

## The Use of Language in Product Advertising Discourse on Instagram

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of language in product advertising discourse on the Instagram platform. With the rise of digital marketing, Instagram has become a strategic medium for product promotion. The focus of this study is to analyze the language style, persuasive rhetoric, and linguistic elements used by advertisers to attract attention, build brand image, and encourage purchasing decisions. Qualitative content analysis was applied to a sample of product advertisements from various categories. The results of the study indicate that advertisers on Instagram tend to use informal, emotive, and persuasive language supported by the use of metaphors, hyperbole, and direct appeals. These findings highlight how the characteristics of the Instagram platform influence linguistic communication strategies for advertising effectiveness.

### Keywords:

*Instagram, Advertising Discourse, Language Style, Persuasive Language, Digital Marketing, linguistic Strategy, Qualitative Analysis*

## Introduction

The development of information and communication technology has fundamentally changed the marketing landscape. Social media, especially Instagram, has become a highly influential platform in product promotion strategies. With more than one billion monthly active users globally, Instagram is not only a space for social interaction but also a competitive arena for brands to reach their target audiences. In this context, the use of language plays a crucial role in the success of an advertisement. Language in Instagram advertising discourse is not merely a tool for product description but a strategic instrument designed to build emotional connections, foster positive perceptions of the brand, and ultimately drive purchasing actions.

Use of language in everyday life aims to interact with the surrounding community. The use of language is related to science pragmatics and sociolinguistics, namely sociopragmatics. The use of language is also important in the world of advertising, as is the industrial world, which is inextricably linked to advertising. An advertisement is an informative message aimed at offering a product or service using persuasive language, thereby attracting the reader or listener's interest. With easy access to the internet and social media, people are now using devices more frequently, especially mobile phones. This convenience has been exploited by several product and service providers to promote their products on social media platforms, such as Instagram.

Instagram's unique characteristics, such as its visual dominance, text space limitations in captions, and the interactive nature of the platform, require marketers to design concise, engaging, and persuasive linguistic messages. The language chosen must be able to compete in a sea of information and attract the attention of users who tend to move quickly. Therefore, this study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of how language is used in product advertising discourse on Instagram, including an exploration of language style, rhetorical techniques, and linguistic patterns applied to achieve marketing objectives.

According to Purangga, Instagram is a social media platform that can be a platform for people to socialize by uploading photos or videos. Uploaded photos or videos can contain advertisements, comedy, advice, and so on. Various advertising innovations have been introduced to attract and promote products, such as beauty advertisements that offer cosmetic products that appeal to women who always follow cosmetic trends.

The Media Richness Theory states that communication media differ in their ability to convey rich information. High-richness media are capable of providing instant feedback, using multi-modal cues (visual, audio, verbal), utilizing natural language, and having a personal focus. Instagram, as a highly visual and interactive platform, can be considered to have a fairly high level of media richness, especially in the context of direct messaging or the Stories feature.

In Instagram ads, the richness of this medium allows advertisers to not only use text, but also combine it with high-quality images and videos, as well as emojis and interactive features (e.g., polls, quizzes in Stories). Although caption text may be limited, strong visuals can reduce the need for lengthy verbal descriptions. Advertisers can then use more concise, suggestive, and emotional language, as most of the "rich" information

is already conveyed through visuals. Language becomes a complement and an emotional driver, not the sole conveyor of detailed information.

The study looks at how people use language when talking to each other, whether they are writing or speaking. Fowler says, "Discourse is spoken, and written exchanges show what people believe, value, and how they see the world." There are four main types of discourse: expressive, referential, literary, and persuasive. The analysis of discourse is about looking at how language is actually used. While some linguists focus on the structure of language, discourse analysts look at what people use language for. Michael Stubbs explains that discourse analysis tries to find smaller parts of language, called constituents, and looks at how these parts relate to each other in a few different situations.

Stubbs says discourse analysis is a type of study that looks at how people use language naturally, whether it's written or spoken. Soeseno Kartomihardjo says discourse analysis is a part of linguistics that focuses on looking at bigger units of language than just a single sentence. These bigger units are often called discourse. The kinds of units studied can include paragraphs, reading texts, invitations, conversations, short stories, and many other types.

