THE ILLOCUTIONARY ACT OF FOOD PRODUCT ENDORSEMENTS BY INDONESIAN INFLUENCERS ON INSTAGRAM

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Abstrak: *Endorse* oleh selebriti atau influencer di media sosial menjadi salah satu pendekatan pemasaran yang paling strategis di era digital saat ini. Produk makanan merupakan salah satu komoditas yang sering dipromosikan di media sosial. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana influencer di Instagram membujuk audiensnya untuk mencoba produk makanan dengan menganalisis aspek pragmatis dari postingan Instagram mereka terutama dari segi tindak ilokusi. Enam *endorsement* produk makanan dari enam influencer ternama di Instagram Indonesia dipilih sebagai sumber data. Data dianalisis secara deskriptif dengan mengkaji jenis tindak ilokusi dan fungsi ilokusi tersebut dalam *caption* Instagram.

Kata Kunci: pragmatics, illocutionary acts, instagram endorsements, speech acts

Introduction

Social media use has significantly grown in recent years. This media allows everyone to publish their activities to the public through an account created by themselves without being regulated by mass media companies such as television, magazine, or radio stations. Celebrities such as artists, athletes, or politicians automatically have many followers on their social media. However, many previously unknown people in traditional media attract large audiences and are known to many people for their viral and engaging account content. They are then called influencers. People usually follow an account consciously and are genuinely interested in the account's personality and content. They also often share similar interests and values. Therefore, account followers automatically become the audience of that account. One of the social media that has many users is Instagram. As of January 2022, this photo-based account has 99.15 million users or 35.7 percent of Indonesia's population. This makes Instagram the third most followed social media in Indonesia. Concerning its advertising reach, most of its audience is female (52.3%), and the rest are male (47.7%) (Jemadu and Prastya, 2022). This makes Instagram a promising marketing media for brands and retailers (Vizard, 2015). An individual with large numbers of followers also has a significant social influence that can motivate people

to purchase several products as they become trendsetter and their opinion matters (Scott, 2011; Jin & Phua, 2014).

Unlike traditional advertisements, which the production company makes, product endorsements are usually in the form of testimonials. The influencers tell the audiences their opinion and approval of the product. Considering that product endorsement by the Instagram influencer is a professional activity that can increase product purchases and generate income for the individuals, how the influencer communicates the product to attract and persuade the audience to try the product becomes very important, especially linguistically. Here the influencers employ language and other semiotic devices in such a way to create a maximum effect, attract, and add trustworthiness to their review. This study explores how some product endorsement, mainly food product, pragmatically organizes their message to their audience through their use of language and picture.

Pragmatic is the study of how meaning is inferred in the conversation by considering the context of the situation and other shared knowledge by all the speakers. Central to the study of pragmatics is the notion of speech act. Here, an utterance is not seen as only the process of giving information but also as performing an act (Searle, 1969). There are three layers of interrelated acts in an utterance which are locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act (Austin, 1962). A Locutionary act is an act of saying something, the literal meaning of the utterance. An Illocutionary act is what is intended to be communicated by the interlocuters based on its literal meaning. The last one is the perlocutionary act, which is how the utterance effect the hearer.

Searle (1979) names different categories of illocutionary acts, namely : (1) Assertive, the utterance that commits to the truth of the proposition; (2) Directive, the utterance whose purpose is to make the hearer do something; (3) Commissive, utterance that shows the speaker's commitment to future action; (4) Expressive, utterance that shows the speakers feeling or attitude about something; and (5) Declarative, the utterance that has the power to change status or reality, which is primarily institutional. As a text usually consists of a stretch or sentences, which has an opening, body, and closing, several types of illocutionary acts are frequently performed together to deliver specific outcomes.

Based on the background explained above, this study aims to explore how the Indonesian Instagram influencer employs and organizes several types of speech act to persuade their audiences to try and consume the endorsed products.

