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Discourse Analysis: The Use of Sentence and Phrase Templates in Food Endorsements by Instagram Influencers

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the hidden meaning of the sentences that are used frequently by the Instagram influencer of @jogjataste to promote the products. It was a qualitative research study with the focus on understanding and an emphasis on meaning. Analysis using discourse analysis approach was used to define the hidden meaning from the data which were 5 sentence templates used by the influencer. It is found that the influencer tends to use simple and elliptical sentences. This may due to the limited time in the Instagram story feature which only has 15 seconds. Those sentence forms are supported by the use of exclamatory sentences which are the most frequently used form to promote the foods as this kind of form shows how the speaker feels. This is to make the endorsement more interesting as the dictions such as *sumpah* and *jujur* can really affect followers' interests on the foods psychologically.

Keywords: Simple sentence, Influencer, Exclamatory, Endorsement

1. Introduction

Technology has advanced in recent years particularly with information technology has been seen as a key point in various things (Rouncefield et al., 2016). As a product of the information technology advancement, social media has become an integral part for most people in the world such as showing affection, sharing problems, and demonstrating sociability (Phua et al., 2017). There are many social media platforms used by the society such as Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram. Among those, Instagram is the most used social media platform in daily time (Alhabash & Ma, 2017).

Instagram was released on October 10th 2010. At its core, it is an application of photo-sharing (Sloan et al., 2017) and a relatively new kind of communication in which the users can easily share their updates (Hu et al., 2014). As this application is the fastest growing social network site globally (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016), many companies use Instagram as a channel of their brand managements, social commerce, and consumer services (Jin & Ryu, 2020). Marketing is not only just offering a product to customer; rather than has it become an art of delivering the experience (Ranga & Sharma, 2014). As a result, the course of the growing Instagram popularity creates a new marketing strategy called influencer marketing in which an influencer endorses a product (Ewers, 2017). The person or itself is an Instagram celebrity or is also called an influencer who has built up a lot of followers on his or her Instagram Account

(Johan Grafström, 2018). With that phenomenon, it is unarguable that a lot of companies start to pay influencers to advertise their products.

In endorsing the products, influencers have their very own phrases or sentences in advertising the products which are used by some famous influencers in Indonesia. This business communication draws an attention of how linguistically influencers use sentence templates in Instagram to engage their followers' interests. It seems that those templates have hidden meanings to convince the followers. An example is an Instagram account namely @jogjataste. The posts in there are promoting foods in Jogjakarta. The influencer has some "special sentences" in promoting the foods. At this rate, the writer is very curious in analyzing the hidden meaning of the templates used by the Instagram influencer @jogjataste to promote the products.

2. Literature Review

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing has been experiencing a mass popularity in the last years since (Johansen et al., 2017). Influencer marketing is an approach of marketing at the leading edge of purchasing decision making (Brown & Hayes, 2008). A decade after, now influencer marketing is more recognized as how brands are utilizing social media influencers to advertise their products in social media like Instagram (Woods, 2016). Furthermore, the influencers have to be able to convince mass customers. In that case, they often use some ways of speaking, or to engage their followers' interests.

Group of Words

Sentence is basically a group of words that are put together to make meaning. A sentence should follow grammatical basic rules of syntax which at least, a sentence contains of a subject and a predicate (McArthur et al., 2018). There are four types of sentences. The first one is a simple sentence which has only one clause and one independent variable. The second one is a compound sentence which has two or more clauses joined together with conjunctions or punctuations. The third one is a complex sentence which has one clause with a relative clause. The last one is a complex-compound sentence which has many clauses and at least one relative clause. Sentences have also different purposes which are to declare in a declarative sentence, to ask or question in an interrogative sentence, to say something out of the ordinary in an exclamatory sentence, and to command in an imperative sentence (JENSEN, 2019; Murphy, 2012; Within & Within, 2004).

Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis (DA) is a field of study aiming at analyzing language beyond the sentence(Gee & Handford, 2013). Its scopes are including spoken and written language in its social and psychological context in order to understand how the discourse can affect the meaning of the sentence. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2012).

