

Is Peloton Your Love Language? The Vocabulary of the Peloton Culture

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Abstract

From the White House to The Bachelor Mansion, it seems like Peloton is everywhere. The bike's ubiquity has led Peloton to rank as the second-most influential brand in the United States and has created a fiercely loyal fanbase.

The goal of this project is to examine the culture of Peloton as seen through a textual analysis of the recurring vocabulary and themes in their cycling classes. This project studies a dataset of 36 Peloton classes using a combination of Voyant Tools and Python.

Through the combination of word frequency analysis, topic modeling, and distinctive vocabulary analysis, this project identifies a company ethos based in comradeship, grit, and wellness.

Research Questions

- Do Peloton cycling classes employ a specific vocabulary?
- What ideas or values does that vocabulary promote?
- Does the vocabulary reflect the well-documented attachments that users feel to their bikes?
- How does this vocabulary reflect concepts of self care, wellness, fitness, and ableism?

Dataset

Peloton cycling classes range in length from 5 minutes to 90 minutes, with most classes falling between 20 and 30 minutes. In my corpora, I have included **36 cycling classes**.

- Classes are from the team of **English-speaking cycling instructors** as of February 2021 (omitting new instructors, German classes, Tread classes, classes from the Pilates, yoga, meditation, and weight training programs).
- Classes are between 10 and 30 minutes long.
- All classes are from 2019 to 2021.

Methodology

1. **Transcribing:** I used Otter AI to transcribe recordings of cycling classes and then manually corrected the transcriptions.
2. **Word Frequency Analysis:** I graphed the most common words across my entire dataset. I preprocessed the document using the English language model `en_core_web_sm` from spaCy in an iPython notebook.
3. **Topic Modeling:** I used the `gensim` module to make the topic models and the `pyldavis` module to generate the visualization.
4. **Distinctive Vocabulary Analysis:** Using Voyant Tools, I identified instructors' distinctive word choices.

Results

From the combination of text analysis methods used in this study, we may draw a few preliminary conclusions:

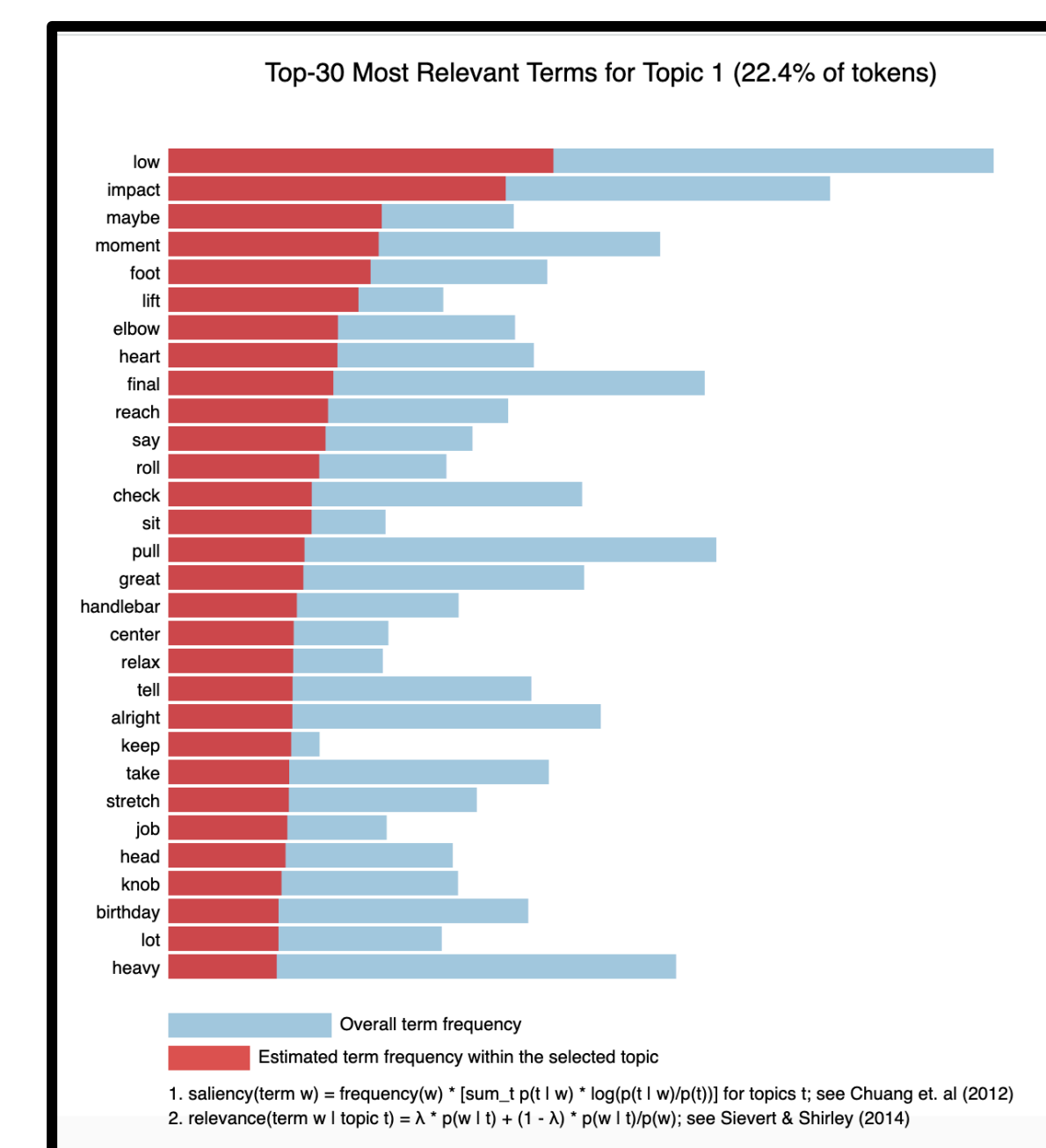
Peloton use a specific vocabulary centered on community, wellness, and supportiveness.

The results of my word frequency analysis suggest that, apart from instructional terminology (cadence, resistance, saddle), Peloton cycling classes **focus on the present** (today, now), **comradery** (family, brother, baby, Peloton), **positivity** (happy, love, honor, believe), and **wellness** (transform, change). There are no explicit mentions of diet or weight loss. In the place of pounds and inches, Peloton classes rely on subjective ideas of wellness based in feelings and a connection to one's body.



Word cloud of most frequent terms- Voyant Tools

The topic models generated in this project suggest thematic focuses in their cycling classes on biomechanics, perseverance and grit, tempo, hill climbs, and Peloton's Power Zone endurance program.



Topic model focused on biomechanics- generated using the `pyldavis` module

An analysis of the most distinctive terms revealed the instructors' unique and varied personalities and teaching styles. This variety may lie at the core of why members form strong attachments to the instructors and the platform. While one instructor regularly discusses sacrifice and discipline, another focuses on pop culture topics like Britney Spears. Essentially there is something for everyone.

Next Steps

On April 20, 2021, Peloton announced that they would be offering **Spanish-language classes**. I plan to expand this research to include a comparison between the vocabulary used in English-language classes and Spanish-language classes. I am interested not only in the classes' linguistic diversity, but also how the classes reflect cultural competence, or the ability to understand, communicate, and interact across cultures.

Questions for future research include

- How similar or different is the vocabulary of the English-language and Spanish-language programming?
- Is Peloton creating a monolithic culture?
- Do Peloton classes demonstrate a knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews?

In addition, I plan to add another component to this project focused on sentiment analysis. I am interested to explore the emotional arcs and narrative structures of the classes.

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Acknowledgements

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