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#HASHTAGS: A LOOK AT THE EVALUATIVE ROLES OF HASHTAGS ON TWITTER

Leah Rose Schaede

University of Kentucky, lsc233@g.uky.edu

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Leah Rose Schaede, Student

Dr. E. R. Barrett, Major Professor

Dr. Greg Stump, Director of Graduate Studies

#HASHTAGS: A LOOK AT THE EVALUATIVE ROLES OF HASHTAGS ON TWITTER

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of
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By

Leah Rose Schaede

Director: E. R. Barrett, Professor of Linguistics

Lexington, Kentucky

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

#HASHTAGS: A LOOK AT THE EVALUATIVE ROLES OF HASHTAGS ON TWITTER

Social media has become a large part of today's pop culture and keeping up with what is going on not only in our social circles, but around the world. It has given many a platform to unite their causes, build fandoms, and share their commentary with the world. A tool in helping group posts together or give commentary on a thought is the hashtag. In this paper I explore the evaluative roles of hashtags in social media discourse, specifically on Twitter. I use a sample of randomly selected tweets from the Twitter API stream I collected and compiled myself. I collected a total of 200,000 tweets and filtered out Re-tweets. Looking at each individual hashtag I sorted them into the categories outlined by the Appraisal Theory proposed by Martin and White (Martin & White, 2005). I explore the types of evaluation expressed in hashtags, the relationships between evaluative hashtags and how users negotiate evaluations using meme hashtags.

Keywords: Twitter, Discourse, Hashtags, Sociolinguistics, Appraisal

Leah Rose Schaede
Author's Signature

4/29/2016
(Date)

#HASHTAGS: A LOOK AT THE EVALUATIVE ROLES OF HASHTAGS ON TWITTER

By

Leah Rose Schaede

E. R. Barrett
Director of Thesis

Greg Stump
Director of Graduate Studies

4/29/2016
Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Section I: Introduction | 1 |
| Section II: Literature Review | 3 |
| Section III: Methodology..... | 11 |
| Section IV: Data Analysis..... | 14 |
| Attitude | 14 |
| Affect..... | 14 |
| Judgement..... | 16 |
| Appreciation..... | 21 |
| Sarcasm & Non-traditional usage of lexical items | 27 |
| Engagement | 29 |
| Graduation | 34 |
| Relationships in Appraisal..... | 36 |
| Meme Hashtags | 38 |
| Section V: Limitations | 44 |
| Section VI: Conclusions | 49 |
| Section VII: Future Research..... | 51 |
| References | 52 |
| Vita..... | 54 |

LIST OF TABLES

[Table 1, Number of Co-Occurrences across Major Appraisal Categories](#) 38

[Table 2, Number of Co-Occurrences across Attitudinal Sub-Categories](#) 38

[Table 3, Distribution of Meme Hashtags across Appraisal Categories](#) 43

[Table 4, Distribution of Meme Hashtags across Attitudinal Sub-Categories](#) 43

[Table 5, Total Number of tokens in Main Appraisal Categories](#) 49

[Table 6, Comparison of distribution of total evaluation hashtags](#) 50
[Versus total evaluative meme hashtags](#)

LIST OF FIGURES

[Figure 1 Appraisal Theory Hierarchy](#) 5
[Figure 2 The gradability of attitudinal meanings](#)..... 6
[Figure 3 The gradability of engagement values](#)..... 6
[Figure 4 Affect – kinds of unhappiness](#)..... 7
[Figure 5 Judgement – social esteem](#)..... 8
[Figure 6 Judgement – social sanction](#)..... 8
[Figure 7 Types of Appreciation](#)..... 9

#Hashtags: A look at the evaluative roles of Hashtags on Twitter

Section I: Introduction

Social media has exploded over the past decade bringing with it new ways of communicating with one another both in local contexts and with the world. Being able to get on the computer and write thoughts and feelings, which by posting are available globally is sponsoring the recognition of different types of language and inspiring language change. It is now a major platform for not only for the fostering of these changes, but also a great source of data for language study. In studying the language being used online we can find how people are compensating for cues that would be received in face to face interaction from sources other than the words being spoken. In this space we find things like emoticons, hashtags, punctuation as well as capitalization to indicate suprasegmental and extra-linguistic cues. Elements, such as hashtags, have come into being through technological necessity and have evolved from their original function to mark the aspects of conversations that cannot be expressed explicitly in text, such as tone or emphasis, as well as being used in other discursive functions.

Hashtags developed on Twitter as a means for grouping posts with similar content. They were originally proposed by Twitter user Chris Messina by tweeting “how do you feel about using # (pound) for groups. As in #barcamp [msg]?” (Messina 2007). He indicated that a grouping function would allow for better organization of the content on the website and users would be able to participate in communities of interest or find more

information about a particular topic simply by clicking on the given tag (Messina 2007). Hashtags are an item that originated on Twitter, but have now expanded to reach many other social networking websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Reddit and Pinterest. Hashtags, after this expansion into multiple electronic platforms, have also begun to be manipulated by the users of these websites. As their prevalence increases, users have begun negotiating the contexts in which they can be used and the functions that hashtags can serve in online discourse. Even with this integration across the board in Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) hashtags are not often the subject of study. They are often written off as merely a mechanism for organizing content on the web or creating an online community, but there are many examples that point to hashtags gaining discursive functions.

In this study I explore the new evaluative roles that hashtags have taken in online discourse, specifically I investigate on the micro-blogging platform Twitter how users are expressing evaluation through hashtags, the types of evaluation that can be expressed using hashtags, and how these different types of evaluation relate to each other. I use appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005) to investigate what types of evaluation hashtags are used and how they relate to the main body of the text. Appraisal Theory, with its hierarchy of evaluation as outlined by Martin and White, allows me to better categorize the different types of evaluation users employ in their tweets. I also look at how meme hashtags take on evaluative qualities in certain online communities.

Section II: Literature Review

Digital communication has been a growing phenomenon over the last thirty years and continues to increase with new social media platforms, blogs, and advertising spreading on the internet. With this rise in volume of language being transmitted digitally we have an easily accessible abundance of data that linguists can analyze. One of the platforms available to readily extract data from is Twitter. Twitter data has been used to study engagement on a social media platform, where posts are analyzed using discourse analysis with 'speaker' and 'hearer' roles (Draucker 2013). Tweets have also been used to study sarcasm in the CMC medium (Rajadesingan 2014). They have been used to analyze the language of branding among modern pop culture celebrities and in the business world (Page 2012). Page specifically looks at how companies and celebrities use hashtags on Twitter to create their own brands and to promote themselves in the public eye. In this paper I explore additional functions outside of grouping that hashtags now play in electronic communication.

In Allison Shapp's article "Variation in the Use of Twitter Hashtags" she identifies two distinct categories of hashtag functions (Shapp, 2014). She explains that there is the traditional function, which is to group posts with similar themes. She calls these 'tag' hashtags, but there are also what she names 'commentary' hashtags. These hashtags add information or commentary to the main body of the post. An example she uses to

illustrate this concept is “Had a dream that @LFarberrrr87 and I were in an all out battle against a heard of dear. #tookakicktothefaceandwokeup #epic” (Shapp, 2014, p. 8). The hashtag ‘#tookakickinthefaceandwokeup’ adds information about the dream the author had and described in the body of the post. These hashtags can also have sub-categories as outlined by Shapp. She also introduces ‘meme’ hashtags which is an in-between category. She explains that many times meme tags start as commentary tags and turn in to grouping tags when a larger group of people begin to use them. One of the sub-categories that Shapp focuses on is the ‘evaluative’ hashtags, which are a sub-group of the ‘commentary’ category. These tags show the author’s stance or opinion concerning the main body of the post. This sub-category of hashtags seems to have an interesting place in the ‘Twittersphere’.

To better categorize evaluative hashtags it is important to understand more about evaluation and how it is expressed linguistically. According to Martin and White (2005) in their Appraisal Theory, evaluation and stance can be separated into different categories according to the function of the evaluation. They illustrate categories and subcategories that evaluative language fits into. According to Martin and White’s theory, Appraisal is divided into three main categories Attitude, Engagement and Graduation. Below is a depiction of the evaluation hierarchy as it moves from major categories to sub-categories.

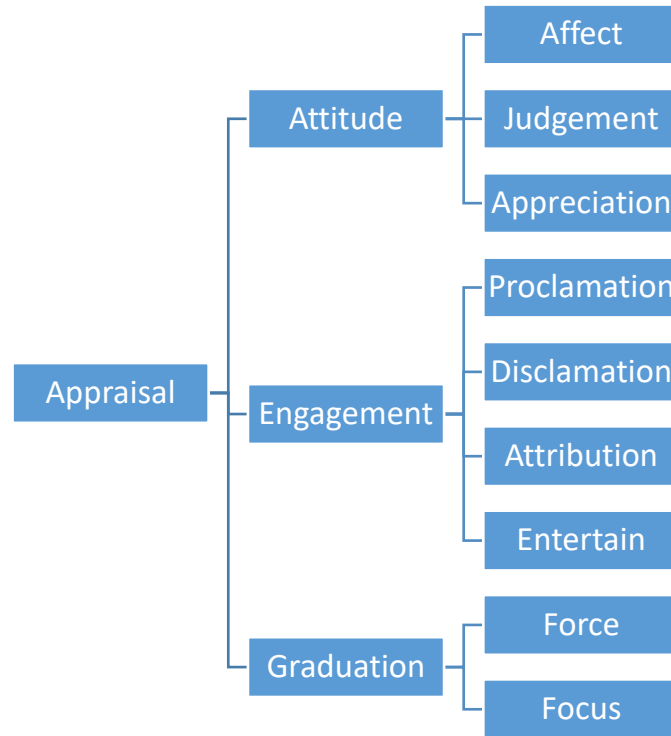


Figure 1: Appraisal Theory Hierarchy

Attitude encompasses evaluations having to do with one's feelings for example emotional responses, judgements of others and values we assign to stimuli (Martin & White, 2005, p. 35). Engagement is the interaction of in the discourse of debate of a topic, while Graduation is identifying the degree or focus of an evaluation (Martin & White, 2005, p. 35). In tables 3.4 and 3.5 from Martin and White, lexical examples are given to illustrate how graduation can attach to the other two larger categories (Martin & White, 2005, p. 156).

