REGISTER OF FASHION CONTENT CREATION ON INSTAGRAM

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Abstract

Social media is one of the reasons a has language revolutionized, leading to the formation of new words as well as a shift in the meaning of a word. This research reveals new insights that resulted from the influence of a specific community and the language trends that this community created. It is the register used by the community of fashion content creators on Instagram. In this paper, the researchers analyzed the process of word formation and semantic change. The fashion content creator community is chosen because it is considered interesting and there is a lot of interaction between fashion content creators and their audience. Interactions and trends led to the occurrence of the possibility of new word formations and semantic changes in the registers. This qualitative research employed documentation as its data collection technique. The data of this research are the registers among the fashion content creators on Instagram social media application. The results of this research found thirty registers related to fashion content, including perf (which means "perfect"), inspo (which means "inspiration), OOTD (which is an abbreviation of "outfit of the day"), preloved (which means second hand clothes or items), etc. Among these thirty registers, it was found that sixteen of them were through a word formation process. Meanwhile, the other fourteen registers went through the semantic change process. The usage of registers in the fashion content creator community on Instagram is influenced by gender, the topic of the conversation, the purpose of communication, the social context, and the medium of communication. This research provides a detailed view of how specific online communities develop unique registers by analyzing the utterances and practices of fashion content creators on Instagram.

Keywords: Register, Fashion, Content Creator, Instagram, Word Formation, Semantic Change

INTRODUCTION

Language and society are two inseparable components. Language evolves and emerges as a result of its speakers. A community is capable of creating new words arising from what they do. In this era of rampant social media usage, online communities are also

capable of creating new words. Many new words have been formulated and used in the community of fashion content creators on Instagram social media application. Being one of the most popular social media applications in the world, with over 2.4 billion users worldwide, and its characteristics that focus on the uploading of image- and audiovisual-based content, it is no wonder that Instagram has attracted the attention of many fashion enthusiasts (Mortensen, 2024). The intersection of language and society in the fashion content creator community on Instagram is an intriguing phenomenon. Fashion content creators and their followers actively create and adapt language to define new trends and styles.

Sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and society. This discipline is focused on how language is used as well as how it influences, and shapes social dynamics in various contexts. Sociolinguistics examines the role of language in delineating social identities, such as class, gender, ethnicity, and economic status, as well as how language can reflect and reinforce social inequalities or differences in society (Rivki et al., 2020). The study of sociolinguistics also includes the analysis of language variation, which may be in the form of dialects, accents, or language styles, which can reveal social patterns in language use. According to Holmes (1992), sociolinguistics particularly studies the relationship between language and society. Holmes was interested in explaining why people speak differently in different social contexts. He was concerned with identifying the social functions of language and the ways it was used to convey social meaning. By understanding the role of language in society, sociolinguistics provides valuable insights into how language is not only a means of communication, but also a social mirror that reflects the complex structure and dynamics of society. The fashion community on Instagram has an intricate framework and ever-changing social structure which is marked by varied relationships and hierarchies.

On Instagram, influential fashion content creators are debatably placed at the highest level compared to other types of creators, as they own a significant number of followers. Their ability to establish trends position them as key opinion leaders in the virtual world of Instagram. These influencers often collaborate with brands, designers, and other content creators, establishing a network of professionals in fashion. Beneath them, micro-influencers and everyday users contribute to the community by displaying their personal style, and participating in fashion challenges and trends. The complexity of this hierarchical structure is increased by the worldwide reach of Instagram, which connects people from many cultural backgrounds, each offering a different point of view. This greatly influences the variation in language, known as registers.

In sociolinguistics, the register studies the connection between language variation and social context (Shofyanti et al., 2021). It encompasses specific linguistic choices, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and tone, which people create when communicating in various social environments. Register reflects how individuals or groups adapt their language to suit the expectations and norms of a particular context.

Some registers are newly formed by a particular community by going through the word formation process which is a part of morphology.

In this research, the register of fashion content creators on Instagram is classified as consultative. In other words, it can also be called professional or occupational registers. For example, in a different context, politicians use the word "acolyte" when referring to a devoted follower or assistant. Meanwhile, doctors call their assistants by the phrase "medical assistant". A doctor would not use the word "acolyte" to call his medical assistant. This shows that the word "acolyte" is only common among the politicians. Another occupation with registers is photographers as they also employ some specific vocabularies in their field. Photographers mostly discuss lighting, angle, wardrobe, etc. Each of those words has different meaning compared to what is usually used by non-photographers. For instance, ambient light is a register which means the natural light without any additional light (Haryani & Putry, 2021). Those words may be unfamiliar to laypeople who do not belong to their occupational group.

