PROSIDING
SENALA
Seminar Nasional
Linguistik Indonesia




Available online:
https://senala.upnjatim.ac.id
E-ISSN:
3123-335X
Prodi Linguistik Indonesia
Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran" Jawa Timur
Jl. Rungkut Madya, Gn. Anyar, Kec. Gn. Anyar, Surabaya, Jawa Timur 60294

Submitted: 07/10/2026 Accepted: 01/11/2026 Published: 05/11/2026

**Research Article**

# Influencers' Textual Strategies in Constructing Popular Psychology Term Meanings: A Faircloughian Critical Discourse Analysis

Andi Wardatul Wahidah Lufini*
*Universitas Hasanuddin, Makassar, Indonesia*
*Correspondence Author, E-mail: andiwardatul@unhas.ac.id

## *Abstract*

*Background: Popular psychology terms circulate widely in Indonesian-language social media, where influencers and content creators fill in their meanings. Purpose: This study examines how influencers and content creators construct the meaning of popular psychology terms that already exist in English vocabulary. Methods: Applying Fairclough's critical discourse analysis as presented by Eriyanto (2001), restricted to the textual dimension, it analyses 59 Indonesian-language social media transcripts containing ten terms: healing, burnout, anxiety, narcissistic/narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), toxic, gaslighting, overthinking, trigger, trauma, and inner child. Representation is analysed at the clause, clause-combination, and sentence-sequence levels, while relations and identity are analysed across whole transcripts. Results: Relational processes predominate in the core clause (55.9%), presenting the terms as states or types of person. Meaning is delimited less by formal definition (22.0%) than by contrast and relabelling of lay words (30.5%), advice (37.3%), and explanations of cause (37.3%), and is packaged in lists of signs (23.7%) that audiences can check against their own experience. Creators address the audience directly (66.1%), mostly through imperatives (45.8%) rather than explicit obligation (16.9%), and appear as explainers (42.4%), survivors (23.7%), or advisers (23.7%); audiences are positioned as symptom-bearers (33.9%) and fellow experiencers (33.9%). Conclusion: These patterns suggest that the terms work as tools of recognition and sorting rather than as defined concepts, that authority rests on experience and closeness rather than clinical standing, and that causes and remedies tend to be placed in the individual. Discursive and social practice are left for a later stage.*

*Keywords: critical discourse analysis, Fairclough, popular psychology, social media, textual dimension*

## INTRODUCTION

Psychological terms such as *burnout*, *toxic*, *healing*, and *gaslighting* now circulate widely in Indonesian-language social media content. The terms are available as vocabulary, but their meanings do not come with them: influencers and content creators fill them in by explaining what a term refers to, how to recognise it, and who deserves to be described by it. The utterance "*Anxiety itu bukan gila*" ('Anxiety is not madness'; Anxiety 4) delimits a term by

denying a lay assumption, and the title "*10 tanda orang yang toxic*" ('10 signs of a toxic person'; Toxic 1) packages it as a list of symptoms. The stakes are considerable. Indonesia had 221.56 million internet users in 2024 (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia [APJII], 2024), 5.5% of Indonesian adolescents had a mental disorder in the past 12 months (Erskine et al., 2024), and greater mental health knowledge is associated with lower public stigma (Hartini et al., 2018). Yet only about one in five German-language TikTok videos on mental disorders was accurate (Mroß et al., 2026), and about a third of advice videos under #mentalhealth were judged misleading (Turuba et al., 2025).

Psychology describes the broadening of such terms as concept creep, the expansion of concepts of harm and pathology (Haslam, 2016), and sociology shows how therapeutic vocabulary permeates talk about emotions and the self (Furedi, 2004; Illouz, 2008). Language does not merely reflect this shift but helps to produce it, because discourse is a form of social practice (Fairclough, 1989). Eriyanto (2001) presents Fairclough's model to Indonesian readers through three elements of the textual dimension: representation, relations, and identity. The model originates in news, where the vocabulary question is what words are chosen to describe something. Here news is replaced by content and the journalist by the creator, and because the words already exist the question shifts to how creators fix the meaning of a term by delimiting, juxtaposing, and opposing it with other words.

Research on the broadening of psychological terms comes mostly from psychology. Computational analysis shows that harm-related concepts have broadened since the 1970s (Haslam et al., 2021b), a review finds mixed consequences (Haslam et al., 2020), words co-occurring with trauma became less severe (Baes et al., 2023; Haslam & McGrath, 2020), and about a quarter of survey participants gave expanded definitions that counted milder behaviour as narcissistic personality disorder (NPD; Hengartner et al., 2026). Awareness efforts may lead some people to read mild distress as disorder (Foulkes & Andrews, 2023), and diagnostic labels made borderline cases seem more in need of treatment while reducing perceived control (Altmann et al., 2024). Studies of mental health content show that personal stories and advice dominate TikTok #mentalhealth and trauma videos (Turuba et al., 2025; Woolard et al., 2024), that engagement follows personal experience and emotional appeal rather than accuracy (Rainer et al., 2026), and that viewers of ADHD content identify with the symptoms shown and estimate higher prevalence (Karasavva et al., 2025; Sieferle et al., 2025). Professionals and wellness practitioners differ in what they offer, but both use calls to action (Christiansen et al., 2025, 2026), and psychologists on Instagram shift expertise from credentials to platform metrics (Sarı, 2025). Linguistic studies are fewer: a transitivity analysis of two Nigerian Instagram accounts found material processes most frequent (Anake et al., 2025), and critical discourse analyses show well-being framed as individual self-control (Docherty, 2021; Huang, 2026; Lecompte-Van Poucke, 2022).