Table 3.4 The gradability of attitudinal meanings


| | low degree |  | | high degree |
|--------------|------------------------|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| judgement | competent player | good player | brilliant player | |
| | reasonably good player | quite good player | very good player | extremely good player |
| affect | contentedly | happily | joyously | ecstatically |
| | slightly upset | somewhat upset | very upset | extremely upset |
| appreciation | a bit untidy | somewhat untidy | very untidy | completely untidy |
| | attractive | beautiful | exquisite | |

Figure 2: From Martin and White 2005 pg. 156

Table 3.5 The gradability of engagement values


| | lower |  | | higher |
|-----------|---|---|---|--------|
| entertain | I suspect she betrayed us | I believe she betrayed us | I am convinced she betrayed us | |
| | possibly she betrayed us | probably she betrayed us | definitely she betrayed us | |
| | she just possibly betrayed us | she possibly betrayed us | she very possibly betrayed us | |
| attribute | She suggested that I had cheated | She stated that I had cheated | She insisted that I had cheated | |
| pronounce | I'd say he's the man for the job | I contend he's the man for the job | I insist that he's the man for the job | |
| concur | admittedly he's technically proficient (but he doesn't play with feeling) | | certainly he's technically proficient (but ...) | |
| disclaim | I didn't hurt him | | I never hurt him | |

Figure 3: From Martin and White 2005 pg. 156

These three broad categories are further broken down into subcategories to better identify the function of the appraisal being made in the context of the broader discourse. Attitude is further divided into three smaller categories 'affect', 'judgement' and 'appreciation'. Affect presents emotional responses to something or some event with mostly emotional lexical items such as happy, sad, proud, disappointed, angry, etc. The table below from Martin and White is where I started when determining what tags should

belong in the affect category (Martin & White, 2005, p. 51). This table give lexical examples for evaluations for the category in general.

Table 2.5 Affect – kinds of unhappiness

| Affect | Positive | Negative |
|------------------|--|---|
| dis/inclination | miss, long for, yearn for | wary, fearful, terrorised |
| un/happiness | cheerful buoyant, jubilant; like, love, adore | sad, melancholy, despondent; cut-up, heart-broken ... broken-hearted, heavy-hearted, sick at heart; sorrowful ... grief-stricken, woebegone ... dejected ...; dejected, joyless, dreary, cheerless, unhappy, sad; gloomy, despondent, ... downcast, low, down, down in the mouth, depressed ...; weepy, wet-eyed, tearful, in tears ... |
| in/security | together, confident, assured; comfortable, confident, trusting | uneasy, anxious, freaked out; startled, surprised, astonished |
| dis/satisfaction | involved, absorbed, engrossed; satisfied, pleased, chuffed/ impressed, charmed, thrilled | flat, stale, jaded; cross, angry, furious; bored with, sick of, fed up with |

Figure 4: From Martin and White 2005 pg. 51

Judgement, on the other hand, displays the speaker's assessment of someone else's behavior with words such as lazy, mean, suspicious, etc. In the following two tables lexical items that are categorized as judgement guided me in my analysis of what to classify in this sub-category and (Martin & White, 2005, p. 53).

Table 2.6 Judgement – social esteem

| SOCIAL ESTEEM | Positive [admire] | Negative [criticise] |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| normality 'how special?' | lucky, fortunate, charmed ...; normal, natural, familiar ...; cool, stable, predictable ...; in, fashionable, avant garde ...; celebrated, unsung ... | unlucky, hapless, star-crossed ...; odd, peculiar, eccentric ...; erratic, unpredictable ...; dated, daggy, retrograde ...; obscure, also-ran ... |
| capacity 'how capable?' | powerful, vigorous, robust ...; sound, healthy, fit ...; adult, mature, experienced ...; witty, humorous, droll ...; insightful, clever, gifted ...; balanced, together, sane ...; sensible, expert, shrewd ...; literate, educated, learned ...; competent, accomplished ...; successful, productive ... | mild, weak, Wimpy ...; unsound, sick, crippled ...; immature, childish, helpless ...; dull, dreary, grave ...; slow, stupid, thick ...; flaky, neurotic, insane ...; naive, inexperienced, foolish ...; illiterate, uneducated, ignorant ...; incompetent; unaccomplished ...; unsuccessful, unproductive ... |
| tenacity 'how dependable?' | plucky, brave, heroic ...; cautious, wary, patient ...; careful, thorough, meticulous tireless, persevering, resolute ...; reliable, dependable ...; faithful, loyal, constant ...; flexible, adaptable, accommodating ... | timid, cowardly, gutless ...; rash, impatient, impetuous ...; hasty, capricious, reckless ...; weak, distracted, despondent ...; unreliable, undependable ...; unfaithful, disloyal, inconstant ...; stubborn, obstinate, wilful ... |

Figure 5: From Martin and White 2005 pg. 53

Table 2.7 Judgement – social sanction

| SOCIAL SANCTION | Positive [praise] | Negative [condemn] |
|--|---|---|
| 'mortal' | | |
| veracity [truth] 'how honest?' | truthful, honest, credible ...; frank, candid, direct ...; discrete, tactful ... | dishonest, deceitful, lying ...; deceptive, manipulative, devious ...; blunt, blabbermouth ... |
| propriety [ethics] 'how far beyond reproach?' | good, moral, ethical ...; law abiding, fair, just ...; sensitive, kind, caring ...; unassuming, modest, humble ...; polite, respectful, reverent ...; altruistic, generous, charitable ... | bad, immoral, evil ...; corrupt, unfair, unjust ...; insensitive, mean, cruel ...; vain, snobby, arrogant ...; rude, discourteous, irreverent ...; selfish, greedy, avaricious ... |

Figure 6: From Martin and White 2005 pg. 53

Appreciation discusses the value of something with many different value types such as good, bad, beautiful, meaningful, etc. Turning again to Martin and White the following table assisted me in my decisions concerning the classification of hashtags under the appreciation sub-category (Martin & White, 2005, p. 56).

Table 2.8 Types of appreciation

| | Positive | Negative |
|---|--|---|
| <u>Reaction:</u> impact 'did it grab me?' | arresting, captivating, engaging ...; fascinating, exciting, moving ...; lively, dramatic, intense ...; remarkable, notable, sensational ... | dull, boring, tedious ...; dry, ascetic, uninviting ...; flat, predictable, monotonous ...; unremarkable, pedestrian ... |
| <u>Reaction:</u> quality 'did I like it?' | okay, fine, good ... lovely, beautiful, splendid ...; appealing, enchanting, welcome ... | bad, yuk, nasty ...; plain, ugly, grotesque ...; repulsive, revolting, off-putting ... |
| <u>Composition:</u> balance 'did it hang together?' | balanced, harmonious, unified, symmetrical, proportioned ...; consistent, considered, logical ...; shapely, curvaceous, willowly ... | unbalanced, discordant, irregular, uneven, flawed ...; contradictory, disorganised ...; shapeless, amorphous, distorted ... |
| <u>Composition:</u> Complexity 'was it hard to follow?' | simple, pure, elegant ...; lucid, clear, precise ...; intricate, rich, detailed, precise ... | ornate, extravagant, byzantine ...; arcane, unclear, woolly ...; plain, monolithic, simplistic ... |
| <u>Valuation</u> 'was it worthwhile?' | penetrating, profound, deep ...; innovative, original, creative ...; timely, long awaited, landmark ...; inimitable, exceptional, unique ...; authentic, real, genuine ...; valuable, priceless, worthwhile ...; appropriate, helpful, effective ... | shallow, reductive, insignificant ...; derivative, conventional, prosaic ...; dated, overdue, untimely ...; dime-a-dozen, everyday, common; fake, bogus, glitzy ...; worthless, shoddy, pricey ...; ineffective, useless, write-off ... |

Figure 7: From Martin and White 2005 pg. 56

The major category of Engagement is a little more difficult to break down Martin and White describe it as follows:

Broadly speaking engagement is concerned with the ways in which resources such as projection, modality, polarity, concession and various comment adverbials position the speaker/writer with respect to the value position being advanced and with respect to potential responses to that value position – by quoting or reporting, acknowledging a possibility, denying, countering, affirming and so on (pg. 36).

Types of engagement can be classified by their polarity or potentially type of stance taken, but clear cut lexical items representing engagement, like those provided for the other categories and sub-categories in the charts above, are harder to define. Finally

Graduation is broken down into two main subtypes: focus and force. Force is an evaluation of how strong or weak an evaluation is (Martin & White, 2005, p. 137). It is often used to intensify or diffuse feelings in a particular statement, for example, *very good* versus *somewhat good*, while focus shows a type of hierarchy within a statement pointing the *reader* toward what is important and what is peripheral (Martin & White, 2005, p. 137). An example of this is the true story, which uses the word true to focus the reader onto this particular story and eliminate all others.

For this study I will be using the above framework of Appraisal Theory to examine the use of hashtags in evaluative discourse on Twitter. This particular framework allows me to categorize the different types of appraisal that are reflected in the use of hashtags. These categories will further allow me to see the types of patterns Twitter users are employing to express their evaluations in the larger discourse on this social media platform, which also can reveal the types of discourse going on between users in general on Twitter itself.