3. Methods

This research study used a qualitative method which brings a form of data collection and analysis with the focus on understanding and an emphasis on meaning (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2020). The data were 5 sentences gained from an Instagram influencer, @jogjataste, which promotes foods in Yogyakarta. Analysis using discourse analysis approach was used to define the hidden meaning from each sentence qualitatively. There are 2 phases in analyzing the data.

4.   Results and Discussion

First of all, @jogjataste is an Instagram account based in Yogyakarta which promotes foods. It has 388.046 followers and 7.236 posts. The average likes are 4945 with 153 average comments. The engagement rate of this account is 2% which is in average category. In promoting, the influencer has some sentences that are generally used. Here, the writer tried to distinguish the sentences and put those according to the types.

Phase 1: Grouping Sentences to Its Types

In this phase, the writer collected the sentences to be explored grammatically. Here, the meanings are not analyzed yet, rather to get the information on the sentences' types. Below is the result of the grouping:

Table 1. Grouping Sentences Based on the Types

No.	Sentence	Sentence Type			
		Simple	Compound	Complex	Compound - Complex
1.	*Buat yang kemarin pada nanya-nanya di DM aku,*			✓	
2.	*Ini tuh favorit aku banget!*	✓			
3.	*Jujur aku tuh suka banget sama produk ini.*	✓			
4.	*Sumpah ini enak banget!*	✓			
5.	*Gak ngerti lagi pokoknya kalian harus coba!*		✓		

It can be seen that based on the table above, there is no compound-complex sentence type. In contrast, 3 out of 5 sentences are categorized as simple, and 1 for compound and complex sentence types respectively.

The first sentence, *Buat yang kemarin pada nanya-nanya di DM aku*, is a complex sentence. It has no independent clause. This one is generally used by adding the object (food) in the form of an independent clause. For example:

Buat yang kemarin nanya-nanya di DM aku,   *aku beli ini di daerah Kaliurang*
        Dependant Clause   Independent Clause

By adding an independent clause, the type will be changed to compound sentence. This first template is occasionally used in the Instagram story, not in the post.

The second sentence is considered as a simple sentence as it has an independent sentence. The sentence *Ini tuh favorit aku banget!* typically has a pronoun "*ini*" which refers to the product that the speaker does an action to. It is also used in the third sentence *Jujur aku tuh suka banget sama produk ini* and in the fourth sentence *Sumpah ini enak banget!* which is the pronoun "*ini*" used to refer the product.

Meanwhile for the fifth sentence, *Gak ngerti lagi pokoknya kalian harus coba!*, is a compound elliptical sentence. It can be seen from the two clauses, *Gak ngerti lagi* and *Kalian*

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harus coba which the punctuation or conjunction is ellipsis form. The first clause, *Gak ngerti lagi*, is also a reduced-subject clause as the subject is not spoken.

For some reasons, the influencer tends to use simple and elliptical sentences. This may due to the limited time in Instagram. For example, to share a story, the limit time is only 15 seconds which makes the influencers have to deal with it. Therefore, from the point of sentence structure, an influencer should be able to produce short, simple, or elliptical sentences to promote the product efficiently. It is not surprisingly that some famous influencers do have and use sentence templates in promoting the foods.

Phase 2: Defining Meaning from Each Sentence

After defining the sentences from the sentence structure point of view, in phase 2, the analysis would be more in seeking the hidden meaning from the sentences produced by the influencer. This phase is to find whether the sentences produced are pragmatically or semantically meanings. First, the table below shows the distinguishment of the sentences based on its purposes.