Method

This study employed a qualitative method. The data consist of six Instagram posts from the Indonesian top Instagram influencer. The data were chosen purposively to cover several types of food products. This study primarily discusses food product endorsement to provide a similar context to analyse the persuasion language of endorsement. The data were classified according to the types of illocutionary acts proposed by Searle (1979) and then described in detail to explore their functions within the context of the Instagram posts.

Result and Discussion

In the Instagram endorsement post, only three types of illocutionary acts are found in the six Instagram endorsements, with a total of thirty-two utterances. In addition, there are twenty-three data categorized as assertive, seven data categorized as directives, and the researchers only found three data categorized as expressive. More details can be seen as follow:

Table 1. The types of illocutionary act in Instagram endorsements

No	Types of illocutionary acts	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Assertive	22	68%
2	Commissive	-	-
3	Directive	7	22%
4	Expressive	3	10%
5	Declaration	-	-
	Total	**32**	**100%**

As seen in the table above, the assertive act is the most dominant one as the endorsement tells the audience about the product, and they try to assert some positive qualities about the endorsed brand. As persuasion strategies, the directive that functions to make the audience do something also occurs in the data in the form of suggesting and advising. As product endorsement also expresses the influencer experiences with the product, they highlight these by using several expressive illocutionary acts. In this paper's discussion part, these illocutionary acts will be discussed based on their function in each

part of the text, namely the opening, the body, and the closing part. Each will be explored in different subsections.

The Opening

As the Instagram post always includes photos, the picture always becomes the most dominant part of the post. Therefore, the influencer will choose the most illustrative and attractive picture than can represent the product. However, there are some differences in how the influencer constructs the messages, resulting in their different engagement with the products. In the data, there are three ways the influencers advertise the product in the picture. Firstly is to show the product's picture only without showing the influencer's face (e.g., data 1). Secondly, the influencer poses with the product (e.g., data 2), and lastly, the influencer show herself consuming the product (e.g., data 3).
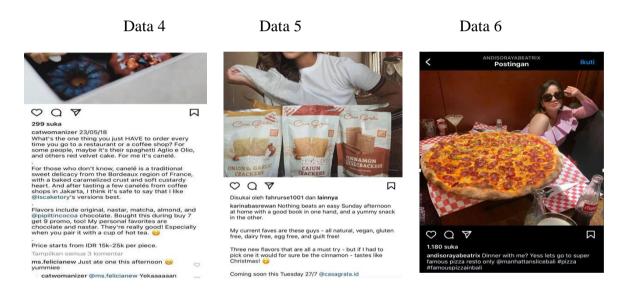
Data 1   Data 2   Data 3

Data 1, from @awkarin, a famous influencer with 7.9 M followers on Instagram, shows the least personal association with the product. By only posting the product's picture, she made the post become a more formal advertisement that highlight the product and the product's producer. This is also supported by the post's caption, which will be explored later. The second data from @miktambayong, an Indonesian TV series actress and model, show her posing with the product. By doing this, the actress gives a more personal attachment to the product, introducing the product to the public but obviously with less personal user testimonial than the data 3, which shows that the influencer, @enyablanco depicts herself as actually using the product.

The opening part also concerns the opening sentence used in the caption. Although there are different ways of opening a product endorsed on Instagram, they use expressive, directive, and illocutionary acts. In promoting the chicken curry product, as in data 1, @awkarin opens the caption by showing how much she missed India by saying *OHHHHH HOW I MISSED MY INDIA TRIP*. This utterance is classified as an expressive illocutionary act as the speaker express her feeling and emotion. The expression is also emphasized through her use of prolonged interjection OHHHH and the use of the capital letter. These are the orthographic source of graduation of interpersonal meaning (Ayomi, 2021; 2022). By alluding to her trip to India, she prepares the audience for what will be presented next: introducing an Indian food product.