Section III: Methodology

Data Collection

Using FireAnt created by Laurence Anthony I collected data through Twitter's API stream (Anthony L. a., 2016) (Twitter, 2016). The stream randomly selects a sample of tweets from all publicly available tweets (Twitter, 2016). An initial test file of 20,000 tweets yielded 3,000 tweets containing hashtags. This sample giving 15% of the tweets as usable data, which I used to calculate how many tweets I would need to do a thorough analysis. I calculated that collecting 200,000 tweets would give me 30,000 usable tweets for my corpus. I collected 200,000 tweets and of those tweets 19,080 contained a hashtag in the post, which was only 9.54% of the overall corpus. The files were collected in 10 separate files of 20,000 tweets per file over a period of three days. 20,000 was the most manageable number for FireAnt to extract from the Twitter API at a time without being interrupted. Collecting the files over more than one day helped ensure that I was not just getting trends for one particular day or for a particular couple of hours. The searching interface in FireAnt allows the user to filter for the language of the tweet. It collects the language information directly from Twitter, which automatically detects the language of a tweet as it is tweeted. My search was filtered specifically for English tweets. The data files containing the tweets are formatted into JSON files when being extracted from the Twitter API. This format allows you to see metadata and also allows you to extract certain pieces of the data file for analysis.

After collecting the corpus I filtered the data to eliminate retweets, searching for the string "RT" under the 'NOT' operator in the FireAnt interface. This string is

automatically inserted at the head of the post by Twitter when a user re-posts another user's tweet. After filtering for retweets the remaining corpus contained 19,080 tweets. I used FireAnt to extract only the text and a unique identification number for each tweet from the JSON file I collected. I exported the filtered data into a comma delimited file and then converted the file to a text file. I then loaded this filtered raw data into AntConc to further analyze it (Anthony L. , 2014). I searched my data in AntConc by using a regular expression to find all instances of hashtags in the data. The expression I used was :

```
#[a-z|A-Z|0-9]+\b
```

It is designed to find all strings beginning with the hash mark (#) and any alphanumeric combination until the end of the string. I designed the string to look for alphanumeric strings because hashtags can only contain these types of sequences. Punctuation immediately breaks the hashtag hyperlink. Emojis can be used in hashtags in some platforms, but I was looking specifically at text. The expression above found each hashtag individually, which meant that each line of my data was a single hashtag and that one tweet could make up several lines if it consisted of a cluster of hashtags. Separating the grouped hashtags also lowered the ability to ascertain a clear context for the hashtag within the greater body of the tweet and the relationships between the hashtags in the cluster. I then revised the regular expression to:

```
(#[a-z|A-Z|0-9]+ )+
```

The parenthesis around the regular expression grouped the expression together with a space at the end, which allowed for there to be spaces between the hashtags that it

found. The following plus sign allowed recursion to find all of the hashtags in a given cluster. This allowed the clusters of hashtags to stay intact and a more clear view of context, as well as the true number of tweets that my corpus consisted of.

After identifying all of the hashtags I read each hashtag individually and separated them into the three main categories and further into the subcategories according to Appraisal theory as outlined above. I also created specific categories for popular 'meme' hashtags and political tweets to be analyzed separately.

Section IV: Data Analysis

Attitude

The first overarching category to consider is the 'attitude' category proposed by Martin and White (2005). "Attitude is concerned with our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgements of behavior, and evaluation of things" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 35). This category encompasses a wide range of evaluation, which can be further broken down into three more specialized categories: affect, appreciation, and judgement.

Affect

The affect subcategory of attitude concerns itself with emotional evaluation. Emotional evaluation is expressing positive or negative feelings towards something (Martin & White, 2005, p. 42). Words such as 'happy' or 'sad' which are clearly emotion words, but also 'bored' are under this subcategory. For example,

707635670181920768 "@flipkartsupport let's see how fast you solve this **#disappointed** not going to use fliipkart again"

Here the user is expressing their disappointment to 'flipkart' about their services. Having an emotional lexical item in a hashtag alone is a fairly common phenomenon. Other examples from my data include:

- 1a 707635728902176768 "I live to #inspire #bodyPositive #imnoangel **#confidence** #goldenconfidence #bbw #curvy #curves... <https://t.co/v0nxaZk9EC>"
- 1b 706179814663852032 "Urgh! #Xboxlive down #again. @Xbox @XboxSupport **#unhappy** face"
- 1c 707630087550717953 "Can't believe tomorrow will be 32 years since dad passed away! What I ask myself if why does it still hurt so much? ᄇ° ʅꞑᄇ° ʅꞑᄇ° ʅꞑ #hurt **#heartbroken**"
- 1d 706193022518693888 "Some people are very sweet & then there are some who like to ruin you **#grateful** then"

there are some who don't appreciate what they have #sad"
1e 707636030871113728 "So this happened yesterday #pinklicence
#delighted https://t.co/YRpD2HCi8f"

In the data above we can see that these tags can also occur in clusters. Some of them as in example 1c can have multiple affective tags in the same cluster with both ‘#hurt’ and ‘#heartbroken’, while others occur in clusters with other types of hashtags such as grouping hashtags or other types of evaluation as in example 1a. We also see affect hashtags not just with the lexical item alone in the tag, but also in a greater phrase within a hashtag, for example:

707640883689066496 "Can someone tell me why the Giants let go of Corey Washington? #WeHellaMissHim ø° l]E @HeDoubleTrouble"

In this example ‘#WeHellaMissHim’ is a phrasal hashtag, but is expressing the users emotional stance toward the Giants letting go of one of their players. This is also a perfect example of how a hashtag can be meta-commentary about the main body of the post. The user starts off by asking a question about an event and then gives their emotional evaluation of the event in a hashtag at the end of the text. This adds to the context of the post without directly being included as part of the main text of the post. This hashtag can also be identified as meta-commentary because there is nothing inherent about the text of the tag that will guarantee that it will be connected to other posts about this particular event. ‘Missing Him’ could be applicable to many different events, such as a loss of a family member or someone moving away. This type of phrasal hashtag reoccurs in the affect subcategory many times as well for example:

- 2a 706186869474656256 "TOUR IN T-MINUS 3 DAYSð° ʌʞð° ʌʞð° ʞʞ
 \n#happydance <https://t.co/2IK5HvdeR7>"
- 2b 706612440340045824 "What you do when you're bored in the car...
 #vampire #photoshop #fitfam #momisbored
 #theoriginals #vampirediaries #...
<https://t.co/ypJsSEhGM9>"
- 2c 706613539251867648 "My son \"mom I have 2 pennies 1 for a toy
 motorcycle & 1 for the necklace you want\"
 #meltmyheart #ilovehim"
- 2d 706615435068874752 "I remember when beating my team was a big
 deal for bad teams.... #IHateThis #LosingSucks"

In the above examples we can see full sentences that express the emotional evaluation of the user in a single hashtag. This is clear in example 2c where the user talks about an event with her son and then gives two hashtags at the end one evaluating how the event made her feel ‘#meltmyheart’ and then her emotional state concerning her son ‘#ilovehim’. Both are full sentences that she could have included in the body of the text, but decided to form into a hashtag at the end to comment on this event. We also see this with the “#IHateThis” tag in example 2d. This also gives a statement and then the tags at the end give evaluation about the situation described in the main body of the text.

Judgement

The next subcategory under ‘attitude’ is judgement. This subcategory deals with how one feels about someone else’s behaviors. This, according to Martin and White, includes admiration, criticisms, praise or condemnation (Martin & White, 2005, p. 42). This category by definition requires an action to be judged and an agent that has committed this action. The user posting their judgement is generally a third part and may choose to form their judgement in many ways. Many times when the term ‘judgment’ is used there is a negative connotation attached and what follows is expected to be

pejorative. This is not the case in this category. Judgements can be both positively and negatively framed. Along with polar variation, in this section, we see the lexical items taking a variety of shapes, for example we can have a verb:

707635410122493957 "He moved his family to the other side of the #world.
What will you do to end #sexslavery?
<https://t.co/eNtSahAjDF> #inspiring #enditmovement"

This example includes a conjugated verb to appraise the action in the main body of the post. The user is praising someone for their actions and further evaluating these actions as inspiring. We also see adjectival forms for judgemental hashtags, such as:

3a 706186064180830208 "Eichel takes a swing at Parise. #gutsy
<https://t.co/7U0I2qNTwg>"

3b 706185376323411968 "MANY IL voters talking about whether to vote republican to go anti-Trump vs. democrat to vote anti-Hillary #pathetic <https://t.co/hXAu3Zat5b>"

All of these tags give a judgment of specific actions that have been committed by someone. A good example of this is example 3a where the user is talking about 'Eichel' taking a swing at 'Parise'. This is a specific event and the user is expressing his judgement that said action was 'gutsy'. In the second example the user is criticizing Illinois voters for what they are saying about voting in the current election, which they judge as pathetic. Judgement tags can also take nominal forms, for example:

706180045354639362 "I just love when squirrels leave me \"presents\" like these on our front porch bench. #aholes
<https://t.co/EAT9IRR4tP>"

The nominal form is more like the author participating in a form of name calling to represent their judgement of the agent's actions. Judging an entity on one particular action is not the only type of judgement to consider in the data. There are also more

broad judgements of entities based on a series of actions. In the above example the user is grouping all squirrels together based on the repeated action of “leaving presents” for her and calling all of them ‘ahoies’. An interesting aspect of this category is that the action that is being judged does not have to be discussed in the main body of the post. For example:

706183077849141248 "OMG @taylorswift13 with the real talk though ǒ° ʘʘǒ° ʘʘǒ° #byekanye #youreaclown
<https://t.co/w0DQ3QizOE>"

Here the user has not mentioned any actions or provided any specific reasons why someone is ‘a clown’. We also see a strong relationship between the two hashtags. If the user had only put the ‘#youreaclown’ hashtag the reader might assume that the author is calling Taylor Swift a clown, but with the addition of ‘#byekanye’ we have a better understanding of the context for the following hashtag and can make the assumption that it is in fact Kanye West that is being judged as the clown. There are, however, examples where no extra context is given and only readers that previously know what the author is referring to will be able to decode the judgement being imposed. For example:

4a 707641051477991424 "This is ridiculous. How are they getting away with this? #sodamnedflawed
<https://t.co/LpBKMQUfFR>"

4b 706611614091493376 "#SuspiciousPerson at 4846 New Broad St. #orlpol #opd"

In these examples there are no explicit references to the actions that are eliciting the judgment in the hashtag. The author may be posting in response to a larger conversation going on in the Twittersphere as in the example 4a or may just be trying to quickly send out a warning as in the second example. They potentially believe that the actions that

qualify the person as suspicious are irrelevant at the moment in order to make sure others are safe.