These studies leave three gaps. Most examine a single disorder, platform, or account type, and the concept-creep literature relies on academic corpora, surveys, and experiments rather than on the texts of creators. The linguistic studies do not ask how the meaning of an existing term is fixed, sentence by sentence, nor do they draw on Indonesian code-mixed discourse. To the author's knowledge, no study has mapped representation, relations, and identity together for a set of popular psychology terms. This study addresses these gaps at the textual dimension, to provide a base for later analysis of discursive and social practice.

The study asks how influencers and content creators give meaning to popular psychology terms that already exist as vocabulary. Three questions guide it: (1) how are the terms represented at the levels of the clause, the combination of clauses, and the sequence of sentences; (2) how are the relations among creators, audiences, and third parties built; and

(3) how are their identities displayed? Three working assumptions, not statistical hypotheses, guide the reading. First, terms are built as recognisable states and types of person rather than as defined concepts (Haslam et al., 2020; Altmann et al., 2024). Second, relations are close and directive, and authority rests on experience more than on clinical standing (Turuba et al., 2025; Sarı, 2025). Third, causes and remedies are placed in the individual (Docherty, 2021; Huang, 2026).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Fairclough (1992, 1995) views every communicative event as text, discursive practice, and social practice at once. This study is limited to the textual dimension, which Eriyanto (2001) summarises as representation, relations, and identity, corresponding to the ideational, relational, and identity functions in Fairclough's work. Representation is distinguished at three levels. At clause level the tools are vocabulary and transitivity: the process types (material, mental, relational, behavioural, verbal, existential) with participants such as Actor, Goal, Senser, Phenomenon, Carrier, and Attribute, and with relational clauses divided into attributive and identifying modes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Eggins, 2004; Thompson, 2014). Two levels must be kept apart: the role of a nominal group in the clause (for example Attribute or Goal) and the function of a word inside that group (Thing, Classifier, or Epithet; Martin & Rose, 2007). Word functions in the clause follow Indonesian grammar (Alwi et al., 2003). At the level of clause combinations, attention turns to relations between clauses and to lexical meaning relations such as relabelling, synonymy, antonymy, and metaphor (Fairclough, 1992; Eriyanto, 2001), and the level of the sequence of sentences examines coherence and text structure. Relations and identity concern the relationship among the creator, the audience, and other participants and the positions displayed for them, read through pronouns, speech functions, modality, and speaker position (Fairclough, 1992, 1995).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Data and Preparation

The study is descriptive qualitative with simple frequency counts, following data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). The data are 59 transcripts or captions of short Indonesian-language videos by influencers and content creators on Tik Tok and Instagram from 15 August to 1 September 2026. The ten terms were chosen after an internet search for popular psychology terms. Each term was then searched as a keyword on the two platforms, and a video was included only if it had more than 500 comments, which was used as an indicator that the video had reached many viewers because view counts are visible only to the creator. Each contains one of ten terms: burnout (10 data), anxiety (9), and healing, narcissistic/NPD, toxic, gaslighting, overthinking, trigger, trauma, and inner child (5 each). The corpus totals 6,416 words (15 to 430 per transcript, median 85). Missing serial numbers (Healing 5, Anxiety 7) were not replaced. Accounts are anonymised: they are not named, and excerpts are cited by term and number, for example (Burnout 3); each datum maps to a source log (platform, link, retrieval date, and reason for inclusion) kept apart from the article. Excerpts are given in Indonesian with the author's English gloss. Transcripts were re-read for speech-recognition errors. The form *nct* in some anxiety data was suspected to be a mishearing of *anxiety* and was normalised in square brackets; it was checked against the audio and confirmed as *anxiety*, so the normalisation was retained. Spellings such as *overthingking* were marked [sic].

**Coding and Analysis**

Each transcript is the unit of observation. The clause containing the first occurrence of the term in its original form (the core clause) is analysed for word class, grammatical function, process type, and the role or function of the term, recorded once per datum, either as a clause-level role or, where the term sits inside a nominal group, as its group-level function. Sentences that mention, explain, deny, or exemplify the term are coded for cotext function (11 codes) and lexical meaning relation (6 codes). Text structure (8 codes), relations (address forms, speech functions, deontic modality, third parties), and identity (6 speaker and 6 audience positions) are coded across the whole transcript through countable indicators. Patterns were counted, compared across terms, and read against the wording of the excerpts, qualifying each reading by what a textual analysis cannot show. The full scheme and the log of ambiguous decisions are given in the supplementary appendices.

