sloan (2010, p.30), ‘better understanding the linguistic characteristics of self-disclosure is potentially useful in advising people on how to increase their self-disclosure, to increase intimacy and well-being’. Studies regarding the language of self-disclosure have been done for years, however, since language use continues to evolve (Strongman, 2017), especially in social media, it is important to be updated on the matter.

### Linguistic Features of Mental Health and Emotional Expressions in Self-Disclosure

Past studies were seen to be discussing many linguistic attributes in this area. For instance, the study by Manikonda and Choudhury (2014) concluded that linguistic attributes in social media include (i) use of affective and emotive language (ii) the presence of relationships and social life words (iii) temporal indicators (iv) work and daily grind related words (v) cognitive words (vi) inhibition words (vii) Pronouns. Moreover, some of these attributes were mentioned again in another study by Barak and Gluck (2007), in which they expressed cognitive words, and the use of personal pronouns are evident in self-disclosing posts. However, in a

more recent study by Reuel et. al. (2022), the language of self-disclosure in social media has evolved and included attributes such as (i) interrogative sentences (ii) positive connotations. Thus, in this study we only focused on two linguistic attributes of self-disclosure on social media, (i) Direct and Indirect Speech (ii) Use of Affective and Emotive words.

### **Direct and Indirect Disclosures in Self Disclosure**

Li, Dijkstra and Zwaan (2022) stated that some individuals prefer to self-disclose in a manner of using symbolic sentences over direct sentences when psychological distance increases, in this case, in mass media. Direct disclosure, as defined by Anderson and Mandell (1989) refers to the act of openly and explicitly sharing personal information or experiences. As an example, when one is in therapy, he/she would usually open completely to the therapist and would say "I have severe depression". On the other hand, indirect speech refers to a more subtle or implicit way of conveying personal information or experiences. (Anderson & Mandell, 1989). For instance, the sentence "I am so sorry for hurting you, I didn't realize depression would ruin our friendship". In this sentence, the main intention was to apologize, but the speaker subconsciously reveals their depressive issues.

In certain situations, self-disclosure can occur inadvertently while discussing other topics, whereby the speaker unintentionally reveals personal information about themselves. (University of Minnesota, 2011). For example, if one wants to apologize for their mistakes, they might include the fact that they made that mistake due to their depression. In this case, the main point of the utterance is the apology, but it also disclosed the fact that they are dealing with depression. This matter is considered as an indirect way of disclosing her personal information. (Andalibi, Morris & Forte, 2018)

Prior research has described indirect and direct disclosures as due to many factors such as cultural norms, psychological distances or simply "unplanned" confessions (Eerland, Engelen & Zwaan, 2013). Age is also seen as a factor of direct and indirect speech usage in self-disclosing information, as claimed by Ungar, McConnel, Tutty and Fairholm (2009), young adults tend to use more indirect communication in self-disclosures in compared to older adults as they prefer to avoid any conflict or risks that would result in negative outcomes.

### **Effects of mental health self-disclosure on social media**

In relation to mental health, Lee, Buchanan and Yu (2020) realized that self-disclosure on social media plays a big role on a person's mental health. In their study about mental health images on Instagram, they stated that by self-disclosing on mental health, one can feel a sense of belonging to a member of the same community. When receiving support from other members of the community, it leads to an increase of self-esteem, self-efficiency and reduces uncertainty of oneself (Lee, Buchanan & Yu, 2020). This matter was agreed by Luo and Hancock (2020) as they affirmed that self-disclosure on social media leads to (i) perceived connectedness (ii) social support (iii) capitalization and authenticity. Additionally, Manikonda and Choudhury (2017) added on to the fact that self-disclosure facilitates "a sense of resolution" which allows less rumination and eventually allows disturbing thoughts to gradually be omitted from conscious thought. By observing these studies, it is evident that self-disclosure can bring out massively positive outcomes.

