

Unique Keywords Found in the Titles of YouTube Beauty and Fashion Videos

Lintang Larasati, Rio Rini Diah Moehkardi*
English Department, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: riomoehkardi@ugm.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the meaning of the keywords used in YouTube's beauty and fashion videos. It attempts to identify the most frequently used unique keywords found in the titles of the videos and examine the semantic change of the keywords. For these purposes, a semantic approach was adopted. A quantitative method was used to identify the most frequently used unique keywords. Furthermore, to reveal the semantic change of the keywords, Leech's theory (1981) of meaning, the componential analysis, and Breal's (1900) specification of semantic change were employed. 44 most frequently used unique keywords were found on the five top rank Beauty & Fashion YouTube channels. Five of these keywords, which are 'favorites', 'swatches', 'haul', 'get ready', and 'try on', appeared on at least three channels. All of them have undergone semantic change. Three keywords are categorized in two types of semantic change. There are two specializations, one pejoration, one metaphor, three ameliorations, and one generalization.

Keywords: *componential analysis, keywords in video titles, semantic change, YouTube beauty community.*

INTRODUCTION

The beauty community on YouTube use some distinctive words in their video titles, which make them stand out from other communities. They tend to repeat the same keywords every now and then, which seems to indicate that there are specific main ideas used repeatedly for video content in the beauty community. For example, in 2016, the word *haul* was used eight times on Burr's (2016) channel and the word *favorite* was used six times on Gabriella's channel (Gabriella, 2016). In comparison to those channels coming from Beauty & Fashion category, in the same year, Pansino's channel (2016) from Cooking & Health only used the word *haul*

one time and there was none found on Therapy (2016), while the word *favorite* was only used one time on each channel. This repetitive use of certain keywords across channels in the beauty community suggests that some keywords are unique to video titles on beauty and fashion channels. Furthermore, these unique keywords have a different number of occurrences which indicate that some of them are more significant than others. For example, while the word *haul* was used eight times in Burr's channel, the word *essentials* was only used one time on the same channel within the same year.

When talking about language used by a community, it is important to talk about the semantic change as the meaning of a word in a

community can be different to what people outside of the community understand. For example, the word *spoiler* in Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2013) means a part of an aircraft's wing for the aeronautics. Also from the same dictionary, *spoiler* has a different meaning related to automotive, where it means a raised part on a fast car. Maggs (2015) wrote in her book about the fandom community that "a spoiler is any information about a story, plotline, or character that is revealed ahead of time." (p. 32). While having a similar meaning with that of the fandom community, the beauty community mostly use the word in their video titles to reveal products included in a subscription box package. Moreover, it is used as a warning since some people prefer their subscription boxes to be secret until they receive them themselves. The examples of this usage can be seen in "March Boxylux | Palette Brand Spoiler!!!" (Guillen, 2019), "July 2019 Boxycharm Spoiler!" (Wolfe, 2019), and "Boxycharm February 2019 & March Spoilers" (Wolfe, 2019). In conclusion, the word *spoiler* has different meanings in terms of its dictionary meaning and the meaning found in a particular community. This shows that the word *spoiler* has undergone a semantic change and we are interested to investigate if there are more words in the beauty community that have undergone a semantic change.

There are many advantages in identifying and understanding these keywords. Learning about them in general improves the vocabulary knowledge and analyzing their semantic changes teaches the proper way to use the terms. Moreover, identifying the most frequently used keywords by beauty and fashion channels helps to recognize the popular types of videos circulated in the community. Understanding the meaning of these keywords in the titles makes it easier for people inside and outside of the community to grasp the context of the videos. It also helps aspiring YouTubers to familiarize themselves with the popular keywords along with their meanings in the community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Four previous studies have relevant topic, methodology, object of study, and approach to the present study. These studies are helpful as they contribute ideas and library references to the present research. García-Rapp (2016) was interested in the beauty community which is similar to the present research. However, García-Rapp focuses on a particular beauty guru, while the present research examines the beauty community as a whole.

Another study by Tobing (2010) used the same theories of meaning and componential analysis as the present research, but the data and the theory of semantic change are different. Stichová (2015) examined keywords in video titles. She investigated not only the semantic change but also the process of word formation. Bilung (2018) is similar to the present study in the sense that both use the same theory of semantic change by Bréal (1964). Both also apply the componential analysis and the theory of meaning by Leech (1981). However, the data are different. The data of this study are taken from the video titles of YouTube channels coming from the Beauty & Fashion category, while Bilung's were from the transcription of makeup tutorial videos. Furthermore, this study looks for the most frequently used unique keywords, while Bilung's analyzes all of the jargons found in makeup tutorial videos.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theories used to solve the problem formulated in this study include the theory of componential analysis, theory of meaning, and theory of semantic changes. Componential analysis is used to break down features of the keywords both in conceptual and social meanings, which are two out of seven types of meaning proposed by Leech. Those keywords are then compared to each other to see if there is a change in the meaning. To see the type of

change undergone by each of the keywords, we use the semantic change theory by Bréal (1964).