**Reliability and Limitations**

Address forms and questions were cross-checked automatically against the texts, and the criteria for word class and process were checked for consistency across rows. Coding was done by a single analyst and no inter-coder check or re-coding of the data was carried out, which is a limitation of the study. To make the decisions open to inspection, ambiguous cases and their rationale are listed in Table 1. Some decisions admit alternatives, for example *ke trigger*, coded as mental affective (alternative: material), and *terjebak* 'trapped', coded as relational (alternative: material). Pronouns, imperatives, and questions inside performed scripts (Gaslighting 1 to 5, Trauma 5) were not counted as address to the audience. Coding only the first occurrence of each term has a consequence: the clause-level findings (word class, process, role) describe how a term is first introduced and not every use, and a term may be built differently later in the same transcript, so the clause-level claims below are worded accordingly (Table 1 lists the decisions affected). The other elements were coded across whole transcripts and are less affected. The number of data per term is unbalanced, so the results are descriptive and not generalised.

**Table 1.** Ambiguous coding decisions and their consequences

| Datum | Item | Code assigned | Alternative | Rationale or status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Trigger 1, 2, 4 | *ke trigger* | mental affective | material | a conscious experiencer undergoes an involuntary emotional reaction |
| Data with *terjebak* | *terjebak* 'trapped' | relational | material | *terjebak* names a state in which the person finds themselves and not an action carried out on a Goal |
| Anxiety 2 and others | *nct* | normalised as [*anxiety*] | left as transcribed | confirmed as anxiety by the audio check; normalisation retained |
| Gaslighting 1–5, Trauma 5 | pronouns, imperatives, and questions in scripts | not address to the audience | address | performed speech, not an utterance to the audience |
| Eight titles | nominal fragments | no process | – | no clause, so no Actor is assumed to be deleted |

*Note.* The full matrix of the 59 data (core clause, codes, and decision for each) is available from the author on request.

## RESULTS

The 59 transcripts show terms built mostly as recognisable states and types of person, fixed by contrast with lay explanations and by lists of signs rather than by formal definition, within a relationship of guidance and self-checking. Table 2 gives the main indicators, and each element is discussed in turn.

**Table 2.** Main textual indicators (n = 59)

| Code | Indicator | n | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Cotext function** | | | |
| SAR | advice or handling | 22 | 37.3 |
| SEB | explanation of cause or mechanism | 22 | 37.3 |
| KON | contrast or denial | 18 | 30.5 |
| GEJ | list of symptoms, signs, or characteristics | 16 | 27.1 |
| DEF | definition | 13 | 22.0 |
| **Lexical meaning relation** | | | |
| ANT | antonymy or negation | 16 | 27.1 |
| MET | metaphor or game framing | 14 | 23.7 |
| REW | relabelling | 10 | 16.9 |
| **Text structure** | | | |
| DAF | list of signs or characteristics | 14 | 23.7 |
| EDU | educational (explanation then advice) | 14 | 23.7 |
| PND | short utterance | 11 | 18.6 |
| DEF | definition and elaboration | 4 | 6.8 |
| **Relations** | | | |
| | direct address to the audience | 39 | 66.1 |
| | imperative to the audience | 27 | 45.8 |
| | question to the audience | 22 | 37.3 |
| | call to interact or consume | 14 | 23.7 |
| | deontic modality (must, don't, should) | 10 | 16.9 |
| | third party depicted | 34 | 57.6 |
| **Identity** | | | |
| PNJ | speaker as explainer | 25 | 42.4 |
| PNY | speaker as survivor or owner of the experience | 14 | 23.7 |
| PNS | speaker as adviser | 14 | 23.7 |
| DIPERIKSA | audience as symptom-bearer being examined | 20 | 33.9 |
| SESAMA | audience as fellow experiencer | 20 | 33.9 |
| DIPAHAMI | audience as understood or normalised | 18 | 30.5 |
| DINASIHATI | audience as advised | 17 | 28.8 |

*Note.* Codes are abbreviations from the Indonesian-language coding scheme (supplementary Appendix A). Only the most frequent codes are shown. A script or dialogue organises the cotext of 6 data (SKR, cotext function) and, as a text structure, 7 transcripts (SKR, text structure); these are different units and are not added together.

### Representation at Clause Level: Terms as States and Types of Person

In the core clause the term is a noun in 36 data (61.0%), an adjective in 18 (30.5%), and a verb in 5 (8.5%). All terms keep their English form, and English modifier–head order appears in *toxic relationship* (Toxic 5), *inner child wound* (Inner child 4), and *Gaslighting final boss* (Gaslighting 4). Terms are not tied to one word class. *Burnout* is an adjective in eight of ten data because it sits in predicate position and can be intensified ("*mentalnya udah totally burnout*", 'her mental state is already totally burnt out'; Burnout 5), yet it is a noun in "*tanda burnout*" ('a sign of burnout'; Burnout 2). *Trigger* takes Indonesian affixes, as in *ke trigger* 'get

triggered' (Trigger 1, 2, 4) and *mentrigger* (Trigger 3). An adjective can be intensified and applied to a person (*orang toxic*; Toxic 3), so the term becomes a gradable quality attributed by degree rather than by criterion, and the verbal use shows a term circulating as everyday speech, although the data cannot show how widely.

Relational processes make up 33 of the 59 core clauses (55.9%): 26 attributive and 7 identifying. Material and mental processes account for eight data each (13.6%), eight data have no process (13.6%), and verbal and existential processes one each. The role of the term must be read at two levels (Table 3): a participant role in the clause (28 data), or, where the term sits inside a nominal group, a function within that group (18 data), for which the clause-level role of the whole group is not counted.