The goal of discourse analysis is to understand the meaning that is the same or very similar to what the speaker meant when they spoke or what the author intended when they wrote. Discourse analysis uses many models from sociolinguistics, which is the area of linguistics that looks at how language works in society, as explained by Abdul Chaer.

## **Method**

This study uses a qualitative approach with content analysis. The research data consists of text (captions) from product advertisements posted on Instagram. This research is descriptive with a qualitative approach, that is, research that does not involve calculating numbers but rather describes the form of the data.

Creswell breaks down the purpose of qualitative research into four components: the main purpose, the central phenomenon, the research subject, and the research location. The main purpose in qualitative research is to understand, describe, develop, and discover the central phenomenon. The central phenomenon is about specifying something that is intended for exploration, clearly identifying the research subject, and clearly stating the research location.

## **Data Collection**

Product advertisements were purposively selected from business accounts or influencers who actively promote products on Instagram. Selection criteria included: advertisements that clearly promote physical products or services, have sufficiently informative captions, and come from various product categories (e.g., beauty, food, fashion, technology) to obtain diverse representation. A total of 50 advertisements from 20 different accounts were collected during the period of March-April 2025.

## **Instrument**

Instruments are tools that researchers use to assist them in using data collection methods. Selecting a single data collection method sometimes requires more than one instrument. Conversely, a single instrument can be used for multiple methods. The research instrument is the researcher himself as the main instrument, assisted by analysis guidelines that cover the following aspects:

1. Style of language (formal/informal, direct/indirect)
2. Word choice (adjectives, persuasive verbs, neologisms)
3. Use of figures of speech (metaphors, hyperbole, personification, similes)
4. Sentence structure (imperative, interrogative, declarative sentences)
5. Rhetorical elements (appeals, promises, implied testimonials)
6. Use of punctuation and emojis

## **Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed in several stages:

1. Data Reduction: Identifying and grouping patterns of language use that appeared in advertising captions.
2. Data Presentation: Describe findings based on predetermined categories.
3. Drawing Conclusions: Interpret findings to understand how language functions in the context of Instagram advertising and relate it to relevant theories. Data validity is ensured through source triangulation (comparing advertisements from various accounts) and discussions with language and marketing experts.

## **Findings and Discussion**

Based on an analysis of 50 product advertisements on Instagram, several dominant patterns were found in the use of language. These patterns collectively highlight how advertisers strategically adapt their linguistic choices to leverage the unique characteristics and affordances of the Instagram platform for effective persuasion and brand communication.

### **1. Informal and Personal Language Style**

Most advertisements use a relaxed, familiar, and often personal language style. This is evident through the frequent use of second-person pronouns such as “you” and informal address terms like “brother”. For instance, phrases like “You’ll definitely love this one!” or “Let’s upgrade your look now!” directly engage the audience, creating the impression of a direct, one-on-one conversation. This conversational approach aligns with the inherent nature of the Instagram platform, which is generally perceived as more

personal and less formal compared to traditional mass media. This informal tone fosters a sense of intimacy and authenticity, crucial for building trust and rapport in a social media environment where users are accustomed to peer-to-peer interactions rather than formal corporate messaging.

The adoption of an informal and personal language style also taps into the concept of social presence, where users feel a sense of psychological closeness to others in a mediated environment. By mirroring conversational patterns, advertisers reduce the perceived distance between the brand and the consumer, making the marketing message feel less like an advertisement and more like a friendly recommendation. This strategy is particularly effective on Instagram, where user engagement is often driven by perceived authenticity and relatability. It shifts the communication from a broadcast model to a more dialogic one, encouraging emotional connection and making the audience feel valued and understood. This informal communication style is a deliberate choice to resonate with Instagram's user base, which typically seeks casual and engaging content.