Likewise, occupational registers can also be found in social media. Social media is an interactive technology where all kinds of people and society gather from all around the world. It allows them to share their thoughts, ideas, and information by text and even visuals. Social media has transformed the way people interact both publicly and privately, extending beyond mere communication (Bhat, 2024). Based on Statista.com, as of August 2024, Instagram is ranked fourth among the most popular social networks worldwide based on its number of monthly active users

Instagram is a social media application that focuses on the sharing of users' photos and videos with a community of followers. The primary function of Instagram is to share photos and videos with one's followers. A user can take pictures or record videos directly within the app or upload them from the device's gallery. Instagram is available as a mobile application for iOS and Android devices, but it can also be accessed through a web browser. Users can also add captions, location tags, and hashtags to their posts to make them more discoverable (Meta, 2024).

The billions of people who use Instagram originate from various societies. They upload different types of content, creating terms or words that are used by certain content creators and are only understood by people in certain communities as well. This is where the register plays a role. In this research, the researchers analyse the register of a particular community of content creators in the Instagram application which was created by making words go through morphological processes and semantic changes.

As a source of data, the researchers chose to analyse the register of the fashion content creator community. On Instagram, a fashion content creator is an individual who specializes in producing and sharing content related to fashion. These content creators play a significant role in the fashion industry by creating and curating content that showcases clothing, accessories, beauty products, and style trends. Fashion content creators use their creativity, fashion sense, and digital skills to engage with and influence their audience. In the context of Instagram, the audience hereby means their followers.

From the background in this research above, the researcher suggests that research is interesting to carry out as the phenomenon of the occupational register shows that a specific profession can communicate more effectively and accurately due to the usage of its special occupational register. The usage of such a register also helps create credibility and authority within each field of profession.

This research was inspired by a previous research by Dewi et al. (2021) who analysed the form of registers used in e-commerce transactions in the beauty field and how the registers are formed. The results of this previous research found that thirty-five out of forty registers was included in the word formation process. The second previous research was conducted by Alhasibunur (2018). He analysed the kind of morphological processes that the fourth semester English Department of IKIP Mataram students in the Public Speaking Class in mostly use in their utterances. The results indicate that students mostly used words which went through derivational morphological processes. This was was the major process that frequently showed up among the students.

This research focuses on the role of specialized language and terminology used by fashion content creators on Instagram, which may not be easily understood by those outside of the profession. The primary objective of this research is to identify and analyse new words and phrases that arise from the interactions between fashion content creators on Instagram and their audiences. This research specifically examines the processes of word formation such as acronym, clipping, blending, compounding, inflection, and derivation. Furthermore, this research aims to identify semantic changes, including generalization, specialization, amelioration, and pejoration.

METHOD

To assist and complete this research, the researchers employed the qualitative method. Qualitative research is the type of research with a textual analysis. In this case, it is used with the intention of analysing language registers that are used by fashion content creators on Instagram. According to Harwell (2011), the qualitative research method can be described as inductive, in the sense that a researcher may construct theories or hypotheses, explanations, and conceptualizations from the details provided. It means that the problem of the research is resolved through collecting, classifying, analysing, and interpreting data.

The subject of the research was the community of fashion content creators on Instagram. This subject was limited to only content creators who posted within the last year. The object of research was their interaction with their audiences (or more specifically, followers) through their posts' captions and comment sections.

In this research, the researchers utilized two types of instruments, namely the primary instrument and the secondary instrument. The primary instrument in the research was the researchers themselves. In qualitative research, the researcher held an important role in collecting and analysing data, as the researchers were the one who developed and carried out the instrument. The secondary instrument of this research was note-taking which