**Table 3.** Role of the term at clause level and at group level (n = 59)

| Level | Roles or functions (n) | Total |
|---|---|---|
| Clause-level participant role | Attribute 10, Carrier 5, Senser 3, Possessed 3, Phenomenon 2, Goal 2, Receiver 1, Actor 1, Existent 1 | 28 |
| Function inside a nominal group | Classifier 7, Epithet 6, Thing 3, Qualifier 2 | 18 |
| Term as verb, or no process | verb 5; no process 8 | 13 |

*Note.* Each datum is counted once. Group-level functions (Epithet, Classifier) are not clause-level roles, and Epithet counts are not counts of relational clauses.

The levels matter for interpretation. In "*menghadapi orang toxic*" ('dealing with toxic people'; Toxic 3), *menghadapi* is a material Process and *orang toxic* is its Goal, while inside the Goal *orang* is the Thing and *toxic* the Epithet. The Epithet classifies the person within the group but does not make the clause attributive, so Epithet counts are not counts of relational clauses. Attributes are clearer: "*aku pernah burnout*" ('I have burnt out'; Burnout 8) and "*kamu bukan males tapi lagi burnout*" ('you are not lazy but burnt out'; Burnout 6). In four data *anxiety* is a Carrier that receives denial, normalisation, or distinctiveness, as in "*Anxiety itu bukan gila*" (Anxiety 4) and "*Nct [anxiety] itu normal*" (Anxiety 8). Three possessive data make the term something owned ("*kamu punya inner child yang terluka*", 'you have a wounded inner child'; Inner child 2), and in material clauses it is something to be dealt with or sought ("*cari healing*", 'look for healing'; Healing 6), sometimes with a non-human Actor such as the nervous system that "*bisa memicu ... burnout*" ('can trigger ... burnout'; Burnout 10). For NPD the term is a Senser with negative affect ("*npd itu gak suka loh berhadapan dengan kamu*", 'NPDs really don't like dealing with you'; NPD 2).

Because relational clauses say what someone is or has rather than what someone does, their dominance indicates that terms are mostly offered as classifications. The creator's main textual work is sorting a speaker, audience, or third party into a category such as burnt out, toxic, or anxious, which gives audiences a name for experience that may have lacked one ("*Kenapa gak ada yang ngasih tau aku dari dulu ya?*", 'Why didn't anyone tell me earlier?'; Burnout 10). But a classification is a statement about a person and not about a situation: the work or relationship that produces the state is not the grammatical focus, so attention is directed to the person who bears the term. Possession and the material processes of dealing and seeking fit together: if experience is something one has, it can also be handled or bought. The eight no-process data are mostly titles, for example "*Gaslighting cewek kalo udah salah*" ('girls' gaslighting when they are in the wrong'; Gaslighting 5). A nominal fragment has no clause, so an Actor cannot be assumed to have been deleted; these data are read as packaging the term as a ready-made category, not as evidence that agency is suppressed. All of this concerns the core clause only, and several codings admit alternatives (Section 3.3).

**Representation at the Levels of Clause Combinations and Sequences of Sentences**

Advice or handling and explanation of cause are the most frequent cotext functions (22 data each, 37.3%), followed by contrast or denial (18 data, 30.5%), whereas definition appears in only 13 data (22.0%). Terms are therefore rarely explained by saying what they formally are, but by what they are not, why they arise, and what to do about them.

Meaning is delimited by contrast and relabelling. Antonymy or negation (27.1%) and relabelling (16.9%) together appear in 18 data (30.5%), and 24 of the 59 transcripts contain *bukan* 'not'. The clearest pattern relabels the same behaviour. In Burnout 2 the speaker who "*ngerasa males terus*" ('kept feeling lazy') concludes "*Ternyata emang bukan males ya*" ('it turns out it really wasn't laziness'), and in Burnout 5 *malas* is set against *burnout*. In Anxiety 4 *gila* 'mad' is set against *gangguan mental* 'mental disorder', in Toxic 4 jealousy is relabelled from proof of love to ego, and in Trigger 1 a religious explanation ("*mungkin kamu bukan kurang iman*", 'maybe you do not lack faith') is set against a physiological one ("*sistem sarafmu belum pulih*", 'your nervous system has not recovered'). Each substitution replaces a moral or folk judgement (laziness, madness, weak faith) with a psychological or physiological condition. This relieves the audience of blame and answers stigma, but the evidence offered for the new label is the old behaviour: in Burnout 2, feeling lazy becomes the very sign of burnout. Relabelling therefore works by reinterpretation and not by criteria, and a viewer who recognises the behaviour finds little that separates burnout from tiredness. That the same texts normalise ("*Nct itu normal*") and widen what the term covers is consistent with concept creep (Haslam, 2016), but at the level of the text this is only an indication.

Core clause and cotext support each other. In all four data where *anxiety* is a Carrier the cotext contains contrast, and in the two data where NPD is a Senser it contains characterisation of a type of person and explanation of cause ("*Mereka tuh gak suka karena mereka merasa akan direpotkan*", 'they just don't like it because they feel they will be burdened'; NPD 1). The cotext thus makes the core clause credible. The scheme did not record whether explanations cite sources, so explanation is shown only as a textual move and not as warranted.

