

A Linguistic Analysis of TikTok comments on Fast Fashion and Thrift Hauls

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Introduction

- Over 60% of teens report feeling pressure to keep up with fashion trends seen on social media, contributing to rising concerns about body image, self-esteem, and materialism
- TikTok hauls, especially those focused on fashion, have become a popular genre that influences how viewers think, feel, and engage with consumer culture
- The two most common fashion haul videos are fast fashion hauls where influencers show new and trendy items they have recently bought, and thrift hauls where the clothing shown are strictly bought second hand
- Little is known about the emotional and cognitive patterns found in the comment sections under fast fashion haul videos compared to thrift haul videos
- **The purpose of this study is to examine the behavioral, emotional and psychological processes that are reflected in the TikTok comments under fast fashion hauls versus thrift hauls by analyzing language patterns**

Methods

Design

- For this study, a content analysis was conducted using Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) to examine psychological patterns in TikTok comments

Subjects

- The top 5 comments from 20 TikTok videos were analyzed with 10 of the videos being under #thrifthaul and the other 10 under #clotheshaul
- Comments must be at least 10 characters or 3 words and not contain emojis

Measures

The LIWC variables this study focuses on are:

1. Behavioral Variables:

- 1st person singular pronouns (ex: "I", "me", "mine")
- 1st person plural pronouns (ex: "we", "us", "our")

1. Emotional Variables:

- Positive emotion (ex: "love", "nice", "sweet")
- Negative emotion (ex: "hurt", "ugly", "nasty")

1. Psychological Variables:

- Achievement (ex: "win", "success", "better")
- Body (ex: "cheek", "hands", "spit")
- Money (ex: "audit", "cash", "owe")

Analysis

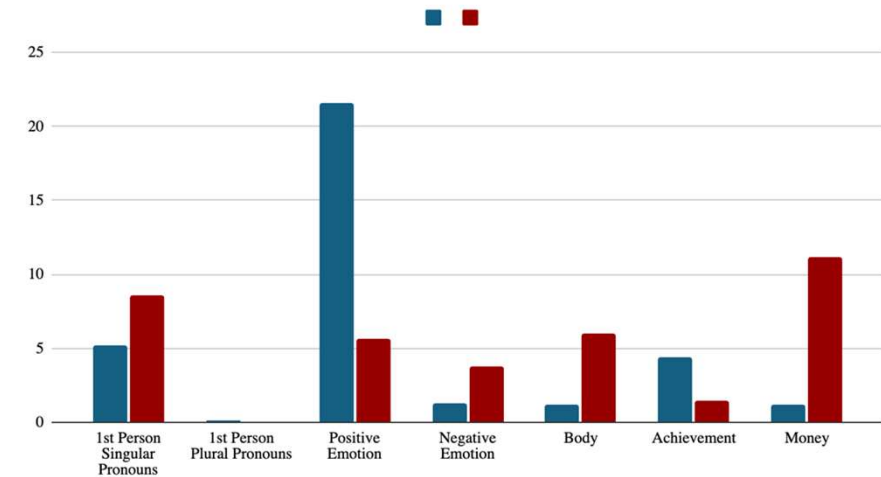
To analyze the findings, the average scores for each LIWC variable were calculated for comments under TikTok videos with #thrifthaul and #clotheshaul

Results

Subject Information

- A total of 100 comments with 50 comments under #Clotheshaul and 50 comments under #Thrifthaul with an average of 5 comments per video
- Videos ranged from 10,000 likes to 3 million likes and were all posted within the past year
- Comments ranged from 10 likes to 60,000 likes

LIWC Scores for Comments Under #thrifthaul (blue) and #clotheshaul (maroon)



1. Emotional Tone by Haul Type

- Comments on thrift haul videos averaged a LIWC positive emotion score of 21.6
- Fast fashion haul comments had a 3.76 rate of negative emotional language

1. Values and Priorities Reflected in Language

- Viewers commented about money (11.12) and the body (5.98) in fast fashion hauls
- Thrift hauls had mentions of achievement with a LIWC score of 4.43

Conclusions

Key findings

- Comments on **fast fashion hauls** showed high mentions of money and body-related words, suggesting that viewers may associate these videos with materialism and appearance
- Comments on **thrift hauls** contained **positive emotion** and achievement language, which could mean viewers see thrifting as inspiring, admirable, or desirable
- **Singular pronouns** were common in fast fashion haul comments, possibly reflecting more self-focused reactions, while **plural pronouns** were almost nonexistent in both, hinting at limited community-oriented language overall

Limitations

- One limitation of the study was the limited sample of a small number of TikTok videos and comments, which may not fully represent all content or user attitudes related to fashion hauls across the platform
- Another limitation is comments with slang words or terms that may be difficult for LIWC to detect

Implications

- Future research could explore how language patterns in comments vary by age, gender, or region to better understand who is engaging with fast fashion vs. thrift content and why
- These findings could inform public health and sustainability campaigns that aim to shift online culture toward more positive and community-focused views of sustainable shopping

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Contact us