functioned to confirm that the collected data were correct. According to Bryman and Burgess (2006) the collected data in this research were analysed using the following procedures: (1) Indexing. In this step, the researchers compiled the words that were found among the content creators and their audiences in the comment section and caption; (2) Identifying. In this step, the researchers identified whether the register words passed through a word formation process or a semantic change; (3) Categorizing. Here, the researchers specifically classified the words. The researchers analysed whether the register word went through a word formation process through the acronym process, clipping process, blending process, or compounding process. Or, if the register word passed was made through a semantic change, the researchers analysed whether it can be categorized into generalization, specialization, or amelioration; and (4) Explaining. Based on the classification above, the researchers described the classified words that were used by the community.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed the registers of fashion content creators on Instagram. The researchers found the process in which these new words were formed and how drastically these words shifted in meaning. Based on the data collected, the researchers found thirty registers among a hundred posts and reels that were used by the community of fashion content creators on Instagram as shown in Table 1. These registers were used in the comment sections, captions, or hashtags of Instagram posts and reels. In general, these registers were divided into two forms, namely those which went through a word formation process as well as those which went through a semantic change process. Table 1 shows thirty registers of the fashion content creator community on Instagram.

Table 1. Register in Fashion Terms of the Fashion Content Creator Community on Instagram

	Register				
1.	Fit	**11.**	Fashion Week	**21.**	Kicks
2.	Dying	**12.**	Collab	**22.**	Ate
3.	Perf	**13.**	Fave	**23.**	Secured
4.	Unreal	**14.**	OOTD	**24.**	Sick
5.	Gorge	**15.**	Hottie	**25.**	Boxy
6.	Inspo	**16.**	Steezy	**26.**	Capsule Wardrobe
7.	GRWM	**17.**	Baby tee	**27.**	Fast Fashion
8.	Baddie	**18.**	Preloved	**28.**	Drip
9.	Stunner	**19.**	Slay	**29.**	Thrifted
10.	Layering	**20.**	Skort	**30.**	Bloke Core

Source: Extracted from the Fashion Content Creator Community on Instagram

Word Formation Processes

Word formation occurs when a word is processed into a new word. It can happen in several ways. They can be made by making an acronym of a phrase, clipping, blending, compounding, inflection, and derivation (Zuhri et al., 2022). The word formation processes found in this research are provided below.

Word Formation through the Acronym Process

An acronym is a word that is formed by taking the initial letters of several words or phrases and then combining them to form a new word that is easier to pronounce and remember. Sometimes, the newly combined letters create a new word that becomes a part of everyday language (Yule, 2010). In this research, the researchers found two registers that classified as acronyms, namely data numbers 7 and 14.

- Data 7: "GRWM" obtained from the phrase "Get Ready with Me"
- Data 14: "OOTD" obtained from the phrase "Outfit of the Day" (as presented in Figure 1)

Figure 1. Data 14 "OOTD"

The acronyms GRWM and OOTD are taken from the first sound in each syllable (Get Ready with Me and Outfit of the Day). GRWM is usually used when fashion content creators show their processes in choosing an outfit for a particular event. They may show their processes of mixing and matching their attire to achieve an attractive look that suits the event. For instance, in Figure 1, the content creator showed the process of choosing an outfit for Coachella, a famous American music event. Then, OOTD is usually used to show off an outfit a content creator chooses to wear without showing his/her process of choosing his/her garments.

Word Formation through the Clipping Process

A word that is created through the clipping process is a word that is formed by shortening words that have more than one syllable. It is carried out by removing one or more syllables to produce a new, shorter, and simpler word. Clipping eases pronunciation

and is sometimes based on the informal language trend. In this research, the researchers found six registers that are classified as clipping, namely data numbers 1, 3, 5, 6, 12, and 13.

- Data 1: "Fit" obtained from the word "Outfit"
- Data 3: "Perf" obtained from the word "Perfect" (as presented by Figure 2)
- Data 5: Gorge: it was obtained from the word "Gorgeous"
- Data 6: Inspo: it was obtained from the word "Inspiration" (as presented by Figure 3)
- Data 12: Collab: it was obtained from the word "Collaboration"
- Data 13: Fave: it was obtained from the word "Favorite"

Figure 2. Data 3 "perf"

Figure 3. Data 6 "inspo"

The word "outfit" is shortened to create the word "fit". It is usually used when discussing an outfit that a content creator wears. Then, the word "perfect" is shortened to form "perf" and the word "gorgeous" is shortened to form "gorge". These two words are usually used when complementing a content creator's look or outfit, expressing admiration and delight. Next, the word "inspiration" is shortened to form "inspo". It is usually used to refer to outfits or looks that may become an inspiration to their audience. This is because followers often obtain ideas on how to mix and match clothes from these fashion content creators. After that, the word "collaboration" is shortened to form "collab". This word refers to a collaboration fashion content creators make with certain brands or businesses, as usually, the former obtain products in exchange for promoting the latter's brands and products. Finally, the word "favorite" is shortened to make the word "fave". This word is usually used by content creators when showing a fashion item which they particularly like compared to other items that they have.