Fourteen data (23.7%) contain metaphor or game framing. Four of the five gaslighting data (Table 4) frame manipulation as a contest or a level (*lomba*, *adu*, *final boss*), and other metaphors include "*perang dengan isi kepala*" ('war with the contents of one's head'; Trauma 1) and "*ngasih makan inner child lo*" ('feeding your inner child'; Inner child 4). Two data use religious framing: anxiety as "*bentuk ujian dari Allah*" ('a test from God'; Anxiety 5), whereas Trigger 1 sets a religious explanation aside. Creators thus negotiate between psychological vocabulary and explanations audiences may hold, although two data are too few to show a pattern. Four data (6.8%) offer consumption: destinations (Healing 2, 6), an e-book (Trigger 1), and hypnotherapy (Inner child 1). *Healing* collocates with "*glamping*" and "*wisata alam kebun teh*" ('tea-plantation tourism'; Healing 6) but is a conversation for people with anxiety in Healing 1, so the same word carries different meanings depending on what the creator offers.

At the level of the sequence of sentences, the most frequent structures are the list of signs (14 data, 23.7%) and the educational structure of explanation then advice (14 data, 23.7%), followed by short utterances (11) and scripts (7), while formal definition organises only four. Lists carry sequence markers ("*Yang pertama*", "*Level pertama*"; Burnout 1, Toxic 4), and seven of the 14 end with a call to interact ("*Follow for more*"; Toxic 1). The word *ternyata* 'it turns out' occurs in nine transcripts (for example Burnout 4 and Trigger 1) and marks knowledge as a discovery: the audience did not know, and the creator does. Knowledge is thus arranged as recognition and remedy and not as concept. A list gives the audience a

procedure of self-recognition (read an item, match it to one's life, count), and, as Section 4.4 shows, 12 of the 14 list-structured data position the audience as the party examined.

**Relations: Closeness and Direction**

Creator and audience are related mainly through direct address (39 data, 66.1%), with *kamu* the dominant form (31 data) and inclusive *kita* a form of solidarity (14); 20 data do not address the audience, including the five gaslighting scripts. Imperatives occur in 27 data (45.8%) and questions in 22 (37.3%), such as "*kira-kira kamu burnout gak nih?*" ('so, do you think you are burnt out?'; Burnout 1), which hands the diagnosis to the viewer. Calls to interact or consume appear in 14 data (23.7%), for instance "*Save video ini*" (Anxiety 2) and "*Follow akun ini agar kamu kuat menghadapi si NPD Durjana*" (NPD 3), and the audience is segmented by exclusion ("*kalo lo merasa bukan cewe, just keep scrolling*"; Toxic 4). Explicit deontic modality is rarer (10 data, 16.9%), as in "*kamu harus tidur yang cukup*" (Burnout 6). Imperatives are about two and a half times as frequent as deontic modality, although they include calls to comment and save. A bare imperative presents the instruction as the natural next step between familiars, whereas *harus* states an obligation and invites dispute, so the relation is directive but presented as close; "*Sayang, aku kasi tau sekali lagi ya*" ('Darling, let me tell you once more'; Anxiety 2) shows authority expressed as care.

Third parties appear in 34 data (57.6%). In all five NPD and all five toxic data they are described by negative traits and motives ("*Liciknya itu kaya belut*", 'their cunning is like an eel's'; NPD 5), whereas in the anxiety data they are more often aware and struggling people ("*bagaimana dia berjuang setiap hari*", 'how they struggle every day'; Anxiety 10). Trauma 2 is an exception, attributing quick temper and suspicion to people with trauma. Because absent people cannot reply, the traits attributed to them are not tested in the text, and Trauma 2 shows that sympathy is not guaranteed by the term.

**Identity: Authority from Experience, Audience as Patient and Peer**

Creators most often appear as explainers (25 data, 42.4%), followed by survivors and advisers (14 data each, 23.7%). The survivor position is prominent for burnout (six of ten data), with knowledge claims that start from experience ("*aku pernah burnout dan kehilangan diriku sendiri*", 'I have burnt out and lost myself'; Burnout 8). Creators also stress that they are not clinicians ("*Gua gak mau mendiagnosa di sini*", 'I don't want to diagnose here'; NPD 4; "according to my personal experiences"; Inner child 4). Audiences are most often symptom-bearers (20 data) or fellow experiencers (20), followed by understood (18) and advised (17). The symptom-bearer position is tied to lists, since 12 of the 14 list-structured data position the audience as the party examined, and the listed symptoms are often everyday experiences ("*kamu jadi sering banget nunda-nunda pekerjaan*", 'you often keep putting off work'; Burnout 1; "*Kamu menyenangkan orang lain secara berlebihan*", 'you please others excessively'; Inner child 2). Audiences are sometimes blamed ("*Selama ini kamu menipu dirimu sendiri*", 'all this time you have been deceiving yourself'; Anxiety 2).

Creators thus ground authority in lived experience or the ability to explain, not in clinical standing. The disclaimers protect the creator, yet they sit alongside lists, questions, and imperatives that steer the audience's self-assessment, so diagnostic work is transferred to the audience while the creator remains the one who explains. The audience is both examined and accompanied, so the texts pathologise and comfort at once. Because the listed symptoms are everyday experiences, most viewers could find themselves in them, which is consistent with concern about concept creep, although proving it would require comparison with clinical definitions.