### **General language attributes and terminologies in social media discourse**

Numerous linguists acknowledge that the proliferation of the Internet has resulted in the emergence of electronic communication, alongside spoken and written forms (Kurmanbekova et al., 2022). As social media became more significant in our lives, our way of communicating in the sites was also revolutionized. It is undeniable that social media communication is limitless, as anonymity is preferred and the norms in everyday communication can be ignored. Hence, the language linguistic use in social media, are often harsher or more personal with the use of non-formal language, sarcasm, slang, emojis/emoticons, or harsh language with abbreviations (Gultom & Rahmadini, 2020). Although the topic of social media discourse is wide, only certain aspects of it will be focused on this study.

Furthermore, one of the prevalent types of "social metadata" or "social tagging" is the hashtag, represented by the # symbol followed by a keyword or combined phrase or clause (Zappavigna, 2019). In this study, the social



tagging used is the word “depression” by using the advanced search feature on Twitter, which includes the use of the #depression. Zappavigna (2019) realized that hashtags, as a form of conversational tagging, enable individuals to search social media discourse to find out what people are saying about particular domains, or to share feelings and opinions with like-minded users. The term “hashtags” only exists in the realm of social media as it is used to find certain topics or communities within the keyword searched on (Kurmanbekova et. al., 2022).

Based on the literature review provided, it can be concluded that depression among Malaysians is a growing concern, and they find ways to cope with the issues that they deal with in their everyday life. Self-disclosure on social media is an effective coping mechanism for mental health issues, as it provides a sense of belonging, social support, and authenticity. However, it should be noted that self-disclosure on social media can also have negative implications, including envy and negative responses from others. In addition, we are also able to realize that there are many styles of languages used in social media when disclosing depressive disorders. In this study, we will be focusing on how Malaysian users use direct and indirect speeches as well as emotive / affective language when disclosing their depression on the social media site, Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)).

## METHODOLOGY

### Theoretical Framework

Discourse consists of talk, text, and media that express ways of knowing, experiencing, and valuing the world (Mullet, 2018). On the other hand, Discourse analysis is defined as examining patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used (Paltridge, 2012). Paltridge (2012) also states that it considers the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understandings. Discourse analysis, as opposed to text, is directly related to the context of a situation and what meanings can be derived from the context of the speakers, situation, and the listener (Fairclough, 1995). A popular example can be seen with Paltridge’s study of Discourse Analysis which was the air traffic control situation. “The runway is full at the moment” can be understood in many ways depending on the context and the identity of the speakers. When uttered to a friend who is going to pick you up at the airport, the utterance can mean that the speaker is going to be late but, if it is uttered to a pilot from an air traffic control worker, it means that he will be unable to land the plane (Paltridge, 2012). From this instance, we can prove what discourse analysis is, which relies heavily on the context of the situation and the interlocutors.

As stated by Fairclough and Wodak (1997), without context, discourse cannot be produced, and understanding is not able to be achieved without taking context into consideration. To put it differently, the reason why context plays a key role in discourse analysis is because language does not possess a fixed meaning and hearers must rely on surrounding factors such as social context, economical state, and community membership to give meaning to the words that have been uttered. Without these factors, discourse analysis could not be achieved as researchers do not understand the choices that were made by the participants that had led them to use language in a certain way. These key factors, along with the components such as text, speakers and hearers are what define discourse analysis.

In this study, the use of discourse analysis is relevant as we are studying the relationships between language attributes (direct vs indirect disclosures and affective language use) and self-disclosure of depressive disorders on Twitter. However, to delve deeper and find patterns of language use in the tweets of the users, a corpus tool must be used. The corpus tool, AntConc, allows us to identify the frequency of affective/emotive word use in the data retrieved.

AntConc is a freeware application, making it ideal for individuals, schools, or colleges with a limited budget, and runs on both Windows and Linux/Unix based systems (Anthony, 2004). Anthony (2004) also describes AntConc as a corpus tool that is a powerful concordance, word and keyword frequency generators, tools for cluster and lexical bundle analysis, and a word distribution plot. Thus, using the corpus tool AntConc in this study, in order to find the frequency of affective and emotive word use in self-disclosing tweets of Malaysian youngsters would be the most effective.