Word Formation through the Blending Process

It is a word created from the parts of two existing words. It is usually formed by taking the beginning of one word and the end of the other word. Blending is often used to

describe unprecedented concepts. In this research, the researchers found three registers that were created through the blending process, namely data numbers 16, 18, and 20.

- Data 16 "Steezy" obtained from the blending of the words "Style" and "Easy" (as presented by Figure
- Data 18 "Preloved" obtained from the blending of the words "Previous" and "Loved"
- Data 20 "Skort" obtained from the blending of the words "Skirt" and "Short"

Figure 4. Data 6 "steezy"

The beginning of word "style" (st) was merged with the end of word "easy" (sy) to form a new word, which is "steezy". Steezy is often used to indicate styles that are simple and easy to wear and imitate. Then, the beginning of word "previous" (pre) was merged with word "loved" to form a new word, which is "preloved". It is usually used to indicate formerly used or second-hand items. This word is usually used when fashion content creators want to sell their used items. Next, the beginning of word "skirt" (sk) was merged with the end of word "short" (ort) to form a new word, which is "skort". A skort is a skirt that is connected with a pair of shorts.

Word Formation through the Compounding Process

It is a word that was formed by combining two or more words. It allows the speaker to convey more specific or complex meaning by combining elements that already exist. In this research, the researchers found five registers that were created through the compounding process, namely Data 11: "Fashion Week", Data 17: "Baby Tee", Data 26: "Capsule Wardrobe" (as presented by Figure 5), Data 27: "Fast Fashion", and Data 30: "Bloke Core" (as presented by Figure 6).
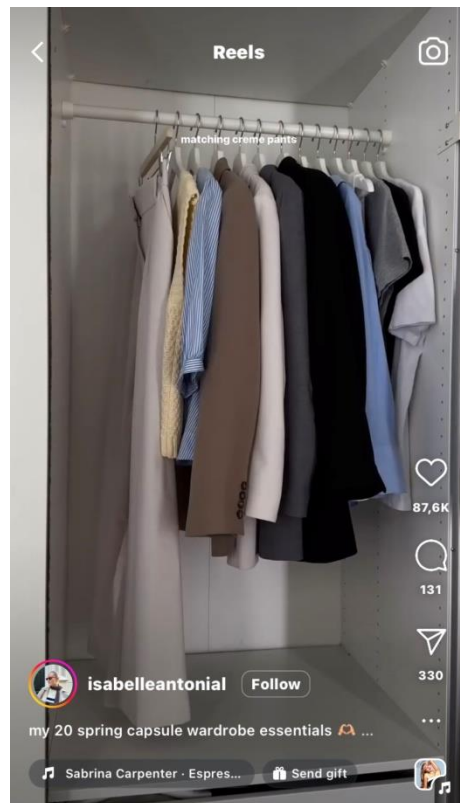
Figure 5. Data 26 "capsule wardrobe"

The words "fashion" + "week" are combined to produce "fashion week". Fashion Week is an event where famous designers present their upcoming fashion collections in runway shows (Hoo, 2015). Then, the words "baby" + "tee" are combined to produce the phrase "baby tee", which is a fitted t-shirt (*The Baby Tee Trend with a Gym-Inspired Twist*, 2023). Next, the words "capsule" + "wardrobe" are combined to form the phrase "capsule wardrobe", namely a curated collection of clothing attire that can be mixed and matched to form different outfits (*Capsule Wardrobe*, 2024). Then, the words "fast" + "fashion" are combined to produce the phrase "fast fashion", which is fashion which aims to quickly adapt to the newest trends and is notoriously bad for the environment (Centobelli et al., 2022). Lastly, the words "bloke" + "core" are combined to produce the phrase "bloke core". It is a casual fashion trend for men that are famous among Gen Z's (Pellot, 2022).