Just as with the affect subcategory phrasal hashtags contribute to judgement. We have seen this previously with the example of ‘#youreac clown’ in the data above, but this is not an isolated incident. Other examples include:

- 5a 706615393163411456 "@Skelly363 Yeah that's what we're afraid of. @josephmagnier @IngrahamAngle @tedcruz @usnews #NoShadyBusiness #NeverTrump #Motel6"
- 5b 707629022197448704 "I can certainly see why people don't like Steph Curry. #makesusalllookbad <https://t.co/2bNhRmb1QP>"
- 5c 707632235034382341 "Moving on! #onceajerkalwaysajerk #stillhappy #nevergonnabringmedown #icanseeyourstillmiserable... <https://t.co/59dfn6AsyF>"
- 5d 706610506778460162 "When you have to write your own Mother's Day card and you're not a single mum... ð° ʌ ð° ʌ #pieceofshit #forgetful"

The phrasal tags in this set of examples can consist of up to six words in a single tag. There is variation on the way in which the author refers to the agent they are appraising. In example 5b the author explicitly mentions Steph Curry where as in examples 5c and 5d the agent is implied either by discussing their relationship to the author, as in 5d in which the author implies the father of her children by saying she is not a single mother or in 5c where the author implies a former significant other by making references to “moving on”. With these examples the reader must have enough cultural knowledge to be able to pick up on the implication that the author is making. This is, however, a more general

knowledge base and is therefore open to more readers unlike in example 5a where the readers needed specialized knowledge to understand the message.

An interesting aspect of this particular category is that judgements can be made in both directions. Anyone can judge someone's actions and this is something that some Twitter users recognize as they are writing their posts. This realization has caused a phenomenon I have labeled 'reflexive judgement' where the user is aware of the potential negative judgements that readers will attach to their post and add hashtags to either acknowledge the judgements or try to assert opposition to them proactively. For example:

- 6a 707641043093733376 "i wanna watch #sayyestothedress #guiltypleasure"
- 6b 707640179033559040 "My image Homeless has received special recognition #humblebrag @viewbug <https://t.co/nWum39aiQb>"
- 6c 707633103267880960 "@g5pasha why did you start playing Countrr strike and who told you about it <3 #NoHomo love you my Friend"

In example 6a the author hedges her desire to watch a certain TV show by admitting it is a "guilty" pleasure. The author seems to recognize that some people would have a negative opinion of the show itself or about her choice to spend time watching it, so to minimize the possible negative criticism from readers she acknowledges it up front. Example 6b is similar in the way that the author seems to recognize that there is a negative connotation with the action of 'bragging'. The user then adds 'humble' into the hashtag to try to counteract the thought that they were being pompous. In example 6c the user is recognizing that saying 'love you' to someone of the same sex may lead people to believe that they are homosexual and this particular user preposes the '#NoHomo'

hashtag to distance themselves from that possibility. Each user in these situations are making judgements of their own actions and how the larger discursive community might interpret what they have said, which then gives them the choice to distance themselves from the negative or accept it and move on.

Appreciation

The final subcategory under the larger 'attitude' umbrella is the appreciation section. Martin and White describe this category as "meanings construing our evaluations of 'things', especially things we make and performances we give, but also including natural phenomena – what such things are worth (how we value them)", (Martin & White, 2005, p. 56). This subcategory is the most expansive in terms of possibilities for variety of appraisal. Generally, when discussing the value of something we can judge it to be good or bad, positive or negative and other terms of this nature. We can also evaluate it on a scale. This one is good, but that one is better and the other one is the best. These kinds of appraisal are present in the data. For example:

- 7a 707635057804967936 "Fresh ingredients from Sheridan Village @PeoriaHV. Great lunch for my day off. #FreshIsBest #LoveStuffOnSale <https://t.co/mKse4TZM1U>"
- 7b 706179940513787904 "Lemon Pepper Remix #chicksnwings #wedabest #nothingtastebetter #foodie #hustle... <https://t.co/gydV3qtvhH>"

In these examples we see a traditional value scale for appraising things by the usage of the words 'best' and 'better'. These vary on what is being evaluated. In example 7a the user is proclaiming that 'fresh is best' when referring to ingredients to cook with, while the other three examples are evaluating a specific thing the chef or lemon pepper chicken wings. These positive and negative types of evaluations are not limited to these specific

lexical items. There are many variations on the concept of something being of good or bad quality, which may be in a less gradable format, such as:

- 8a 706176627001184257 "#Awesome Food : #Baked Stuffed Brie with Almonds and Honey. Super easy but fancy as fuck. <https://t.co/4BUUBcPtT6> <https://t.co/ya9rwMMi8c>"
- 8b 706186227754655747 "@KatGraham will there be links for your #IWALK4WOMEN speech and info? SO important #amazingwomen #EnoughIsEnough #NOMORE @Mariska"
- 8c 706190338197557248 "@districtdonuts #sliders, #Cheesywafflefries w/grilled onions, #donuts, #DistrictDonuts #FollowYourNola #Superb <https://t.co/4EPHuz39m0>"
- 8d 707632570570297345 "@realrobintunney Adore & respect you so much. One day, hope to be able to meet you & show how #wonderful & #precious I think you are. Love2u."

All of these terms are used to describe something the speaker or author appraises as good or of good quality without using the simple words in the good/bad comparison dichotomy. Not all of the variety found in the data are traditional lexical items. With Twitter being used overwhelmingly more by the younger generations popular lexical items and trending slang are making their way into appraisal hashtags. For example:

- 9a 706613732194045952 "BAYBEE YOU DONT KNO NUTHIN BOUT DIS SHEER.... #yasss <https://t.co/OHMTqoFPaH>"
- 9b 706613124044984324 "@ChickenNGreens Shit. I forgot about the rattle snake. Another honorable mention would be Goldberg. #stunner #spear"
- 9c 706613799319515136 "Salute my school Lady champs I see you @lvmymeg #TheRealBenedict #BCBCYouKnowYouKnow #SheSoDope... <https://t.co/2hIvBli5bV>"
- 9d 706180129253433348 "@OriginalFunko @greigo_uk oh my!! So much cuteness #win ୫° ୱୱ"

All of these examples include lexical items more popular with younger generations to show approval or a good evaluation of something. ‘Dope’ and ‘stunner’ as terms for positive evaluation have been used for the past few decades, but terms like ‘win’ and ‘yas’ have seemed to crop up more recently. ‘Win’ is not a far stretch semantically to become a term to describe something good, as wins are generally good things. In the past few years its function and meaning has been extended to being able to describe a good thing or a good situation. In this particular example the user is describing the amount of cuteness as a “win”. The term that may be a bit less identifiable as an evaluation is ‘yas’. This is a spelling variation on the word ‘yes’, which is overtly positive. The variation in spelling is used to represent enthusiasm as is adding additional letters to the word. The more letters a user adds to the word the more intense the evaluation becomes.

Variation is not only present in positive appreciation, but also occurs on the negative side as well. For example:

- 10a 706176278873833472 "@Owlicus @Kittyattackship @SouleBreaker @AvengersAcademy this is the reward for the all week event. #notWorthIt <https://t.co/5M7jQCB1G1>"
- 10b 706185955128930304 "@carolinafever BAD BLOOD (#DukeSucks) Parody. #LOL #BeatDuke #BeatDook #GoHeels #UNC <https://t.co/GjludarkFP>"
- 10c 706613715421028352 "@Hendrick5Team @kaseykahne could no good CC #roddensucks maybe get Kasey up front? Unless that's asking too much fucking asshole"
- 10d 706614675920785410 "After a lovely weekend of laundry, /work/work and coursework it's back to a full week of long hours at uni. #adulthoodsucks ㇀ル子"

10e 707630544717279234 "Thank you, BuzzFeed. #raisinssuck
<https://t.co/plc7HTOch3>
<https://t.co/jeBI4nuMOZ>"

10f 706535000000000000 @fragileheart Uhhh.....I'm sure it'll be a
delicious dinner. ;) #Nope #NotWeights

With the negative group of examples there is an instance of evaluation of worth itself in example 10a. The user is directly assessing worth instead of using other means to evaluate the outcome of the event. The next four examples all use the verb 'sucks' to express either opinions of the entities in question. These things range from a particular person as in 10c or a whole team or school as in 10b. It can also be used to assess an abstract idea as in adulthood (10d) or an inanimate object such as raisins (10e). The variation in these examples is the different things that this one word is used to express. As with the 'yas' example in the positive examples 'nope' is used in a similar way on the negative side. A definitive answer to a question has again been taken and expanded to express evaluation. In this particular example the user is using 'nope' to signify that the meal will likely not be delicious. This tag is interesting because it helps the author mark that they were being facetious in the body of the post and help the reader to better interpret the message.