This study employs both discourse analysis methods, with the use of a corpus tool, AntConc. This type of framework often occurs when the researcher first, goes through a dataset and analyzes it by utilizing discourse analysis methods, then using a software to investigate word frequency lists, annotations etc. To support this, Taylor (2013) stated that analysts may start with a discourse-analytical frame and then use the corpus to collect data which is interpreted and categorized through that frame. This is to view the data and analyze it in different angles and approaches. All in all, this approach helps researchers to reconcile close linguistic analyses with the more broad-ranging analyses made possible by using corpus linguistic methods to analyze language (Ancarno,2020).

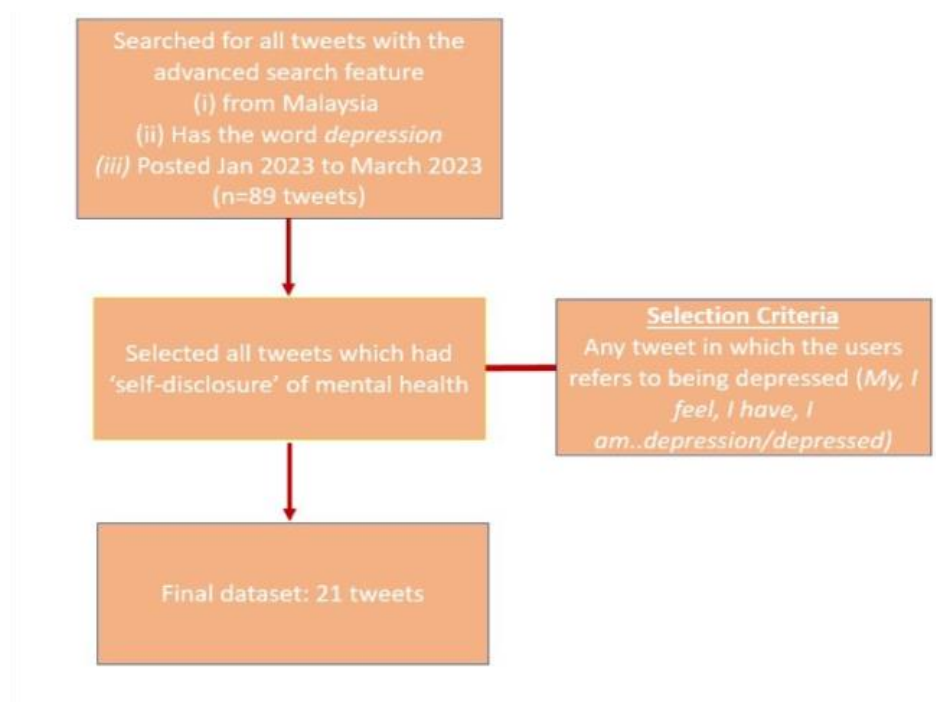
In short, this study implements the discourse analysis framework, with the use of the corpus tool, AntConc, to answer both research questions effectively. The data is first analyzed and interpreted qualitatively by using a discourse analysis approach. Then, the data is run through AntConc to identify the frequency of affective language word use in self-disclosing tweets on the users' depressive disorders. So, using this framework would be sufficient and effective in answering the research questions in relation to this study.

### Data Collection Procedure

In order to obtain relevant data, the researcher accessed the popular social media platform Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)). Using the advanced search feature on the website, tweets were filtered based on specific criteria. According to Benevenuto, Magno, Rodrigues and Almeida (2010), tweets can also be retrieved through search systems and other tools. With the emergence of real time search systems and meme-tracking services, the repercussion of all kinds of events and news are beginning to be registered with practically no delay between the creation and availability for retrieval of content (Benevenuto, Magno, Rodrigues & Almeida, 2010). The criteria included tweets located in Malaysia and containing the keyword "depression." The posts were restricted to those published between January 2023 and March 2023.