## 2. Emotive and Persuasive Word Choice

Advertisers on Instagram consistently tend to choose words that evoke positive emotions and encourage immediate action. Adjectives such as “amazing,” “practical,” “affordable,” and “innovative” are frequently employed to describe products, focusing on the aspirational benefits and positive experiences associated with their use rather than merely listing features. For example, a beauty product might be advertised with phrases like “kulit glowing menawan” (stunningly glowing skin) instead of simply “kulit bersih” (clean skin), emphasizing the desired aesthetic outcome and the emotional satisfaction it provides.

Furthermore, imperative verbs are extensively used to direct the audience towards specific actions. Commands like “get,” “buy now,” “try,” and “don't miss out” are prevalent, serving as direct calls to action (CTAs) that aim to minimize decision-making friction and urge immediate conversion. Consider examples such as “Experience the unparalleled sensation of softness!” or “Secure the promotion now before it runs out!”. The latter, in particular, leverages the psychological principle of

scarcity and urgency, creating a fear of missing out (FOMO) that compels users to act quickly before an opportunity vanishes. This strategic choice of emotive and imperative language aligns strongly with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion, where the aim is to appeal to the peripheral route of processing. On Instagram, where users scroll rapidly and attention spans are short, advertisers often rely on these superficial cues and emotional appeals to influence attitudes and behaviors without requiring extensive cognitive effort or deep logical evaluation from the audience. The goal is to generate a quick, intuitive, and emotional response that translates into a purchase.

## 3. Use of Figures of Speech for Appeal

Figures of speech are skillfully integrated into Instagram advertisements to enhance their appeal and memorability. These rhetorical devices add layers of meaning and vividness, making the concise captions more impactful and engaging.

#### a. Hyperbole

This figure of speech is frequently used to exaggerate the quality or benefits of a product. Examples include: "Your skin will shine as bright as a star!" or "The magic solution to all your problems!". The primary aim of hyperbole is to create an impression of product superiority and generate excitement. While not meant to be interpreted literally, the exaggeration captures attention and creates a powerful, memorable statement that distinguishes the product in a crowded digital landscape. This method is particularly effective for quickly conveying a sense of extraordinary benefit, appealing to users who are seeking quick fixes or dramatic improvements.

#### b. Metaphor and Simile:

Although less intense than hyperbole, metaphors and similes are also employed to provide more vivid and imaginative descriptions. For instance, "This product is like a savior for your dry skin". These figures of speech create mental imagery and connect the product to existing positive concepts or experiences in the consumer's mind, thereby enhancing emotional appeal without necessitating lengthy explanations. They add a poetic quality to the advertisement, making it more engaging and less overtly commercial, and facilitate a deeper, more imaginative connection with the product's benefits.

#### c. Personification:

This involves giving human characteristics to a product or a problem it addresses. An example observed is: "The wrinkles on your face will shy away". Personification makes abstract concepts or inanimate objects more relatable and dynamic, drawing the audience into a more engaging narrative. This technique can make the product seem more active and effective in solving a problem, as if it possesses a conscious ability to perform actions, thus enhancing its perceived efficacy and appeal.

The strategic deployment of these figures of speech elevates the persuasive power of Instagram advertisements. By employing vivid imagery and exaggerated claims, advertisers aim to leave a lasting impression and appeal to emotional responses and desires rather than purely rational assessment. This plays a significant role in the effectiveness of advertising on Instagram, where brevity, visual impact, and emotional resonance are paramount. These linguistic choices are often processed via the peripheral route, where the attractiveness of the message itself, rather than detailed arguments, drives persuasion.

### 4. Direct and Interactive Sentence Structure

Sentences in Instagram advertisements tend to be short, concise, and direct. This structural choice is directly influenced by the limited text space available in Instagram captions and the imperative need for immediate comprehension in a fast-paced scrolling environment. Short sentences are inherently easier for users to scan and digest quickly, catering to the common behavior of rapid content consumption on social media platforms.

Rhetorical questions are also frequently used to actively engage the audience. Questions such as "Are you ready to stand out?" or "Who needs an instant solution?" are



common. These questions are not typically designed to elicit a direct response in the comments section, but rather to stimulate self-reflection and implicitly guide the audience towards recognizing their own need for the advertised product or service. They create a conversational tone and draw the user into the advertisement's narrative.