Polarity is not the only axis on which this type of evaluation can turn. There are other ways that one can assign a value to something by basing their evaluation on specific qualities an entity can possess such as truth or falsehood, beauty, or meaning. This is also a prevalent type of evaluation in Twitter hashtags. Examples from the data include:

11a 707640556533522432 "#truth \nLife isn't always easy and giving up
is the easy way out .. Sticking it out and...
<https://t.co/lejKsWpmwC>"

11b 706180410271731714 "If you enjoy Hip-Hop with a message
checkout \"better man\" comes with a free

downloadð° ୯୨ð° ୨II <https://t.co/OEoAHKl6ow>
#meaningful #rap #hiphop #pop"
11c 707630397937618944 "still ridesss #Timeless
<https://t.co/Sn8oiXozEb>"
11d 706535000000000000 When you're in your #twenties sometimes
moving forwards is going to feel like moving
backwards. #relatable #thestruggle is real
11e 706536000000000000 Dubai does nothing in small measures.
#spectacular #proper
<https://t.co/XU20dNVZMV>
11f 706542000000000000 "Beautiful #braids, thanks to Dominic
Guzman for the #professional #hair #style.
\n\nSkin care, thanks to Dr. Bobby...
<https://t.co/LRfJmgsUWm>"
11g 706542000000000000 How Big Is Texas #Unique #DMZ #Ratty
<https://t.co/Gpv1SjdRRJ> #UMI

With the diverse qualities that something can possess this type of appraisal bears a large amount of variety. Each quality about has an oppositional evaluation, which lends to its evaluative nature. In instances like example 11a the user is asserting that the following statement is true and the reader should take it as such. The author of example 11b is doing much the same thing in asserting that a particular song is meaningful. While in examples 11e and 11f the authors are assessing performative aspects of an entity. In example 11e the user is appraising how the people of Dubai “do things” and is marking them as doing them properly. In example 11f the user is evaluating the braidwork done by someone as professional. Both of these example involve an entity and assessing a particular quality of what has been done or what was created.

The above qualities are in dichotomous pairs that oppose each other and do not have any real variation in lexical items or in intensity. Qualities such as beauty possess both lexical variation and degrees of intensity. For example:

- 12a 707630267905798144 "A #gorgeous #picture of an #elephant #reaching out for the #trees. <https://t.co/Laa5KzWQFF>"
- 12b 706542000000000000 . . . A #beautiful #rainbow assortment of #colors. #ColorsInfinity! ㅎㄷㄷ #Heel #HeelsHigh #ShoeFashion #JimmyChoo <https://t.co/NI7LkJzNkP>
- 12c 707634395117703168 "Aren't they just the cutest things? #funny #adorable #owls <https://t.co/OgvQakuigG>"
- 12d 706536000000000000 Scout after a shower via /r/aww #cute #kitten #puppy <https://t.co/iVzt9u4YN3>

Each example listed above is a varying degree of beauty with gorgeous being the most intense and cute or adorable being the least. With beauty being a completely subjective quality the user is clearly making an evaluation about the entity in question and expressing their opinion in the hashtags that they use. This is not to say that beauty is not in a pair with an antonym. There is obviously an opposition of words such as ‘ugly’, which also has a complimentary set of degrees and variation such as ‘hideous’ and ‘homely’. Another consideration with this particular value is that some of the degrees could be semantically blocked from being used to evaluate a specific entity. For example in example 12d the author is discussing a kitten or puppy and calling it ‘cute’, when talking about kittens we rarely call them gorgeous or beautiful. This particular word may have certain semantic boundaries that may not allow it to evaluate all things in the ‘beautiful’ semantic realm.

As with the previous two subcategories appreciation evaluations can be constructed with whole sentences. A user may find it more poignant to use a full expression to assert their evaluation than just one word. For example:

- 13a 707640262919593985 "@AkOnMyNiteStand OMG you need to try @weloveeyesxo makeup remover It's

#lifechanging and made with tea tree oil so it doesn't burn!"
13b 707633103259508736 "#thisishuge #DosEquis is retiring 'The Most Interesting Man in the World' https://t.co/96xDiolrIW via @TIMEBusiness"

These two examples use multiple words to express their opinion, which adds to the intensity of the appraisal. Both of the tags have a weight to them that would be hard to achieve with just one word, for example 'life changing' is more powerful than something like 'inspirational'. There is a different feel to the phrase, a type of emphasis, which can also be illustrated by the second example. 'This is huge' already puts the thing being evaluated on a scale from minor or little to major or, in this case, huge. This simple phrase already alerts the reader that what is coming will be big and much in a different way than a word such as 'shocking' might. With using the full phrase the author can intensify their evaluation and portray their evaluation on a more accurate level to how they are truly feeling.

Sarcasm & Non-traditional usage of lexical items

The lexical items given in the above sections and other related words are not always used in the traditional contexts that native English speakers would initially think of. For example:

706611404363603969 "#SadPartIs that there are actually people super excited to see @LilTunechi tonight...ð° ʌɪð° ʌɪɹɪ"

This tag includes 'sad', which traditionally is used in an emotional context, so we would assume that this tag should be sorted into the affect category. Looking closer at the construction it is clear that the author is not talking about the emotion of sadness, but more like the alternate meaning of 'unfortunate'. This difference in semantics shifts the

categorization of this tag from affect to appreciation. Multiple meanings of a lexical item is one possible cause for this, but another possible cause for non-traditional use of lexical items is word play.

Hashtags, as we have seen, are highly productive and authors can become very creative with what they use tags for. Users will in fact use them to emphasize that the opposite is true and mark sarcasm. For example:

71663600000000000000 Oh Johnny stop picking your nose #adorable
<https://t.co/N2JegWZSaj>
Here the user is expressing their desire for 'Johnny' to stop picking his nose, then uses the hashtag '#adorable'. There is a complete mismatch between the two. It is generally frowned upon in society to pick your nose around others and is found disgusting, but here the author uses a degree of beauty to joke about this being done in their presence and invoke sarcasm. Another example from the data can illustrate sarcasm well.

706186282272161793 "I guess hanging with @kokonutkay in the JFK airport is alright #idontevenlikeher 😊🙄🙄🙄"
This user is talking about spending time with someone, but is down playing their enjoyment and their opinion of the person the time was spent with. The tag '#idontevenlikeher' would suggest that she did not enjoy the time and that she does not have a very high opinion of this person, but if we take into account the smiley faces after the tag we can see that the tag is most likely sarcastic.

Engagement

The next over-arching category of appraisal is Engagement. This category as defined by Martin and White "... we include within the category of engagement those meanings which in various ways construe for the text a heteroglossic backdrop of prior utterances, alternative viewpoints and anticipated responses," (Martin & White, 2005, p. 97). Engagement centers on dialogue. There must be a discussion in which there are multiple viewpoints being expressed for engagement to take place. As with attitude, engagement can be broken up into several sub-categories. Proclaim and Disclaim are a pair that go hand in hand, followed by attribution and entertaining.

An author would use disclaiming to position themselves in opposition of or rejecting a previously stated position (Martin & White, 2005, p. 97). These types of evaluation involve denying something or countering a previous argument, for example:

- 14a 706614751405731840 "My illness isn't an adjective #SickNotWeak #ImNotAshamed <https://t.co/c70teRNDf9>"
- 14b 707628846053531648 "@realdonaldtrump #thisisnotaboutyou #potus #nevertrump Trump displays steak, water, wine to defend business record - <https://t.co/oRCBOTBX8u>"

All of these examples involve denying a potential opposing argument. In example 14a the author is denying that they are or should be ashamed for being sick. They are also countering the argument or notion that because someone is sick it means that they are weak. In example 14b the author is denying that voters wanting to know about Trump's business record is "not about" him. They are countering Trump's argument that the voters are attacking him personally by wanting to see his business record. Both examples participate in a preexisting discussion going on in society and are using the hashtags to

give their evaluation a voice. Example 14b may seem much like the previous example with Taylor Swift and Kanye, where it is stated that it is a bit unreasonable to directly tag someone in a negative evaluation. In the previous example the author is evaluating Kanye as a clown, while this hashtag is used to engage Donald Trump directly to oppose his position of the argument. This difference is what qualifies these tags into their respective categories.

On the other side of disclaiming sits proclaiming. Proclaiming involves “representing the proposition as highly warrantable, the textual voice sets itself against, suppresses or rules out alternative positions,” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 98). Authors may use this to make the opposing argument look irrelevant or to assert that they are telling the truth. This presents their point of view as the most sensible or the most compelling side of the debate.

15a 706177906284691456 "With me it's Walter Matthau...#honest
<https://t.co/g351JoUOcs>"

15b 706612683626315776 "No last name needed #truth #jack
<https://t.co/aihBAZvgsq>"

In these examples the author is asserting that their argument is honest or the truth. They want the readers to value their argument or even themselves as being the better option.

A topic that may better illustrate this dichotomy is politics. During my data collection period the presidential campaigns were traveling around the country and the caucuses were taking place. Political tweets contributed a significant amount of data to my corpus and many of these tweets were engaging in the debate over who the best candidate for the nomination should be. This debate, of course, was widespread in the

'Twittersphere' and multiple sides were represented. Many of the hashtags became widely used and some came in polarized couplets, for example, the hashtags '#AlwaysTrump' and '#NeverTrump' have been used in directly opposing tweets.