Initially, a total of 89 tweets were retrieved, encompassing a variety of content, including advertisements and non-profit organization posts. To ensure the selection of self-disclosing tweets, each post was carefully screened. Tweets were examined for explicit mentions of phrases such as "I feel" "I have" or other indications of self-disclosure regarding depressive experiences. Ethical considerations were taken into account, and only tweets from public accounts were included in the study.

Figure I Data Collection Procedure



Ultimately, a dataset of 21 self-disclosing tweets was chosen as the primary source for analysis. Figure above is displayed to show a clearer view of the data collection procedure.

## FINDINGS

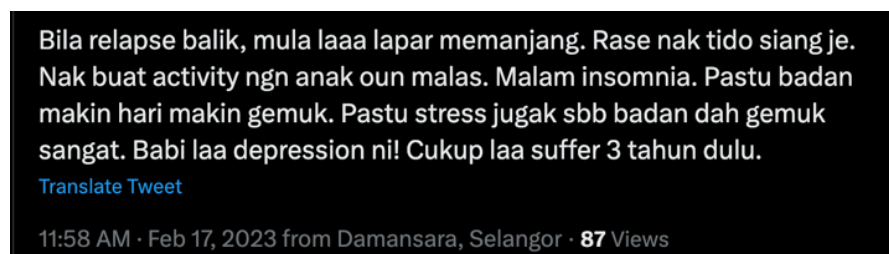
In total, about 89 Tweets were retrieved, between January 2023 to March 2023, containing the word *depression*, posted in Malaysia. The 89 Tweets were then screened to fit the definition of “self-disclosure”, as mentioned in section 3.2, and 21 Tweets remained. In this study, the 21 Tweets were used to analyzed two criteria (I) the use of direct disclosure and indirect disclosures in the Tweets and their linguistic patterns (II) the frequency of affective/emotive language used in the Tweets.

### The use of direct disclosure when self-disclosing

Out of 21 Tweets, a total of 13 tweets were regarded as direct self-disclosures of depression on the Twitter platform. Posts can be categorized as direct, where the main idea of the tweet is to express their depression clearly and in a straightforward manner, either in a way of expressing their depressive issues or talking about their own effects of depression (Yang, Yao, Seering & Kraut, 2019). Their emotional expressions include emotions of sadness, unwillingness, and fear. Among these direct self-disclosures, users also discussed the effects of depression on their physical and mental health. Some shared brief statements about their depressive states. Moreover, there were also different linguistic patterns between the two types of disclosures. These patterns include: (i) Pronoun usage (ii) Tense use. Despite differences in how they expressed their depression, Twitter served as a direct outlet for expressing and venting their depressive issues.

In order to elaborate this matter, Gonsalves (2022) suggested that expressing personal thoughts or emotions directly have additional effects on well-being because it increases the significance of the events shared and allows people to rearrange their memories about the events during the course of expression. Not only that, but by sharing directly, they are able to convey their message and issues more clearly to their readers. As an example, sample tweet 9 expressed her depressive issues by speaking on the effects of depression on her well-being and personality. She stated in her tweet that, when she relapses, she starts to get hungry, sleep during the day, insomniac, lazy in doing activities with her child and stressed on her weight gain.

Figure 4.1 Sample Tweet 9



*Translation: When it relapses, I constantly feel hungry. I only want to sleep during the day. I feel lazy to engage in activities with my child. I have insomnia at night. Then my body keeps getting heavier every day. And I'm stressed because my body has become very overweight. Damn this depression! I've suffered enough 3 years ago.*

The image showcases that the user explains the effects of her depression issues on her physical, mental well-being and her personality. Not only that, but the tweet also shows her history of already suffering from depression 3 years ago. This matter demonstrates that the user self-discloses, not only her current depressive issues, but also her past depressive issues.

