

'I just have to vent about how much I loved this episode'

Fandom affect on social media

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Motivation

Despite fan communities being driven by affect and investment, there is little linguistic research on the affective stance and emotion in fandoms. As part of a larger study on affect and stance in fan communities on social media, this poster presents preliminary results on the syntactic frame and discursive use of the affective expressions *I love* and *I like* in popular media fan spaces.

Data & Methods

Corpus of 1.2 million words of data representing the fan groups of two popular media fan interests, case studies of cartoons popular among also teens and adults.

- *One Piece* (1997-)
 - Japanese action-adventure fantasy comic and cartoon, highly popular also in the West
- *Steven Universe* (2013-2019)
 - Recent American fantasy adventure cartoon, praised for themes of inclusiveness

To compare affect on different platforms, data collected from micro-blogs **Twitter** and **Tumblr** and from discussion forum **Reddit**.

Goal: Study of 2 markers of personal affect:

I love f: 0.40 / 1000 words

I like f: 0.77 / 1000 words

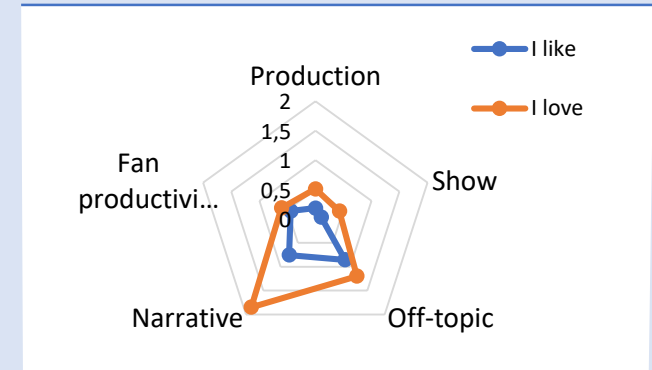
Finding 1: The *Steven Universe* fandom has a higher frequency of the affect markers, notably on Twitter. *One Piece* has more affect on Reddit.

ONE PIECE				STEVEN UNIVERSE		
Reddit	Tumblr	Twitter	/1000 words	Reddit	Tumblr	Twitter
0.56	0.27	0.26	<i>I like</i>	0.53	0.29	0.46
0.44	0.45	0.67	<i>I love</i>	0.80	0.87	1.38

Finding 2: The affect expressions take a Noun Phrase object in 82% of cases. While delimitations are needed, stringent frameworks risk missing affect in otherwise richly emotive and opinionated genre. E.g., definitions of *affective stance* are limited to VERB + COMPLEMENT CLAUSE (cf. e.g. *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, Biber et al. 1999). A framework encompassing more forms is therefore advised.

Object form	/1000 words	Example sentence from data
NP	9.61	<i>I liked <u>this scene so much</u></i>
Clause	1.10	<i>I love <u>how it's predictable</u></i>
Non-finite VP	1.07	<i>I also like <u>to edit vids sometimes</u></i>

Finding 3: The studied expressions most often discuss the narrative or the characters of the series, which gains especially *I love* affect.



Narrative & characters: *I fucking love her backstory*

Fan productivity (fanart/fiction): *I love how clean your style is*

Production/technical: *I really like this panel*

Show in general: *I love this show so much*

Differences in frequency may have a sociolinguistic explanation, but also the conversation topic is worth considering. Whereas *Steven Universe* triggers more fan productivity, *One Piece's* Reddit discusses narrative elements: this suggests platform and topic specific variation in interest foci.

Notes & What's next

- Salience of positive affect: *I hate* and *I dislike* had a frequency of 0.07 and 0.02 / 1000 words.
- Future study to look at other expressions of affect and opinion, to the extent this is possible through mostly automated detection.