### Patterns by Term

Table 4 summarises the patterns for each term, and they divide by what the term names. Terms that name a type of person (NPD, toxic) come with characterisation, cause, or lists and a negative third party: NPD has characterisation and cause in four data each and a third party in all five, and toxic has lists in four and direct address in all five. Terms that name a condition of the self (burnout, anxiety, overthinking, trauma, inner child) come with attributive or possessive clauses, contrast or cause, and an audience to be understood or examined: burnout with survivor speakers and fellow-experiencer audiences, anxiety with contrast and negation, and inner child with explainers in all five data and an examined audience in four. *Trigger* names an event and is written with a verb, a mechanism, and an educational structure. Gaslighting is performed in scripts with game metaphors, and healing is partly offered for consumption. The textual treatment of a term thus follows what it names and what the creator wants to do with it: to warn, comfort, explain, entertain, or sell. With five to ten data per term, these readings are indications and not generalisations.

**Table 4.** Summary of textual patterns by term

| Term | n | Core clause | Cotext and structure | Relations and identity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Healing | 5 | noun 4, verb 1; mental 2, material 2, identifying 1 | promotion 2; synonym of 'holiday' | kamu 3; promoter 2; audience as consumer 2 |
| Burnout | 10 | adjective 8; attributive 8 | symptoms 5, narrative 5, contrast 4; relabelling of 'lazy' | survivor 6; audience as fellow experiencer 6 |
| Anxiety | 9 | noun 8; attributive 6, identifying 3 | contrast 6, advice 5, definition 4; negation | third party 6; audience understood 5 |
| NPD/narcissistic | 5 | noun 4; mental affective 2 | characterisation 4, cause 4 | third party 5; audience understood 4 |
| Toxic | 5 | adjective 5; attributive 3, material 1 | list 4; symptoms 3, type 3, advice 3 | address 5; adviser 3 |
| Gaslighting | 5 | noun 5; no process 5 | script 5; game metaphor 4 | performer 5; audience as fellow experiencer 5; no address |
| Overthinking | 5 | noun 3, adjective 2; attributive 3 | advice 3, metaphor 3; religious 1 | adviser 2, survivor 2 |
| Trigger | 5 | verb 4; mental affective 3 | cause 3; educational 3 | explainer 3; promoter 1 |
| Trauma | 5 | noun 4; attributive 3, no process 2 | symptoms 2, type 2; list 2 | audience understood, examined, fellow experiencer 2 each |
| Inner child | 5 | noun 5; possessive 2 | cause 4, example 3; list 2 | explainer 5; audience examined 4 |

*Note.* n = number of data (transcripts) per term.

## DISCUSSION

### Interpretation of the Findings

The three elements work together. At clause level a term is a state or type of person; at the level of clause combinations that category is made recognisable by opposing it to lay words and explaining its cause; and at the level of the sequence of sentences it is packaged in lists that the audience checks against their own lives. Direct address, questions, and imperatives make the audience do the checking, and the creator as explainer or survivor and the audience as symptom-bearer or fellow experiencer make it feel safe. The audience is invited to recognise themselves rather than to learn a concept. The research questions are answered accordingly: terms are built as states, types, and owned entities delimited by contrast, cause,

and advice; relations are close and directive, with third parties sorting people into those to avoid and those to understand; and authority rests on experience and explanation while audiences are examined and accompanied at once.

The assumptions are largely supported, with qualifications. The first holds (relational processes 55.9%, definition 22.0%). The second holds, but directive force is carried by bare imperatives (45.8%) rather than explicit obligation (16.9%), which was not anticipated. The third holds for the causes and remedies named in the examples, but the texts also work against blame, since relabelling *malas* as burnout and normalising anxiety take blame from the person, so the cause is located in the body or in the term and the remedy appears as work on oneself. The assumptions describe burnout, anxiety, and inner child better than gaslighting, which is performed, or healing, which is partly sold (Section 4.5). Analytically, the vocabulary question in Eriyanto's (2001) account shifts when words already exist: the object becomes how meaning is fixed through contrast, cause, lists, and offered positions. The study also points to linguistic mechanisms for concept creep (gradable adjectives, possession, relabelling by reinterpretation, and checklist structures) that could be tested against corpora and clinical definitions, and it cautions against pooling terms such as *toxic*, *burnout*, and *healing* as one category.

**Comparison with Previous Studies**

Anake et al. (2025) found material processes most frequent in two Nigerian Instagram accounts, whereas relational processes predominate here. The difference may reflect the unit (one core clause per transcript) and the genre, since the data were chosen because they contain a named term that is being classified; relational classification may thus characterise term-centred content, which needs testing with the same unit. Personal stories dominate TikTok #mentalhealth and trauma videos (Turuba et al., 2025; Woolard et al., 2024), but narratives are a minority of cotext functions here (23.7%), perhaps because the corpus was built around terms, so that experience mainly supports explanation and advice. The calls to interact or consume and the four promotional data are in line with the marketing calls to action of professionals and wellness practitioners (Christiansen et al., 2025, 2026), although creator type was not coded, and engagement driven by personal experience and emotional appeal (Rainer et al., 2026) may explain why lists, titles, and *ternyata* hooks recur, although engagement was not coded either. Authority grounded in experience, with disclaimers of diagnosis, resembles authenticity work (Audrezet et al., 2020) and the shift from credentials to platform metrics (Sarı, 2025). Placing causes and remedies in the individual is consistent with analyses of well-being as self-control (Docherty, 2021; Huang, 2026; Lecompte-Van Poucke, 2022; Sik et al., 2025). Symptom lists of everyday experiences, the symptom-bearer position, and the negative depiction of NPD third parties parallel findings that ADHD viewers identify with the symptoms shown (Karasavva et al., 2025; Sieferle et al., 2025), that narcissism videos were among the least accurate (Mroß et al., 2026), and that lay definitions of NPD are expanded (Hengartner et al., 2026), although accuracy and reception were not examined. In the Indonesian setting, relabelling and normalising also work against documented stigma (Hartini et al., 2018), and young Indonesians use TikTok to voice private struggles (Widiastuti et al., 2024).