In terms of linguistics, the user indicated that these were effects of her depression with the phrase “*babi laa depression ni*” (Damn this depression!) as the demonstrative “this” signifies an idea or thought that was talked about in the previous clauses (Merriam-Webster, 2023). Moreover, throughout her tweet, she also uses multiple personal pronouns e.g. “I”, “my”, to indicate that these were her experiences and effects that she felt due to her depression. Not only that, but the user also disclosed her past depressive issues in the phrase “*Cukup laa suffer 3 tahun dulu*” (I’ve suffered enough 3 years ago) as the verb form “suffer” was used in past tense and “ago” is defined as an event happened earlier than present time (Merriam-Webster, 2023). So, in this tweet, it demonstrated some linguistic aspects that the user uses to directly disclose her depressive issues as she

talked about the effects that she faced due to it. By giving a direct self-disclosure, the message is well-conveyed by the reader and the reader would be well-aware of what the user has disclosed.

### The use of indirect disclosure when self-disclosing

Amongst the 21 tweets obtained, 8 of them were recognized as indirect self-disclosure. Indirect self-disclosure were tweets that were tweeted for other purposes, but the user hints depressive issues (Andalibi, Morris & Forte, 2018).

In these indirect self-disclosing tweets, there were 5 categories that were identified which include; (i) Apology, (ii) Frustration/Disappointment (iii) Advice (iv) Gratefulness (v) Resolutions. It was a common pattern that the user would first, talk about their purpose of tweeting, before going into their own experience in depressive issues. According to Wainwright et al. (2015), the utilization of indirect speech enables individuals to communicate their difficulties in an incidental manner, while directing their attention towards other aspects such as guidance, solutions, or frustrations.

Moreover, there were self-disclosing tweets that were expressions of gratitude towards someone or a group of people due to other issues, but also subconsciously disclosed their depression. An example can be seen below with Sample Tweet 15.

Figure II The Indirect Speech of the User Showing Gratitude

Blessed to say that I have. 🥰 married into his family where my in laws supported us financially till we found new jobs. Got retrenched & unemployed for months & not once did they make me feel bad about my depression. They let me heal till I got employed again. So grateful. ❤️

8:35 PM · Jan 23, 2023 from Damansara, Selangor · 628 Views

In this sample tweet, we can observe that the user expressed her gratitude towards her in laws who have supported her and her husband financially till they got new jobs. She also talked about how they were unemployed for months (first issue) and claimed that their in-laws did not make her feel bad about her depression (subconsciously disclosed her depression). In this context, it seemed as if the couple had issues financially due to being retrenched and caused her depression. Linguistically, the user was seen using third person pronouns like, “his” and “they” as the user’s main idea of posting the tweet was to show gratitude to her in-laws and how they supported her and her husband emotionally and financially. There was also the use of positive connotative words (“grateful”, “blessed” “supported” “heal”) and emojis throughout the tweet. This matter shows that the user’s main idea was to express her positive emotions towards her in-laws. So, the tweet showed that the user disclosed her depression even though the main idea of the tweet was to express about something else.

### Linguistic Patterns in Direct and Indirect Disclosures

In the disclosures, it was evident that it had different linguistic patterns. Linguistic patterns in direct and indirect disclosure reveal distinct characteristics on how individuals express their emotions in regards to their issues. According to the data, there were two significant linguistic patterns that were identified: (i) Pronouns (ii) Tense.

Banfield (1973) explained that most direct disclosures utilize more personal pronouns (I, my, me, we, us) than indirect disclosures. This is since direct disclosures are statements of their own depressive issues and their main point of tweeting, is to disclose their depression. Fuentes, Kahn, and Lannin (2018) realized that people tend to use first-person pronouns rather than others as it increases self-focus and decreases their sadness. This matter was because, using personal pronouns allows the focus of the sentence to be directed to the writer, which subconsciously makes them acknowledge their feelings and be in touch with themselves more. An example can be seen with the figure below.



Figure III The Use of Personal Pronouns in Direct Disclosures of Depression.