Figure 6. Data 30 "Bloke Core"

Semantic Change Process

Register also happens when words undergo semantic change. Unlike other types of linguistic change, like changes in sound or spelling, semantic change is strongly linked to arbitrary cultural and social changes; thus, it is very strenuous to predict the direction or depth of this change. Moreover, semantic change has no physiological restriction as how sound change does, for instance. Semantic change may result in generalization, specialization, amelioration, and pejoration (Ariani et al., 2020). The semantic change processes found in this research are provided below.

Generalization Semantic Change

The semantic change generalization occurs when the meaning of a word becomes broader or more general than its original meaning. In this research, the researchers found six registers that went through the generalization process of semantic change, i.e., Data 2: "Dying", Data 4: "Unreal", Data 22: "Ate" (as presented by Figure 7), Data 24: "Sick", Data 25: "Boxy" and Data 28: "Drip" (as presented by Figure 8).

Based on the Cambridge Dictionary, the word "dying" (Data 2) is defined as an adjective which means "very ill and likely to die soon". Sentence examples include "He nursed his dying wife for two months" or "My brother is sad because his kitten is dying". However, in the community of fashion content creators on Instagram, the word "dying" shifted in meaning. The community usually uses the word "dying" to express their likeness. For example, an account with the username @kateehutchins posted a picture of her outfit with a black T-shirt and black short pants, and also covered herself in a dark brown blazer. One of her followers with username @paceswest commented "Dying over this blazer" which means that @paceswest really loved the blazer and highly desired it. Instead of explaining how she admires the blazer in long sentences, she uses the word

"dying" to express her feelings. In this case, @kateehutchins understood the register and replied in the comment section that she agreed with her.

Figure 7. Data 28 "drip"

The broadening of the meaning of the word "dying" is similar to the case of the word "sick" (Data 24). Even though the Cambridge Dictionary defines it as "physically or mentally ill; not well or healthy", this word's meaning broadened to mean something amazing or cool (*Sick*, 2024). This also applies to Data 28 (Figure 7) where a man is shown to be sitting down wearing an outfit with the caption "Drip Outfit". In this case, the word "drip" has experienced a broadening in meaning as it is now used to describe something cool (*Drip*, 2024).
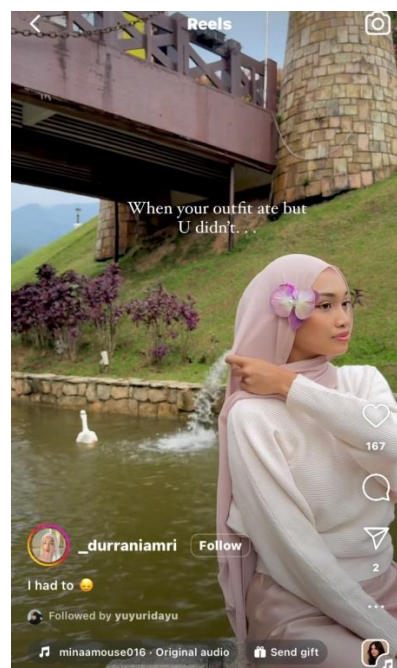

Figure 8. Data 22 "ate"

Data 4 shows how an account named @claudiamelinaskiver used the word "unreal" in a comment (*Unreal*, 2009). This word is used when one wants to express disbelief or awe. In this content creator community, this word is usually used when complementing a look. Then, Data 25 (Figure 7) shows a girl posting a video on Instagram reels with the caption "When your outfit **ate** but you didn't". The meaning of the word "ate" experienced a broadening in meaning as it is now used to define something or someone doing a great job at something (Gvizzle, 2022), even though outside of this community, the word "ate" refers to someone having eaten something.

Another example is data number 25. The word "boxy" is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as an adjective which describes something as having the shape of a box. In this community, this word has been broadened in meaning as it is used to refer to clothing pieces that have a loose or wide cut. It could be a T-shirt, shorts, jacket, or a hoodie. For example, an account with the username @jonthrifts posted a video of him on Instagram reels where he wore two boxy hoodies from different brands. He wrote the caption as "Boxy Hoodies | Elwood vs. Entire Studios #hoodies #boxyhoodie." In the video he compared these two hoodies by wearing them and showing the audience how wide the cut of the hoodies is.