**Implications**

For creators, including health professionals who work as creators, the findings suggest stating thresholds that separate everyday distress from disorder, saying where an explanation comes from, and avoiding descriptions of absent third parties as types to avoid. For educators

and platforms, media-literacy prompts could ask what a checklist leaves out, and awareness campaigns that use the list-and-relabel format should state when distress calls for care and when it does not (Foulkes & Andrews, 2023). These implications derive from textual patterns and need testing with audiences.

## CONCLUSION

At the textual dimension, influencers and content creators construct the meaning of existing popular psychology terms as tools of recognition. Representation places the term mainly as a state or type of person (relational processes 55.9%), delimits it by contrast and relabelling of lay words (30.5%) rather than by definition (22.0%), and packages it in lists of signs or characteristics (23.7%). Relations are built through direct address (66.1%) and imperatives (45.8%), so that direction is given in a register of closeness. Identity displays creators as explainers, survivors, and advisers who claim authority from experience, and audiences as symptom-bearers and fellow experiencers who are examined and accompanied at once. The pattern varies with what a term names: NPD and toxic come with a villain, burnout and anxiety with a sufferer to be understood, trigger with a mechanism, gaslighting as a game-framed script, and healing with tourism and consumption.

The study is limited by the analysis of one core clause per datum, the unbalanced number of data per term, a single analyst, and analytical decisions that admit alternative readings. The interpretations concern the wording of the texts and not their effects. Later studies should analyse discursive practice (production, platform specificities, and consumption) and social practice (psychologisation, the commercialisation of healing, and stigma), add a second coder, code one row per occurrence of a term, and test the practical implications with audiences and health educators.

## REFERENCES

Altmann, B., Fleischer, K., Tse, J., & Haslam, N. (2024). Effects of diagnostic labels on perceptions of marginal cases of mental ill-health. *PLOS Mental Health, 1*(3), Article e0000096. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmen.0000096

Alwi, H., Dardjowidjojo, S., Lapoliwa, H., & Moeliono, A. M. (2003). *Tata bahasa baku bahasa Indonesia* [Standard grammar of the Indonesian language] (3rd ed.). Balai Pustaka.

Anake, S. A., Chimuanya, L., Evaristus, A., Kayode, O. A., & Ogbulogo, C. U. (2025). A linguistic investigation of mental health discourse on Instagram: A transitivity approach. *Forum for Linguistic Studies, 7*(6), 737–750. https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i6.9033

Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia. (2024, February 7). *APJII: Jumlah pengguna internet Indonesia tembus 221 juta orang* [APJII: The number of Indonesian internet users reaches 221 million]. https://apjii.or.id/berita/d/apjii-jumlah-pengguna-internet-indonesia-tembus-221-juta-orang

Audrezet, A., de Kerviler, G., & Moulard, J. G. (2020). Authenticity under threat: When social media influencers need to go beyond self-presentation. *Journal of Business Research, 117*, 557–569. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.008

Baes, N., Vylomova, E., Zyphur, M., & Haslam, N. (2023). The semantic inflation of "trauma" in psychology. *Psychology of Language and Communication, 27*(1), 23–45. https://doi.org/10.58734/plc-2023-0002

Christiansen, A., Craythorne, S.-L., Crawford, P., Larkin, M., Gohil, A., Strutt, S., & Page, R. (2025). Multimodal analysis of stories told by mental health influencers on TikTok. *Health Expectations, 28*(3), Article e70226. https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.70226

Christiansen, A., Craythorne, S.-L., Crawford, P., Larkin, M., & Page, R. (2026). Mental health advice on TikTok. *Journal of Pragmatics, 257*, 26–38. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2026.03.002

Docherty, N. (2021). Digital self-control and the neoliberalization of social media well-being. *International Journal of Communication, 15*, 3827–3846. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/17721

Eggins, S. (2004). *An introduction to systemic functional linguistics* (2nd ed.). Continuum.

Eriyanto. (2001). *Analisis wacana: Pengantar analisis teks media* [Discourse analysis: An introduction to media text analysis]. LKiS.

Erskine, H. E., Maravilla, J. C., Wado, Y. D., Wahdi, A. E., Vu, L. M., Fine, S. L., Li, M., Ramaiya, A., Wekesah, F. M., Odunga, S. A., Njeri, A., Setyawan, A., Astrini, Y. P., Rachmawati, R., Dao, H. T. K., Wallis, K., McGrath, C., Shadid, J., Enright, M. E., . . . Scott, J. G. (2024). Prevalence of adolescent mental disorders in Kenya, Indonesia, and Viet Nam measured by the National Adolescent Mental Health Surveys (NAMHS): A multi-national cross-sectional study. *The Lancet, 403*(10437), 1671–1680. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(23)02641-7

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media discourse*. Edward Arnold.