METHODS

The data collection was conducted in two ways. One was by collecting the video titles and the other was by using a questionnaire targeting YouTube's beauty community. The samples for the primary data, which are the video titles, were selected with some specifications set to both the channels and the videos. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was distributed through e-mails and online forums containing a request for the respondents to do componential analysis.

The data analysis was conducted in two ways. One was by looking through the primary data and determining which keywords were used most frequently, while the other one was comparing the conceptual meaning and the social meaning of each keyword to reveal the type of semantic change. The conceptual meaning was taken from breaking down meanings found in the dictionaries. The social meaning was taken from the questionnaire result, the video samples, and online references.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The keywords 'haul', 'favorites', 'swatches', 'get ready', and 'try on' were presented to respondents so that they could make their own judgment, as a part of the Beauty Community, of what features best represent those keywords. 59 respondents answered the questionnaire with only 10 of them were qualified to be analyzed further. Those were who answered all of the questions listed accordingly.

We asked the respondents to give 10 features for each keyword, but some of them sometimes gave more than 10 features and some gave only nine for some of the keywords. Nevertheless, we included all of the features provided by the respondents.

Haul

No.	Lexical Item	Conceptual Meaning	Social Meaning
K.1	Haul	[+a result] [+an effort to obtain] [+with a device] [-fashion] [-makeup]	[+a show of result] [+shopping] [+money] [+fashion] [+makeup]

While the conceptual meaning of the noun *haul* may refer to the result of any act to obtain anything using the appropriate device, the beauty community uses the noun 'haul' to refer to a show of one's shopping's result. This shows that the meaning of the noun *haul* in the beauty sector has undergone a semantic change and it has been narrowed; therefore, the noun *haul* is categorized in the specialization semantic change. The conceptual meaning of the noun *haul* is the superordinate of its social meaning and its social meaning is the subordinate of its conceptual meaning. Moreover, two features that are added to the social meaning are proven to be topics that are popular in haul videos, which are [fashion] and [makeup].

Favorites

No.	Lexical Item	Conceptual Meaning	Social Meaning
K.2	Favorites	[+a person or a thing] [+loved] [+treated with special favor] [+received better treatment than others] [-periodical-ly]	[+a person or a thing] [+loved] [-treated with special favor] [-received better treatment than others] [+periodically]

The social meaning loses the features [treated with special favor] and [received better treatment than others] from the conceptual meaning, which means that the positive sense of 'special favor' and 'better treatment' are not in the social meaning. The limitation in the manner of time by the feature [periodically] also makes the noun 'favorites' lose the meaning of it being special. The loss of positive sense puts the word *favorites* under the pejoration type of semantic change.

Swatches

No.	Lexical Item	Conceptual Meaning	Social Meaning
K.3	Swatches	[+sample] [+small collection] [+fabric] [-color] [-makeup] [-fun]	[+example] [+small collection] [-fabric] [+color] [+makeup] [+fun]

The additional feature [fun] found in the social meaning puts the noun 'swatches' in a more positive sense and therefore may categorize it in the amelioration semantic change. However, it may also be categorized in the metaphor semantic change. The noun 'swatches' in the conceptual and social meanings refers to different entities from different domains. Its domain in the conceptual meaning is textile, while its domain in the beauty sector is makeup product. Therefore, although they share similarities, the social meaning of 'swatches' proposes a different sense of meaning in comparison to the conceptual one. The similarity perceived here is the similarity of function and quantification. They both take sample from a product which can be seen in the feature [sample] from the conceptual meaning and [example] from the social meaning. They also have the same way of quantification, using the feature [small collection] for both meanings. Meanwhile, they differ in their sources. The conceptual meaning has the feature [fabric] as the source of the sample and the social meaning has the feature [makeup].

The beauty community uses the noun 'swatches' to describe the makeup product which has the same function and quantification of the textile 'swatches'. The beauty community maps both the feature of function [sample] and the feature of quantification [small collection] from the domain of textile onto the domain of makeup product. This transfer from one domain to another puts the noun 'swatches' to be in the metaphor semantic change.

Get Ready

No.	Lexical Item	Conceptual Meaning	Social Meaning
K.4	Get Ready / Get Ready with Me / GRWM	[+to prepare] [-fun] [-tutorial] [-beauty]	[+to prepare] [+fun] [+tutorial] [+beauty]

The idiom *get ready* has been narrowed in the beauty sector by the feature [tutorial] and [beauty] as the social meaning of 'get ready' heavily involves putting on makeup. Therefore, the idiom may be categorized in the specialization type of semantic change. The conceptual meaning of the idiom 'get ready' is the superordinate of the social meaning and the social meaning is the subordinate of the conceptual meaning. Moreover, it has also gained a positive sense with the feature [fun] which may also categorize it in the amelioration type of semantic change.