Specialization Semantic Change

The specialization semantic change occurs when the meaning of a word becomes more specific or limited compared to its original meaning. In this research, the researchers found one register when through a semantic change by the specialization process, namely data number 23 (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Data 23 "secured"

The word "secured" is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as an adjective which means "positioned or fixed firmly and correctly and therefore not likely to move, fall or break". However, in the community of fashion content creators on Instagram the word "secured" has shifted in meaning to become more specific. In this community, the word "secured" is used to define something that has already been bought, usually referring to a fashion item. For example, an account with the username @sarahpirklemd posted a video on Instagram reels. In this video, she was shown to be unboxing a brand-new bag from a brand called Beis, then she showed some items that she fit into her new bag. In the last scene, she showed her full outfit with her new bag. In the caption, she wrote "Secured the bag @beis #beistravel #workbag #doctor #womeninmedicine #greysanatomy #orthopedicsurgery". This means that she has positioned the bag into her arm and she owned the bag as already bought it.

Amelioration Semantic Change

The amelioration type of semantic change occurs when the meaning of a word becomes more positive or more favourable than its original meaning. There are three registers that underwent semantic changes by the amelioration process, namely Data 8: "Baddie", Data 15: "Hottie", and Data 19: Slay (as presented by Figure 10)

Taking Data 8 as an example, the word "baddie" is defined by the Cambridge dictionary as a bad person in a film, book, etc. However, in the community of fashion content creators, this word shifted in meaning to become more positive than its original meaning. In this community, the word **baddie is** defined as a physically attractive and gorgeous person. This meaning is positive because it is usually used by women in the community to complement each other. For example, an account with the username @styledwithjuless posted a video on Instagram her interview a random girl, who asked "Who is your favourite underrated fashion influencer?". The interviewee answered "I'm in love with Monet McMichael. Fits, slays. Makeup, slays. Video editing, slays. She deserves all the hype!". Jules asked again "How could you describe her aesthetic?", the interviewee answered "Baddie." This proves that the word "baddie" is used as a complement.

Likewise, in Data 15 "Hottie" and Data 19 "Slay" experienced a shift in meaning to become more positive. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, "hottie" is usually used to define a hot-water bottle. But its meaning has shifted. It is now used to describe someone who is very sexually attractive. Then, Data 19 (Figure 10) shows the usage of the word "slay" in a caption. The Cambridge Dictionary defines the use of the word "slay" as another word for "kill". But in this case, its meaning has shifted to become more positive. It is not defined as something that is cool.

Figure 10: Data 19 "slay"

Although this research provides significant insights into the register of fashion content creators on Instagram through word formation and semantic change process, it is important to acknowledge several limitations. First, this study used the qualitative analysis method with a data collection technique in the form of documentation. Unfortunately, it may not cover all the variations and dynamics of language used in this community. The data samples taken may not be fully representative of the entire population of fashion content creators on Instagram. Second, this research is limited to the Instagram platform, so the findings may not be generalizable to other social media platforms that have different user characteristics. Third, the language changes observed in this study may be influenced by external factors, such as global trends and changes in platform algorithms, which cannot fully be controlled or predicted. Finally, the interpretation of the results of this study also depends on the subjectivity of the researchers in analysing the data. These limitations indicate the necessity for further research to achieve a more comprehensive understanding.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research above, the researchers concluded that the usage of registers in the community of fashion content creators on Instagram is influenced by gender, the topic of the conversation, the purpose of communication, the social context, and the medium of communication. Based on the thirty registers found, sixteen out of them went through a word formation process. Two registers were acronyms, six registers underwent clipping, three registers underwent blending, and five registers underwent compounding. None of these registers were categorized into registers which went through blending, derivation, inflection and back form in the word formation process. While, the other fourteen registers underwent semantic change processes, including six registers in the generalization category, two registers in the specialization category, and three registers in the amelioration category. No register was classified into the pejoration category.

According to the results of this research, there are several recommendations for future research that can enhance the understanding of word formation and semantic change in the community of fashion content creators on Instagram. First, future researchers could consider broadening the data sample to other social media platforms, such as TikTok, YouTube, and X (Twitter). Researchers can analyse whether comparable language

patterns arise in diverse digital contexts. Second, longitudinal research that tracks language change in these communities over time could provide further insights into the language evolution and factors that impact it. Third, comparative research between the fashion content creator communities and other content creator community, such as those in the fields of culinary or technology can provide insights into the differences and similarities in word formation and semantic change patterns across fields. Therefore, these recommendations are expected to guide future research to make them more comprehensive and varied.

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