Foulkes, L., & Andrews, J. L. (2023). Are mental health awareness efforts contributing to the rise in reported mental health problems? A call to test the prevalence inflation hypothesis. *New Ideas in Psychology, 69*, Article 101010. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2023.101010

Furedi, F. (2004). *Therapy culture: Cultivating vulnerability in an uncertain age*. Routledge.

Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar* (4th ed.). Routledge.

Hartini, N., Fardana, N. A., Ariana, A. D., & Wardana, N. D. (2018). Stigma toward people with mental health problems in Indonesia. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management, 11*, 535–541. https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S175251

Haslam, N. (2016). Concept creep: Psychology's expanding concepts of harm and pathology. *Psychological Inquiry, 27*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2016.1082418

Haslam, N., Dakin, B. C., Fabiano, F., McGrath, M. J., Rhee, J., Vylomova, E., Weaving, M., & Wheeler, M. A. (2020). Harm inflation: Making sense of concept creep. *European Review of Social Psychology, 31*(1), 254–286. https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2020.1796080

Haslam, N., & McGrath, M. J. (2020). The creeping concept of trauma. *Social Research: An International Quarterly, 87*(3), 509–531. https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2020.0052

Haslam, N., Tse, J. S. Y., & De Deyne, S. (2021a). Concept creep and psychiatrization. *Frontiers in Sociology, 6*, Article 806147. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2021.806147

Haslam, N., Vylomova, E., Zyphur, M., & Kashima, Y. (2021b). The cultural dynamics of concept creep. *American Psychologist, 76*(6), 1013–1026. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000847

Hengartner, M. P., Eymir, A., & Haslam, N. (2026). Expanded definitions of psychopathology: Exploring concept creep in narcissistic personality disorder. *Acta Psychologica, 264*, Article 106604. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2026.106604

Huang, F. C. (2026). Quoting and well-being: Researching social media posts of two mental health campaigns in Hong Kong. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 47*(1), 74–99. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2024.2344632

Illouz, E. (2008). *Saving the modern soul: Therapy, emotions, and the culture of self-help*. University of California Press.

Karasavva, V., Miller, C., Groves, N., Montiel, A., Canu, W., & Mikami, A. (2025). A double-edged hashtag: Evaluation of #ADHD-related TikTok content and its associations with perceptions of ADHD. *PLOS ONE, 20*(3), Article e0319335. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0319335

Lecompte-Van Poucke, M. (2022). 'You got this!': A critical discourse analysis of toxic positivity as a discursive construct on Facebook. *Applied Corpus Linguistics, 2*(1), Article 100015. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acorp.2022.100015

Martin, J. R., & Rose, D. (2007). *Working with discourse: Meaning beyond the clause* (2nd ed.). Continuum.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Mroß, A. L., Takahashi, H., Koelkebeck, K., & Langenbach, B. P. (2026). Insufficient quality of mental health information on German-speaking TikTok: A content analysis. *Clinical Psychology in Europe, 8*(1), Article e17279. https://doi.org/10.32872/cpe.17279

Rainer, E., van der Wal, A., & Beyens, I. (2026). Portrayals of depression on TikTok: Content analysis of diagnostic accuracy, creator type, and stylistic features. *JMIR Infodemiology, 6*(1), Article e85323. https://doi.org/10.2196/85323

Sarı, B. (2025). The rise of influencer practices among psychologists: From therapy rooms to Instagram reels. *Social Media + Society, 11*(2), Article 20563051251353741. https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051251353741

Sieferle, K., Guidi, T., Dorr, F., & Bitzer, E. M. (2025). Quality and perception of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder content on TikTok: Cross-sectional study. *JMIR Infodemiology, 5*(1), Article e75973. https://doi.org/10.2196/75973

Sik, D., Rakovics, M., & Németh, R. (2025). The manifest and latent structures of medicalization and psychologization in lay depression discourses: A word embedding analysis of online forums. *Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science, 10*(2), 411–423. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41347-024-00440-8

Thompson, G. (2014). *Introducing functional grammar* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Turuba, R., Zenone, M., Srivastava, R., Stea, J., Quintana, Y., Ow, N., Marchand, K., Kwan, A., Ong, A.-J., Ding, X., Warren, C., Marcon, A. R., Henderson, J., Mathias, S., & Barbic, S. (2025). Do you have depression? A summative content analysis of mental health-related content on TikTok. *Digital Health, 11*, Article 20552076241297062. https://doi.org/10.1177/20552076241297062

Widiastuti, A., Bajari, A., & Mirawati, I. (2024). Self-deprecating cyberculture on TikTok: Experiences of young Indonesians. *International Journal of Communication, 18*, 23. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/20949

Woolard, A., Paciente, R., Munro, E., Wickens, N., Wells, G., Ta, D., Mandzufas, J., & Lombardi, K. (2024). #TraumaTok: TikTok videos relating to trauma: Content analysis. *JMIR Formative Research, 8*(1), Article e49761. https://doi.org/10.2196/49761