Table 2. Sentences Distinguishment to the Purposes

No.	Sentence	Purposes			
		Declarative	Interrogative	Exclamatory	Imperative
1.	*Buat yang kemarin pada nanya-nanya di DM aku,*	✓			
2.	*Ini tuh favorit aku banget!*			✓	
3.	*Jujur aku tuh suka banget sama produk ini.*			✓	
4.	*Sumpah ini enak banget!*			✓	
5.	*Gak ngerti lagi pokoknya kalian harus coba!*				✓

Based on the table above, it can be seen that there is no interrogative sentence that is produced by the influencer of @jogjataste. Rather, she frequently uses exclamatory sentences to promote the products or foods. She occasionally uses declarative and imperative sentences as well. To know more, the writer analyzes each sentence respectively.

The first sentence, *Buat yang kemarin pada nanya-nanya di DM aku,* is a declarative sentence which is informing the followers who send a direct message. From this, it is known that the background for this sentence is the followers' direct messages. However, if it is closely and carefully analyzed, the influencer might be lied as well. It is the purpose of the promotion as psychologically, the followers would think that the food is very interesting because many followers ask about it. This could cause curiosity among the followers even though no followers ask about it. Hence, the aim is to engage followers' interests towards the foods.

For the second, third, and fourth sentences, these are considered in exclamatory sentences. By stressing the intonation, the influencer could start to engage followers' attention. In the *ini tuh favorit aku banget!*, the followers can, in a literal meaning, follow what the influencer likes. The followers may put the food in their favorite lists; or at least put in a-must-try list. As it also happens in the third sentence, the word *jujur* stresses the followers to believe what the

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influencer says. The word *sumpah* in the fourth sentence also does the same thing. These kinds of words could psychologically affect the followers' point of view towards the foods.

The last sentence, *gak ngerti lagi pokoknya kalian harus coba,* is an imperative sentence as the influencer asks the followers to try the food. This kind of sentence, structurally meaning, build a curiosity towards the taste of the food. The elliptical sentence *gak ngerti lagi pokoknya* is to show how the influencer cannot describe the taste of the food in words. This might sound hyperbolic but, it does effectively affect followers' interests to try the food.

It is true that the use of those sentences is basically to engage followers' interest and curiosity towards the foods. Even though, maybe, the influencer is not really into the food, she has to make an endorsement to promote the foods. Some of them are not in semantic meaning but likely to be more pragmatic. This is to make the endorsement more interesting as the dictions such as *sumpah* and *jujur* can really affect followers psychologically.

Discussion

Based on the results, the influencer in @jogjataste likes to use short and simple sentences to fulfill the limited time in the Instagram story feature. The simple sentence is the most frequently used as this kind of form does not really need complex structure. The complex and compound sentences are occasionally used although not as many as the simple form because in producing complex, compound, and even complex-compound sentences are not easy. Moreover, the influencer needs to deal with the limited time, 15 seconds only, in the Instagram story. Even though more on the simple sentences, yet it is still effective to promote the foods as the sentences are pragmatically meaning that can engage followers' interests.

The simple sentence form is supported by the purpose of the sentence. Exclamatory are the most frequently used to promote the foods as this kind of form shows how the speaker feels. The declarative and imperative sentences are not used as many as the exclamatory sentence. This may due to the purpose itself. The declarative sentence tends to only inform something and sometimes without any further action. This is not an effective way of course to promote something. However, the influencer overcome this by, maybe lying, making the followers curious. For the imperative, she may use this hyperbolically to show how she cannot describe the foods in words.

5.   Conclusion

The conclusion is, language use in promoting products is very important to be consider. The influencer in @jogjataste uses some types and purposes of sentences to promote the foods in her endorsements. The limited time in the Instagram story feature is also a matter as it is only allowing the user about only 15 seconds each. If it is taking too long, there may be a chance for the followers to skip the story. That is why, the influencer needs to deal with the limited time without decreasing the purpose to promote the products.

Not only structurally construct sentences, but the influencer should also consider the meaning of it. Using simple and exclamation sentences are very useful for the influencer of @jogjataste. The words such as *sumpah, jujur, gak ngerti lagi,* are something that can engage the followers' interest and curiosity. Therefore, the findings of this research is hoped to be used as a reference for those who want or ask influencers to promote the products in which the language should really be considered.

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