Data 4	Data 5	Data 6

Another way of opening a product endorsement is by using a directive illocutionary act, i.e., the act of asking. This can be seen in data 4 from @catwomanizer. In promoting canelé, she started her caption with a question *What's the one thing you just HAVE to order every time you go to a restaurant or a coffee shop?*. As the caption is actually a one-way communication and she also directly proceeds to the subsequent utterances without a need for an answer, this question is therefore rhetorical to create an atmosphere of a conversation with the reader. Then, she continued with a sequence of assertive illocutionary acts *For some people, maybe it's their spaghetti Aglio e Olio, and others red velvet cake.*

For me it's canelé. Here she guesses what the audience's preference might be and makes a statement about her choice.

The most frequent use of opening on the Instagram is in the form of assertive. This is when the influencer informs, state, or explain some things to their audience. One example that can be seen from the data is presented in data 5, in which the influencer @karinabasrewan saying *Nothing beats an easy Sunday afternoon at home with a good book in one hand, and a yummy snack in the other.* Here she asserts the truth to her statement by making a declarative sentence claiming that reading a book with some good food is the best way to spend a Sunday afternoon (the post is made on Sunday). By saying this she can make the next move, promoting the snack.

The Body

The body of the Instagram endorsement contain the information of the product. In most cases this is made by using assertive illocutionary act of informing about how the products taste, the ingredients, where to buy, as well as the flavour. This can be seen in same of the excerpt below:

> *My current faves are these guys - all natural, vegan, gluten free, dairy free, egg free, and guilt free! Three new flavors that are all a must try - but if I had to pick one it would for sure be the cinnamon - tastes like Christmas!* (Data 5)

> *@awkarin x @wanfan_id. Inspired by Karin's craving on Indian cuisine and for the love of Chinese cuisines as well. Presenting you, CURRY-IN CHICKEN. A combo of Indian spices with an additional fun twist of WANFAN Signature spices. Made this dish super rich and flavourful that it will burst in your mouth since the first bite! Expect a tempting and appetizing aroma, with a mild spicy-ness, savoury taste, this dish is a REAL presentation of how Karin and WANFAN is, and..* (Data 1)

As can be seen in the excerpts, each caption presents the good qualities of the product using several adjectives related to food, such as *all natural,* s*uper rich and flavorful*, and *tempting* and promoting the products using utterances that carry assertive illocutionary act which inform the reader of their opinion about the product. The most natural form of assertive illocutionary act is in the form of a declarative sentence. However, as can be seen in Data 1 @awkarin post contain many declarative sentences with the omitted subject, which make it almost like imperative sentence such as *Expect a tempting and appetizing aroma, with a mild spicy-ness, savoury taste, this dish is a REAL presentation of how Karin and WANFAN is.* Although the sentence seems to suggest the reader do something, as the verb used is the verb of perception and the perceived reality

is already constructed by the writer, the illocutionary force is assertive instead of a directive. This phenomenon is also known as interpersonal grammatical metaphor (Ayomi, 2021; Ayomi,et al., 2020)

The Closing

As with the body of the endorsement posts. The closings are mostly dominated by utterances containing assertive illocutionary force. This is reflected by the use of declarative sentences such as below:

It's totally #KarinApproved (Data 1)

Price starts from IDR 15k -25k per piece (Data 4)

Coming soon this Tuesday 27/7 @casagrata.id (Data 5)

After discussing the product's taste and quality, the closing consists of the illocutionary act of claiming, such as in data 1. By namedropping the influencer name and approval, the post hopes to assure the audience that the product has a good quality. This advertisement relies on the influencer's credibility and trustability. Other illocutionary acts consist of informing, telling the reader about the price and product launching date. Besides the use of assertive illocutionary act, there is also the use of directive illocutionary act, specifically the directive illocutionary act of recommending such as in:

Yess lets go to super famous pizza resto only @manhattanslicebali #pizza #famouspizzainbali (Data 6)

Use my code "FORBXENYA " for 10% OFF your purchase (Data 3)

Conclusion

This study found that the influencer food product endorsements on Instagram posts can be divided into three sections: the opening, body, and closing. The most dominant illocutionary act is assertive of informing and claiming especially talking about the product information and how the influencer's experience in consuming the product. The most varied part is the opening section, where influencers can use various illocutionary acts to open a conversation or attract their audience's attention to read further.

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