On the other hand, indirect disclosures tend to utilize second-person pronouns (you, yours, yourselves, yourself) or third-person pronouns (It, They, She, He). This matter was due to the user's main point of posting was not on their own self-disclosures but rather, on other things that involve other people. Not only that but using second or third person pronouns in disclosing posts allows the user to feel more distant towards the issue at hand (Fuentes, Kahn & Lannin 2018). Although they still use personal pronouns to self-disclose their issues, the main point of the posts would usually be about other things that involve other people or the readers.

Figure IV The Use of Third-Person Pronouns in Indirect Disclosures



Next, there was a difference in terms of tense use. In direct disclosures, many of the Tweets were written in present tense whereas the indirect disclosures used past tense. Direct disclosures were seen being posted with present verb forms, indicating the event happening at the present time. On the other hand, indirect disclosures were mainly in past tense. This matter showed that many of indirect disclosures were talking about past experiences with depression in relation to an issue that involves another party. These two instances can be seen below.

Figure V Present Tense Usage in Direct Disclosures of Depression

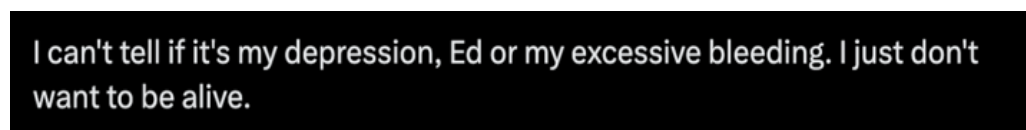
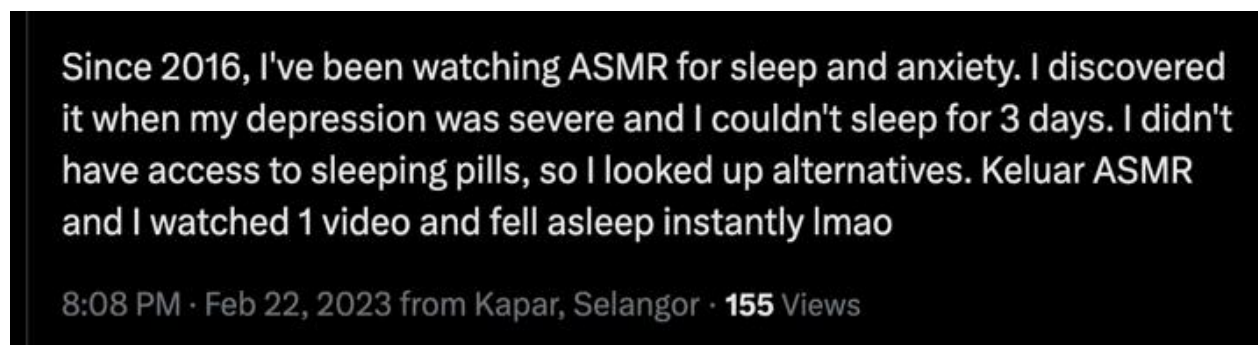


Figure VI Past Tense Usage in Indirect Disclosures of Depression



In these figures, it was evident that, in image 1.6, the user used present tense verb forms when talking about her depression; “s,” “don’t”. Whereas in image 1.7, the user used past tense forms, especially when referred to her severe stages of depression (“I discovered it when my depression was severe..”). These two figures indicate that, when disclosing directly or indirectly, the tense used might be influenced.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the different dynamics of self-disclosure of depression on Twitter. The analysis of tweets revealed a range of direct and indirect disclosure strategies employed by individuals when sharing their depressive experiences as well as the affective/emotive words used when self-disclosing. The study highlights the ways of depressive self-disclosure, linguistically, amongst young adults in Malaysia. The findings contribute to our understanding of how users express themselves on the Internet regarding mental health issues. Further research in this area can deepen our understanding of other linguistic attributes of depressive self-disclosure which can include a wider sample as well as a longer range of timeline.

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