



Analysis of Linguistic Difference in Writing Primed with Regulatory Focus

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1. Introduction

➤ Regulatory focus(Higgins, 1997)

Two type of human motivation(Shah, Higgins & Friedman,1998)

- Promotion focus

→ motivated to gain positive results, use approach strategies

- Prevention focus

→ motivated to avoid negative results, use avoidance strategies



Promotion



Prevention

➤ Manipulation of Regulatory focus

(Freitas & Higgins, 2002; Higgins, Roney, Crowe, & Hymes, 1994)

- Research applying regulatory focus frequently used writing prompts related to each focus to situationally prime a promotion or prevention.

- Promotion focus : write three of hopes and wishes

- Prevention focus : write three of responsibilities and duties

- After participants were primed with a type of the regulatory focus, their decision making, satisfaction and performance in cognitive tasks were examined.

➤ Study purpose

- Manipulation check relied generally on the researcher's subjective discrimination.
- However, subjective discrimination following arbitrary criteria may lead to problems such as difficulty judging ambiguous writings and excluding participants.
- Still to this day numerous studies use this writing task but there has been no study that investigated whether there are differences in those writings.

→ This study compared writings varying in regulatory focus and examined their characteristics.

2. Method



From our research from 2014 to 2016 that used priming writing tasks, we analyzed writings of approximately 400 participants. Participants were primed with one of the two conditions: promotion focus and prevention focus.



Promotion focus : write about your **hopes and dreams**

Prevention focus : write about your **responsibilities and duties**

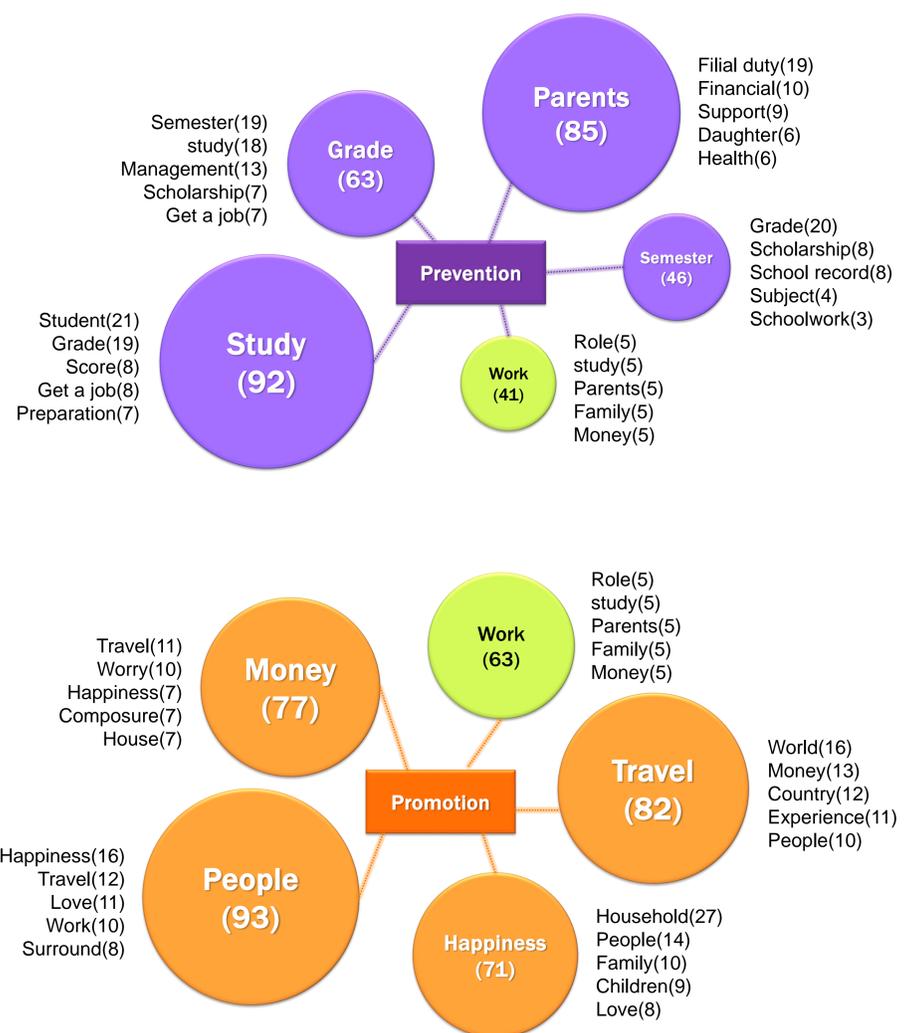
(Freitas & Higgins, 2002; Higgins, Roney, Crowe, & Hymes, 1994)



The program 'antconc' was used to identify which words were used frequently and what words surrounded them. The frequency of the surrounding words was further identified and differences between writings of each regulatory focus were examined.

3. Result

	sentence	words	morphemes	morphemes /sentence
Promotion	342	3460	6399	18.7
Prevention	329	3463	6429	19.5



Analysis shows that prevention-focused writings contained fewer sentences but more words and morphemes.

Promotion-focused writings frequently used words like happiness, travel, family, money and their surrounding words were love, life and marriage. However, prevention-focused writings frequently used I, parents, GPA and surrounding words were life, parents, friends and wife.

Furthermore, results revealed that participants wrote more about themselves under the promotion condition and more about others under the prevention condition.

4. Discussion

- This study analyzed writings, a typical method to prime regulatory focus, and found differences based on regulatory focus.
- Promotion focus produced abstract writings about what they want in the future and prevention focus produced specific writings about what they need to do now under various social roles.
- Results provide a foundation to form objective discrimination criteria for future priming writing tasks.