Never Trump:

- 16a 707636353828261888 "Nah, just the ones that he specifically
\"demonstrated\" weren't failures by lying to
you. #NeverTrump <https://t.co/chE6R2r0Io>"
- 16b 706176622798508036 "This is what makes me sickest of all.
#NeverTrump <https://t.co/NFDgnwidZo>"
- 16c 706177973360013313 "The Zombie Apocalypse Is
Coming...\n#NeverTrump
<https://t.co/H0XTHMSJyi>"

Always Trump:

- 16 7061785437937991 "And angry white women, and black and brown
d 68 people, and everyone else tired of being shafted.
#AlwaysTrump <https://t.co/Zpvmv2Hdav>"
- 16 7061835937443266 "@DanScavino @tedcruz @CLewandowski_
e 56 @realDonaldTrump #AlwaysTrump Cruz must
DISAVOW Glenn Beck for his extremism."
- 16f 7061901913718824 "READ revealing letter to @GOP's traitorous
99 pos...\nDEAR
REINCE:\n<https://t.co/aEYO9OpT0p>\n#AlwaysTrump
#Trump2016 #MAGA
<https://t.co/E7vQr3OI1L>"
- 16 7066137951169454 "Amen!!\n#AlwaysTrump #Trump\nJudge
g 08 Jeanine: Mitt Romney awoke a sleeping giant
<https://t.co/3UjGYHF7RQ>"

These two hashtags are directly trying to promote or devalue Donald Trump as a political candidate. Another example of disclaiming, specifically, is the "#HillNo" hashtag.

- 17a 706613245667225600 "Yes and don't forget that Hillary *IS* the 1%!
https://t.co/RiTkOoAu3c\n#BernieOrBust
#MichiganPrimary #HillNo
<https://t.co/3LEJ0Q1giv>"

- 17b 706187242780401665 "Where's the outrage?! #HillNo has the blood of hundreds of environmental activists on her hands. #EarthForBernie <https://t.co/1Y1DHBipSz>"
- 17c 707631199041282048 ".@NoahCRothman \nIn 1968 Stewart Alsop called Humphrey vs. Nixon \"The Dismal Choice.\" \nHow lucky we were.\n#NeverTrump #HillNo"
- 17d 706537000000000000 No merge HRC would only taint the @BernieSanders ticket and GOP would eat that up #HillNO NOT EVER <https://t.co/4qpTYb6Svc>

These examples are all denying that Hillary Clinton is a viable candidate for president.

Each author gives a different reason or comparison as evidence for their stance, but overall these authors are using this tag to express their opinion of one of the possible candidates in the presidential discussion. This tag is also interesting in that authors recognize it as a play on the phrase ‘hell no’, which also adds to the negative polarity of the tag. This type of word play also works with another tag in the data set.

- 18a 706178279573741568 "#Floridað° ʘʘð° ʘʘ\nVote #AlwayTrumpð° ʘʘð° ʘʘ\nLand Slide #TRiUMPh saves #America\nWE'RE WINNING ALREADY\nDON'T BELIEVE ME JUST WATCHð° ʘʘð° ʘʘ <https://t.co/HoMlzPLGMh>"
- 18b 706535000000000000 ð° ʘʘð° ʘʘ#Clevelandð° ʘʘð° ʘʘ#Ohioð° ʘʘð° ʘʘ \nVote #AlwayTrumpð° ʘʘð° ʘʘ\n#TRiUMPh saves #America createsð° ʘʘð° ʘʘ#JOBSð° ʘʘð° ʘʘ \nDON'T BELIEVE ME JUST WATCHð° ʘʘð° ʘʘ <https://t.co/VOUNPPWWOS>

Here the users strategically use capitalization to highlight ‘Trump’ in the word triumph. This also doubles as an intensifier for the positivity they are trying to portray in the conversation about their chosen candidate.

Authors have played with proclamations in other ways with this particular section of the data, for example:

- 19a 706187242780401665 "Where's the outrage?! #HillNo has the blood of hundreds of environmental activists on her hands. <https://t.co/1Y1DHBipSz> #EarthForBernie
- 19b 706613245667225600 "Yes and don't forget that Hillary *IS* the 1%! <https://t.co/RiTkOoAu3c> #BernieOrBust #MichiganPrimary #HillNo <https://t.co/3LEJ0Q1giv>"

“Bernie or Bust”, in example 19b, makes it seem like the only possible option for the presidency is Bernie Sanders. In example 19a “Earth for Bernie” makes it seem like all of the people on the planet should support him, eliminating all other prospects without using the common ‘always’ or ‘never’ hashtags.

The remaining two sub-categories of entertain and attribute are not present in my data sample. Entertain being used as considering a possible position, instead of its traditional semantic value of providing amusement. This type of engagement does not seem to be a source for hashtags. Attribution is a bit trickier. It is about attributing an argument to someone else, for example, ‘Jerry believes this to be true’. Here using ‘believe’ is attributing the following argument to Jerry. This also does not seem to come up in my data sample. A possible reason for this is that because hashtags are generally used to group or to comment on the body of the post, thus it would be more likely to put these types of engagements in the body of the post and use the hashtags to proclaim or disclaim.

Graduation

The final category of appraisal is graduation. This category is different than the other two, in that it is actually ingrained in both of the other categories, but can also stand on its own. Graduation concerns itself with assessing degrees or grades of things. Martin and White describe these interactions as “It [graduation] is a general property of values of affect, judgement and appreciation that they construe greater or lesser degrees of positivity or negativity,” and “...engagement values scale for the degree of the speaker/writer’s intensity or the degree of their investment in the utterance,” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 135). Graduation also has two sub-sects that it is divided into: focus and force.

Focus, as it sounds, adds a lens to center the reader in on the argument at hand. It helps to eliminate other extraneous elements or possible imposters for entities. For example:

- 20a 706613799319515136 "Salute my school Lady champs I see you @luvmy meg #TheRealBenedict #BCBCYouKnowYouKnow #SheSoDope... <https://t.co/2hIvBli5bV>"
- 20b 706185992890359808 "We're making feelings again. #NewMusic #Metalcore #realband #VA2016 #rockmusic <https://t.co/5RK36d8Pf1>"
- 20c 707631840790765568 "ur opinion is almost as bad as ur face #realtalk"
- 20d 706191713916755968 "Drunkity drunk drunk #thisisthirty #drunkitydrunkdrunkdrunk #truestory #singleandfabulous..."
- 20e 706192120776937472 "#truelove: See The Consummate Couple Who Got Married Today That Sets Social Media Ablaze <https://t.co/VFFLQsRXDd>"

In all of these examples the authors use the word 'real' or 'true' to better focus their appraisal of the following entity. In example 20b '#realband' is straining away any other possibilities that may be trying to imitate a band. '#realtalk' is proposing what the author is saying is the truth. '#truelove' frames the user's appraisal of the love story as the purest form of love. All of these examples narrow the author's appraisal to a specific person or thing. It leads the reader to what they are supposed understand as the center of the evaluation.

On the other hand force is about intensifying an argument or an evaluation. In this subcategory authors are expressing different degrees or polarity or intensity of some other evaluation, for example:

- 21a 706177306495225857 "What a great day we've had #MWR2016 together with so many great women. #verycold #endviolenceagainstwomen <https://t.co/XvedoLajXD>"
- 21b 706178996770242560 "@gauravsinghsen6 @javeeddgpup @shalabhTOI @adityanews #very true"
- 21c 707641051477991424 "This is ridiculous. How are they getting away with this? #sodamnedflawed <https://t.co/LpBKMQUfFR>"
- 21d 706186563328339969 "holy fuck I feel like holy fuck ghahwcneawl #holyfuck #holyifeellikeholyfuck"

In examples 21a and 21b the authors use a standard intensifier 'very' to increase the magnitude of their assessment. In examples 21c and 21d are more non-standard using swearing to help signify intensity. In example 21d the force element is both in a longer tag and in a tag of its own. Something similar is seen in example 21b, but it is unclear if 'very' was supposed to be on its own or if 'true' was part of the tag and was accidentally separated.

Another interesting example of the force aspect is the use of reduplication as an intensifier. Native English speakers often use reduplication to create intensity in speech, for example, saying that something is 'hot hot' means that it is extremely hot. This usage increase the weight of the assessment, which appears in the Twitter data.

22a 707630603437527040 "Oh #Parahoy. You were the most ridiculous, scary, exciting, and fun experience ever. Thank you #happyhappy 🤗"

22b 706537000000000000 "90th minute, 1-0 down, throw-in deep in their half, yet we manage to get it ALL the way back to our centre half #boringboringfootball #mufc"

In both of these examples the word being repeated is instantly understood as possessing a higher degree of 'happiness' or 'boringness'. It is equally interesting because this type of graduation does not need a specific lexical item. The user can utilize the lexical item for their assessment, in this case the affective lexical item, and double it to create a difference in degree.