Try On

No.	Lexical Item	Conceptual Meaning	Social Meaning
K.5	Try On / Try-On / Trying On	[+put on] [+clothing] [+see the fit] [+how it looks] [-makeup] [-brand] [-new]	[+demo] [+fashion] [+fit] [+impression] [+makeup] [+brand] [+new]

The feature [new] is present in the social meaning and it gives the keyword a positive sense of something fresh and up to date. This feature can be found in all of the video samples, as they all talk about something the vloggers just recently bought. The addition of the feature [new] may put the keyword 'try on' in the amelioration type of semantic change. However, there is also an addition of the feature [makeup] which makes the keyword's meaning widen in the social meaning. While the

conceptual meaning only relates 'try on' to clothing, the beauty sector branches it further out to makeup. Therefore, the type of semantic change experienced by the keyword 'try on' is generalization with the conceptual meaning being the subordinate of the social meaning and the social meaning being the superordinate of the conceptual meaning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the first problem, there are 266 unique keywords found across five YouTube channels' 651 video titles. The most frequently used are as many as 44 keywords. Of these keywords, only five were found on most of the channels. The most popular one is 'haul' with 108 occurrences. The second is 'favorite' with 64 occurrences. The third is 'get ready' with 43 occurrences. The fourth is 'try on' with 40 occurrences. The fifth is 'swatches' with 35 occurrences. The frequency of the keywords may give insight into what is popular in the community at the time.

Based on the analysis of the second problem, only five out of six Breal's types of semantic change are found in this study. All of the keywords in the beauty sector have undergone semantic change. 'Haul' is categorized in the specialization type of semantic change. 'Favorites' is categorized in the pejoration type of semantic change. 'Swatches' is categorized in the metaphor and amelioration type of semantic change. 'Get ready' is categorized in the specialization and amelioration type of semantic change. 'Try on' is categorized in the generalization and amelioration type of semantic change.

In relation to these keywords, there are specific topics found in the social meaning, which are beauty and fashion. We found that the generalization and specialization semantic changes are all due to adjusting the meaning in relation to beauty and fashion. We also found that the most common type of semantic change experienced by the keywords is the amelioration semantic change. Our hypothesis on this would be because these keywords appear in the titles of videos usually produced for entertainment purposes where positive sense needs to be employed.

There have not been many studies which take interest in the language of the beauty community. Therefore, one of the limitations in doing this research was looking for a reference for establishing an effective and structured system in collecting and analyzing the data. We suggest other researchers to find better ways to collect and analyze the data for similar research. Another limitation was the sample size of just five channels. Having more researchers or time would have allowed for a better understanding of the language used by the beauty community by expanding the sample size. We also could have used more respondents instead of just 10 and it would have allowed for a more accurate representation for the beauty community. Furthermore, we suggest other researchers to take a closer look into more areas other than semantic to have more thorough research on the study. For example, other researchers may conduct a syntax analysis and discover how the titles are structured to further understand the language used by the beauty community for video titles. Other researchers may also conduct a study to explain the reason why the change happened and to test if our hypotheses about the change, as briefly talked about earlier in this conclusion, are true.

REFERENCES

- Bilung, J. J. (2018). *A semantic analysis of the beauty jargon found in makeup tutorial videos on YouTube*. (Unpublished undergraduate thesis). Universitas Sanata Dharma, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.
- Bréal, M. (1964). *Semantics: Studies in the science of meaning*. New York: Dover.
- Burr, T. (2016). [Video Section]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/user/pixi2woo/videos>.
- Gabriella. (2016). [Video section]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/user/velvetgh0st/videos>.
- García-Rapp, F. (2016). The digital media phenomenon of YouTube beauty gurus: the case of Bubzbeauty. *Int. J. Web-Based Communities*, 12(4), 360-375.

- Guillen, Y. [Yari G]. (2019, February 5). March Boxyluxe | Palette Brand Spoiler!!! [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJp-xrM_VWk.
- Leech, G. (1981). *Semantics: the Study of Meaning* (2nd ed.). London: Penguin Books.
- Maggs, S. (2015). *The fangirl's guide to the galaxy*. Philadelphia: Quirk Books.
- Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, 8th Edition [Kindle Version]. (2013). Retrieved from Amazon Kindle store.
- Pansino, R. (2016). [Video section]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/user/RosannaPansino/videos>.
- Štichová, L. (2015). *The language of YouTube beauty video titles*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Masaryk University, Brno, Czechia.
- Therapy, U. (2016).[Video Section]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/user/unboxtherapy/videos>
- Tobing, S. S. (2010). *Semantic change and meaning shift analysis*. (Unpublished undergraduate thesis). Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia.
- Wolfe, E. (2019, January 9). Boxycharm February 2019 & March Spoilers [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUuntyM1iaI>.
- Wolfe, E. (2019, June 10). Boxycharm July 2019 Spoiler[Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtu.be/kaHN1EXQ0wl>.