

## ABSTRACT

The causes of auditory verbal hallucinations (AVH) in people with schizophrenia (Sz-AVH) are unknown. While inner speech was proposed to be the raw materials of AVH, its phenomenology in Sz-AVH remains understudied. Moreover, given that negative affect (NA) acts as both an antecedent and a consequence of AVH, the temporal associations between inner speech and positive affect (PA) and NA are unclear. Serving as an exploratory work, this thesis employed the experience sampling method (ESM) in (i) comparing the inner speech phenomenology and (ii) its associations with affect in Sz-AVH, relative to healthy controls (HC). Seven patients diagnosed with schizophrenia spectrum disorders with current AVH, and seven HCs completed clinical interviews, baseline questionnaires and then ESM for six consecutive days, with ten entries each day. ESM data were analyzed using multilevel linear regression modelling. Across-moment associations were tested with time-lagged analysis. A total of 264 and 317 valid data points were collected from Sz-AVH and HC groups respectively. No significant difference in the inner speech phenomenology was observed between the two groups. For both groups, NA was associated with all domains of inner speech within the moment. Whereas NA only predicted increased level of evaluative inner speech in the next moment, this effect was less salient in the Sz-AVH group. On the contrary, condensed inner speech predicted a reduction of PA; such associations were more salient in the Sz-AVH group. The temporal dynamics between inner speech and affect are somewhat different in Sz-AVH relative to HC. This thesis sheds light on the potential roles of condensed and evaluative inner speech in the generation of AVH.

*Keywords:* inner speech, affect, auditory verbal hallucinations, cognitive model, experience sampling method, schizophrenia, psychosis