Relationships in Appraisal

As the majority of the examples from the graduation section show, the different categories and sub-categories are not isolated from one another. A user can encode several types of appraisal in a single tweet or about a single entity. There are many different examples of this in the data. Some are quite simple, for example:

707634625775017985 "Mumbles needs #nofilter 🤗 🤗 🤗\n#beauty #sunset #seaside #instapic #love #happy #view <https://t.co/EYtUFlz0B>"

These two affective hashtags occur directly adjacent to one another in a cluster of hashtags at the end of the post. They individually make a comment on the content of the tweet, but also inform each other and the overall mood that the author is portraying in

the post. However, the hashtags marking a user's evaluation in a single tweet do not need to be from the same sub-category. It is possible for a user to use multiple attitudinal hashtags in a single tweet. For example:

706614084532240384 "So for my first #lakers game this season I get to see them get a W and over the Warriors no less 🤩 🎉 🎊 #sweet #proud"

Here the user has employed an affective appraisal by using '#proud' to express their emotional assessment of seeing their favorite basketball team at their first live game. They also use an appreciative evaluation by assessing the situation as 'sweet'. The embedding of evaluation can become even more complex, for example:

707640158074576896 "#PayPigs think money=power. Money is the only thing you have that I could find a use for. Without money you don't exist #HowPathetic #HowSad"

The first tag in this example is at its core a judgement tag with the user judging the uses of an entity as 'pathetic'. The second tag is an appreciation tag with the use of 'sad' meaning 'unfortunate'. This is more of an evaluation of the situation, which places it in the appreciation category. Both of these tags include 'how' before the defining lexical item. This is a form of graduation that increases the force behind the assessments. This layering of evaluation is common and by no means are these examples an exhaustive list. There are numerous combinations of the different types of appraisal that can be employed.

Table 1: Number of Co-Occurrences across Major categories

| Appraisal Categories | Number of Co-Occurrences With Another Category |
|----------------------|--|
| Attitude | 11 |
| Engagement | 3 |
| Graduation | 8 |

Table 2: Number of Co-Occurrences across Attitudinal Sub-categories

| Attitude Sub-Categories | Number of Co-Occurrences |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Affect | 6 |
| Judgement | 4 |
| Appreciation | 4 |

After looking at the total numbers it is clear that attitude categories are more likely to pair with other types of evaluation, which is closely followed by graduation. Graduation is unsurprisingly high because it is naturally ingrained in the other categories. Within the sub-categories of attitude affect is the most likely to occur with other types of appraisal, while judgement and appreciation are more evenly distributed. This also makes sense because emotional responses can be applied to anything, but judgement requires a person or action, while appreciation is more about ‘things’.

Meme Hashtags

There is a group of hashtags that merit separate consideration from the other hashtags in the data. These tags are called ‘Meme’ hashtags. The term ‘meme’ was coined by Richard Dawkins, a biologist. He defines them in his 1976 work “The Selfish Gene” as

Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation, (Dawkins, 1976).

The internet has taken this term and appropriated it to fit a specific type of hashtag that has begun appearing on social media platforms and is especially prevalent on Twitter.

Allison Shapp also provides a frame in the context of Twitter in her article:

In the context of Twitter, memes are common ideas in the form of hashtags that circulate and that are participatory, in that people learn about the hashtag and then use it themselves to add their own contribution to a funny or thought-provoking idea (Shapp, 2014).

These tags may start out with a single user, but the larger community catches on to the idea and negotiates an underlying meaning. They then begin to use it on a broad scale.

These tags have many different functions to invoke humor, to mark a common idea, or more relevant for this paper, express evaluation.

There are a vast amount of meme hashtags on twitter, but a few examples of meme tags that add evaluation to the post have presented themselves in the data I have collected. One of these such tags is the 'team' hashtag. These tags are constructed using the word 'team' followed by another entity, usually a noun. This tag can mark group identity, but it can also express the author's appraisal as the best side of a debate. For example,

- 23a 706615166654398464 "I'm so excited @JeffMauro is going to be on my favorite show tonight! Woo hoo! ǿ° ʌ=ǿ° ʌʌ #allstaracademy #teamirvine <https://t.co/7pHRI4nAw5>"
- 23b 707631400371945472 "I only stand with the important people on the important issues.\n\nI am, of course, referring to

Captain America and Batman.\n\n#TeamCap
#Batman"

23c 716636000000000000 Follow 25 #bloggers for exclusive content as they head to LA 4/9-4/12 for the #CaptainAmericaEvent! #TeamIronMan
https://t.co/LnnITIVHTG

23d 70654400000000000000 ❤️❑RED & PINKð° 𐄂 BOX BRAIDS BY UMI
\n\n#africanbraiding #braids #hairbraiding
#teamnatural #afro... https://t.co/e76n96NEKH

All of these examples contain tags that are in competition with other possible “teams”. In example 23a the ‘team’ tag is referring to a chef competing on a cooking show. This author seems to be showing their support for this contestant, but also assessing them as the best choice. Examples 23b and 23c are in direct competition with one another. In an upcoming movie, Marvel’s “Captain America: Civil War”, the characters Captain America and Ironman are pitted against each other. Users are choosing sides and using the ‘team’ hashtags to show support. Example 23d is a more broad debate. This author is expressing their evaluation that having natural hair is better than hair extensions. All of these tags express a user’s evaluation of an ongoing debate or conversation and which side they appraise to be the better one. This would categorize such tags as appreciation tags.

There are also meme hashtags that fall under the judgement category. Two specific meme hashtags that express judgement in the data are the ‘#smh’ and ‘#goals’ tags. The ‘#smh’ tag stands for ‘shake my head’, a common sign of disapproval in American culture that has been made into an acronym. This tag is generally employed by users to express disappointment or disapproval of another’s actions, for example:

706178426349207552 "#Jaguares score a 2nd amazing try down 2 players nogal. #smh #SHAvJAG #SSRugby #SuperRugby #AllOutRugby"

This user is expressing their disappointment in a team in a rugby game. It is unclear if they are disappointed in the team being down two players or in the team that let them score the goal. On the positive side of judgement we have the 'goals' hashtag. This can be a tag on its own, '#goals' or the user can add another lexical item to give the appraisal focus, '#relationshipgoals'. When a user applies this tag they are expressing that the content of the post is something others should strive for or make their goal to achieve. For example,

- 24a 706180867425632256 "there's a woman at the gym doing lunges and squats while holding her baby. if I ever have kids that would be #goals"
- 24b 706187716724072448 "Being trilingual will only help me better serve my students. #goals"

These users have described an action or course of action in the main body of the post and have then given their evaluation of the description as something to strive for by using the 'goals' tag. As previously mentioned this is not the only way an author may form a 'goals' hashtag. For example:

- 25a 706539000000000000 "Early bird Zootopia showing, in comfy seats. #sundaygoals (@ Century Cinema 16 - @cinemark in Mountain View, CA) <https://t.co/mesOLnKDIC>"
- 25b 706187947410849792 "RESULTS ᐃ° ^ᐃᐃᐃ° ᐃᐃᐃᐃ° ᐃᐃᐃᐃ° ᐃᐃᐃᐃ° ᐃᐃᐃᐃ° ᐃᐃᐃᐃ° ᐃᐃᐃᐃ° ᐃᐃᐃᐃ° ᐃᐃᐃᐃ° #gym #layover #flightattendant #crewlife #workout #fitness #bodygoals... <https://t.co/8PW5LK6YwH>"
- 25c 706541000000000000 Beyonce performed at Blue Ivy's school.....#momgoals
- 25d 716638000000000000 Girls just wanna have fun. 🍷\n#squadgoals #girls #igdaily <https://t.co/9rtqNFrA46>

The addition of the noun focuses the author's appraisal. It tells the reader exactly what type of 'goals' the action in the body of the post should inspire. This addition of focus cross-lists these tags as a graduation tag as well.

This is not the only meme hashtag that falls under the graduation category. As in the earlier 'force' section of graduation, swearing can be used to increase the force of an evaluation. This has carried over into meme hashtags with the tag 'as fuck'. This is used to add intensity to the evaluation, for example:

706176656357138436 "Interesting Epic Fail compilation Part 38
@rehanjawaid <https://t.co/KYDMOMIeU7>
[#interestingasfuck](https://t.co/CEkNOGWAKE) <https://t.co/CEkNOGWAKE>"

The author is using the 'as fuck' to magnify or emphasize their assessment that the content of the video linked in the post is interesting. This is not the only way to form this tag either. Many users shorten it to just and 'af' at the end of the tag. This particular form did not show up in my data collection in the hashtags, but was prevalent in the bodies of posts, for example:

26a 706176790583234560 "@ChrisRa7en damn! Majestic AF"
26b 706179776919130112 "Last night was lit af"
26c 706181152650846209 "It's cold AF outside :("

All of these posts use an abbreviated form in the same magnifying manner. It is possible for a user to make a hashtag using this type of construction as well, but such a form was not present in my data.

Considering the raw frequency counts of the meme hashtags in the corpus patterns emerge. In Table 3 below we can see that Engagement has the most total meme hashtag tokens, which is followed closely by the Attitude category. I do not think this is

surprising because meme hashtags are used to engage in a community and participate in shared humor or ideas. Attitude having a high token count is unsurprising because many memes are meant to judge others such as ‘smh’ or ‘goals’. In Table 4 we see that the Judgement sub-category has the highest token count, which supports this pattern.

Table 3: Distribution of Memes hashtags across Appraisal Categories

| Appraisal Categories | Total Tokens |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Attitude | 22 |
| Engagement | 26 |
| Graduation | 4 |

Table 4: Distribution of Meme hashtags across Attitude Sub-categories

| Attitude Sub-categories | Total Tokens |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Affect | 5 |
| Judgement | 10 |
| Appreciation | 7 |

Section V: Limitations

When deciding what data to collect, what methods to use and how to analyze that data there are always limitations to consider, not only in the data collection and analysis methods, but also in the theories being used to analyze the data.

Appraisal theory provided a good framework to categorize different types of evaluation, but it had a few limitations as well. Much of the analysis was subjective when trying to decide what category to put a particular hashtag into. This subjective nature of the theory leads to differences in interpretation from researcher to researcher. This was particularly difficult when considering overlap between categories. During my analysis I began to realize there were aspects of the 'appreciation' sub-category of attitude and the 'graduation' category that overlapped. Both could be used to assign the value of an entity in comparison to another. For example, 'the best hat ever' could be seen as assigning a positive value of appreciation to this hat or comparing this hat to all other hats on a scale of which it is the best. There is also lexical overlap between 'appreciation' and 'affect' categories, as previously mentioned, when users employ 'sad' which is an affective word, but mean 'unfortunate' which falls more under the appreciation category.