Furthermore, calls for interaction are highly prevalent. Phrases like "Tag your friends who need this!" or "Comment below!" are very common, strongly reinforcing the interactive nature of Instagram. These explicit invitations for engagement directly leverage Instagram's

media affordances for social interaction, transforming passive viewers into active participants. This strategy not only boosts engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares) but also significantly expands the advertisement's organic reach through user-generated content and peer recommendations. The interactive structure cultivates a sense of community and shared experience around the product, which can further strengthen brand loyalty and foster trust among users. This directly supports the notion that the platform's features (affordances) play a pivotal role in shaping the linguistic strategies employed in advertising.

## 5. The Role of Emojis and Punctuation Marks

Emojis are used extensively in Instagram advertisements to enhance visual appeal, convey emotions, and segment text to prevent it from appearing too dense. For instance, the 🔥 (fire) emoji often indicates "hot" or "popular," ✨ (sparkle) signifies "clean" or "beautiful," and ❤️ (heart) conveys 'love' or "liking". Emojis function as a highly efficient form of digital non-verbal communication, quickly relaying tone, emotional nuance, and emphasis in a space-efficient manner, which is crucial given the text limitations inherent in Instagram captions. They significantly improve readability, make the text more visually engaging, and break the monotony of plain text, thereby enhancing user experience and message retention. Emojis also contribute to the informal and personal tone discussed earlier, aligning with the casual, conversational style prevalent on the platform.

The repeated use of exclamation marks (!!!) and question marks (?) is also commonly observed to emphasize urgency or draw immediate attention. These punctuation choices amplify the emotional intensity of the message, creating a sense of excitement, urgency, or direct address. For example, multiple exclamation marks can convey strong enthusiasm or an urgent call to action, while repetitive question marks might express curiosity or a direct challenge to the audience, prompting them to consider the advertised solution. The strategic integration of emojis and intensified punctuation marks demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of how visual cues can complement and amplify textual messages in a digital environment where rapid communication and emotional appeal are key determinants of advertising effectiveness. This further exemplifies how advertisers adapt to the media richness of Instagram, using visual and textual elements in concert to convey rich information efficiently.

This discussion robustly shows that advertisers on Instagram consciously adopt linguistic strategies specifically tailored to the unique characteristics and constraints of the platform. The inherent limitations of text space and the undeniable dominance of

visuals compel them to craft concise yet highly persuasive texts. This is achieved by strategically relying on strong, emotive word choices, effective figures of speech, and an informal, familiar writing style. This adaptive approach is in full alignment with the prevailing view that effective digital marketing communication must be highly relevant, deeply engaging, and inherently consumer-oriented. The intricate interplay between compelling visual content and concise, emotionally charged language is, therefore, a defining hallmark of successful advertising discourse on Instagram in the contemporary digital landscape.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the use of language in product advertising discourse on Instagram is dominated by an informal and personal style, emotive and persuasive word choices, the use of rhetorical devices such as hyperbole, direct and interactive sentence structures, and extensive use of emojis and punctuation marks. This linguistic strategy aims to quickly capture the audience's attention, build emotional connections, and encourage purchasing actions, aligning with the visual and interactive characteristics of the Instagram platform. A deep understanding of these language usage patterns is crucial for marketers and advertising practitioners to design more effective campaigns in the digital age.

This study concludes that language use in Instagram product advertising is predominantly informal and personal, characterized by emotive and persuasive word choices, rhetorical devices like hyperbole, direct and interactive sentence structures, and extensive use of emojis and punctuation. This linguistic strategy is crucial for capturing audience attention, building emotional connections, and driving purchasing actions, aligning with Instagram's visual and interactive nature.

These findings highlight how advertisers strategically adapt language to leverage Instagram's affordances, fostering authenticity and direct engagement. The reliance on emotive language and rhetorical figures, processed via the peripheral route of persuasion, ensures immediate impact and memorability. Furthermore, the strategic use of emojis and interactive elements maximizes the platform's media richness, allowing for efficient communication of rich information.

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