

The Discourse of Digital Activism: A Linguistic Analysis of Calls for Action Concerning the Fashion Revolution

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Abstract

In this study, we analyze the calls for action in a corpus of tweets with the hashtag #FashionRevolution, related to the 2020 Fashion Revolution week. We offer a linguistic analysis of the discourse of digital activism, relying on insights from pragmatics, discourse analysis, and argumentation. Our analysis focuses on the calls for action concerning the move towards a more sustainable fashion system, issued by account owners that do not have any impositive force on their audience. This leads us to showing that a variety of actors call for action through an imperative but also through other deontic structures. However, those responsible for carrying out the actions towards a fashion revolution are often left vague, in line with overall campaigning strategies. The motive for the call for action, crucial to convince, appears sometimes in an argument and/or through a reference to social or environmental sustainability. Through this case study, we then contribute to the linguistic analysis of digital activism, and to a better understanding of the challenges of bringing about behavioral change from a non-impositive position.