A further limitation I encountered is the alternative use for lexical items that seem to fall under the appraisal categories. Many of the lexical items that I initially looked for to identify evaluative hashtags are used in other ways as hashtags in the data set. For example:

27a 706176345982763008 "#Cosmetic #tattooing – What's the #best method? <https://t.co/cRLRux3XhW>"

- 27b 706611974776430593 "Got a #greatidea for how to teach #nephrology to #medstudents residents? Enter ASN's Ed Innovation Contest <https://t.co/kei9juUxoz>"
- 27c 706537000000000000 "\Better to have lost and loved than never to have loved at all.\" – Hemingway #quotes #love <https://t.co/KiK7DcP9Tg> <https://t.co/w6H7ZkVv0x>"
- 27d 706540000000000000 #Ultimate #Fighting CONOR McGREGOR 2015 #Topps #UFC Champions Autograph... <https://t.co/ewGCTR4wTi> #Forsale #onsale <https://t.co/WhOPYYCMkp>

All of the above examples have tags that would seem to fit the appraisal lexical items as illustrated above. Considering the context of the tweet and what the tag is doing semantically within that context, it is easy to see that none of these tags are commenting on the rest of the tweet. In example 27a ‘#best’ is not asserting that a certain method is the best, but is rather asking for someone else to make that assertion. Here this tag seems to be acting to emphasize what the user is trying to get across. Example 27b similarly emphasizes the request for a ‘great idea’, while example 27c uses ‘#love’ in a more traditional grouping fashion, to identify the theme of the post. Example 27d, on the other hand, has an evaluative lexical item being used as part of a proper noun in ‘#Ultimate #Fighting’ in reference to an Ultimate Fighting Club match. These alternative usages require the researcher to do qualitative analysis and make judgements about what counts as evaluation and what does not.

In my data collection process I used a premade data collector built in to Laurence Anthony’s FireAnt, which brought up a few limitations. Because the data collection function was built into the program I could not modify its setup. I was able to filter for English tweets, but I was unable to constrain geospatially so that I would only get English

tweets from the United States. This means I could potentially have tweets from other countries or in other languages that Twitter has tagged as English. Along these same lines I am unable to be sure that all of the tweets in my data were all written by native English speakers. Twitter simply analyzes the number of English words in a tweet and if the majority of the words in the post are English the entire post is labeled as an English tweet.

706536000000000000 En route vers mon premier live stream! #excited
#grossepreparation #nouvelleetapedevie ° ㄣㄣ° ㄣㄣ°
° ㄣㄣ° ㄣㄣ° <https://t.co/sxbQSnAN4j>

This is a predominantly French tweet, but has been allowed into my data set because many of the words are also present in English such as ‘en route’, ‘premier’, ‘live stream’, and ‘excited’. This, most likely, tipped the balance in the favor of English being auto-detected as the language of the tweet. Even if I was able to constrain geographically many non-native English speakers live in English speaking countries and could be tweeting from them. I also have two tweets that are discernably British or Non-American:

28a 706611463100583937 "Bluetooth 4.0 +EDR Hands Free Car Kit was
£19.99 now £9.99 @ 7dayshop
<https://t.co/OVYzuBUL4Q> #deal #BlackFriday"
28b 706613761541537792 "#MakeAmericaGreatBritainAgain Best prospect
for their future at this moment."

In example 28a the mention of the British pound marks the tweet as coming from somewhere in the United Kingdom, while the use of ‘their’ to mark exclusion in example 28b lets the readers know that the author is not an American. The potential regional variations between American and British English may affect the way evaluation is expressed. I am unable to evaluate the dialectal variation between American and British

English because my tweets are not geospatially tagged and there is a lack of British English data in my corpus. In a future study I think this would be interesting to look at.

When using online data the researcher is unable to ask the author what they meant when they wrote the post. The nature of this data set and random sampling is that the researcher has no real access to the individual users. There is no way for the researcher to send out an accompanying survey when collecting the data in this manner, so the personal intent of a user is somewhat lost. This also makes much of the analysis of the data subjective to the interpretation the researcher has of what the users have said. This interpretation may be accurate or completely different from what the original intentions of the message were.

Even though I ran an initial test to assess the proper amount of data to get a large enough sample for my analysis, I was unable to control how many tweets with hashtags were collected. I ran a further trial collection after my analysis that confirmed my corpus sample was representative at ten percent of tweets containing hashtags.

A common practice on many television shows is to give fans a hashtag to use to tweet about the show. In many competition or award shows fans are asked to vote on Twitter using particular hashtags as well. One such show was taking place while my data was being collected and inflated my data with these award category hashtags. These hashtags can even be structured to look similar to evaluative hashtags that are used as examples above. One single hashtag '#BestFanArmy' which was a category to vote on had 1,023 tokens in my data set. This tag looks as if it could be an appreciation or graduation

hashtag, but it is a forced tag. The user is choosing out of a finite group of entities and their choice may not reflect their true appraisal of the category given a more broad set of options.

Section VI: Conclusions

Twitter, being a social media platform, is at its core a vessel for self-authorship and expression of ideas and life events with one's friends, family and potentially the world. With this in mind it may be expected that many posts would contain evaluations.

In considering if users are employing hashtags as a form of evaluation the data shows that this is an emerging trend. Several different types of appraisal are represented in the hashtags collected in the corpus and represent different contexts.

The majority of evaluation in hashtags fall under the attitude category. This is not surprising if we consider the genre of Twitter itself. It is a platform for users to share their ideas, opinions, accomplishments, life events, etc. with friends and family. It is also a platform to interact with a larger community of users. This self-authoring, informal nature lends itself to more emotional topics and therefore emotionally-based evaluations, such as judgement, appreciation, and affective appraisal.

Table 5: Total number of tokens in Main Appraisal Categories.

| Evaluation Categories | Total Tokens |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Attitude | 150 |
| Engagement | 55 |
| Graduation | 30 |

In Table 5 we see that the majority of the tokens are in the emotionally-based Attitude category. We also see that Engagement is the next highest token count, which fits Twitter's genre in that it is about the interaction between users.

With functionalities such as retweeting and tagging other users in a post it is also not surprising that engagement is also a prominent feature in evaluative discourse on Twitter. When users engage in a debate of any kind, evaluation is a natural part of persuasion, leading to the causal and political examples of engagement discussed above. Interactions may also become emotional and lead to more attitudinal evaluations.

In this way it is clear that different types of evaluation are not mutually exclusive and users can evaluate a topic several ways in a single tweet. This co-occurrence draws relationships between the categories, and how evaluation is negotiated between users. This type of negotiation can be seen with meme hashtags that start off as a single user’s tag, but spread to a broader community that negotiates its meaning and function.

In Table 6 we see that meme hashtags behave differently than the rest of the Evaluation hashtags. Memes are more about engagement, while the majority of the Evaluation hashtags fall under the Attitude category. This is unsurprising as previously stated, if we consider the genre of Twitter and the function of memes.

Table 6: Comparison of distributions of Total evaluation hashtags versus Total evaluation Meme hashtags.

| Evaluation Categories | Total Tokens | Meme Evaluation Categories | Total Tokens |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Attitude | 150 | Attitude | 22 |
| Engagement | 55 | Engagement | 26 |
| Graduation | 30 | Graduation | 4 |

Section VII: Future Research

With more time I would love to do a deeper contextual analysis of the data using links included in the tweets or potentially the time stamps to further investigate the evaluations being used. Being able to look at the events surrounding the contents of the tweet would enable me to draw more firm conclusions about the evaluative nature of hashtags. I would also like to look at a larger data set to enable draw stronger conclusions about the trends noted in this initial study.

As I began to analyze my data I observed many interesting phenomenon in the data outside of evaluation. One of the first things I noticed in the hashtags was the high amount of imperative constructions used. There seems to be a trend of users employing hashtags to try to move people to action or tell others what they should be doing. I would like to look at these types of constructions and determine if the grouping function applies as a valid function or if these tags may be purely commentary engagement.

I have also noticed that there is a lot of syntactic variation with regards to hashtag placement. Sometimes the tags are in the middle of a sentence in the body of a post or sometimes an author will chose to put them at the end. I would like to investigate if different syntactic environments have semantic or discursive meanings. When the tags are placed at the end, there is often a cluster of many different tags. I would also like to study these clusters. I would like to know if there is a hierarchy within the cluster. Is the closest one to the body of the post most relevant? Do certain syntactic functions come before others? Do commentary hashtags come first or the grouping tags? Or is it all just arbitrary?

I have also noticed that many tags seem to mark a group identity. I would like to see if this is just part of the grouping function. Do users tag this way to make sure their posts are with other similar posts? Could they use the tag to find other like-minded people online? I would like to see if it is an aspect of indexing.

My experiences on social media made me think about the possible variety across the different platforms. Do users employ hashtags on Facebook or Instagram the same way that they do on Twitter? What are the differences? Along with this I know that it is possible to post from one platform to others. For example if I post a picture on Instagram there is a function to share it to Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr. The shared post would include the picture and the any text I include. I wonder if this cross platform sharing has any effect on how users are using hashtags on each platform. I would like to see if this is a new type of contact linguistics appearing online.

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Vita

Leah Schaede

- Educational Institutions Attended:
 - Miami University B.A in Linguistics and German
 - University of Kentucky
- Professional Positions Held:
 - Teaching Assistant at University of Kentucky