CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

In this digital age, the way people interact and do business has changed. This is all due to the dominant presence of social media. Social media has not only changed the way we communicate, but also how businesses reach out and interact with their customers. Social media has become an important part of people's daily lives, shaping the way they search for information, shop, and interact with brands.

Among the many social media platforms, Instagram stands out due to its primary focus on images and videos (Losi & Rosida, 2022). Instagram has a unique look, allowing users to tell stories through visuals. This makes it a great place for brand promotion and modern marketing strategies. It's a far contrast to the way marketing used to be done in the past, which usually only used print advertisements or radio/television broadcasts. This change shows how important Instagram is as a digital marketing channel, where brands can build communities, showcase products attractively, and talk directly to consumers to create closer relationships.

The success of modern marketing, especially on Instagram, relies heavily on the use of persuasive language. Language is our primary tool for conveying messages, thoughts and ideas. But, apart from communicating, language is also often used to persuade. In communication science, (Perloff, 2017) explains that persuasion is a process in which a person tries to convince others to change their attitudes, beliefs, or actions through messages, but the audience still has a choice. The use of persuasive language is very important because it is considered one of

the most effective ways to shape audience views and responses in various contexts, including in advertising (Gass & Seiter, 2018). For example, persuasive language in Instagram ads can use strong verbs like "Get your perfect glow now!" to show instant benefits, or use emotional appeals like "Feel confident in your healthy skin!" to connect with consumers' personal desires.

In this evolving world of digital marketing, the role of social media influencers is becoming very large. These are people who are either well-known public figures or more specialized media micro-influencers who have expertise and trust in a particular field, such as beauty, makeup or skincare. They manage to build a large following on platforms like Instagram. Since their initial emergence, social media influencers (SMIs) have been recognized as a new type of independent endorser who can shape audience attitudes through their digital content (Freberg et al., 2011). Their recommendations and endorsements are now recognized as powerful drivers that can strongly influence consumer behavior and purchase decisions. This phenomenon represents an important shift in marketing strategy, where communication from figures that audiences trust and can relate to has enormous influence. The relationship between beauty influencers and the language of persuasion in Instagram ads is mutually reinforcing: influencers use various means of language-such as personal stories, experiences, strong emotional appeals, or direct calls to action-to convince audiences to try or buy certain products, while the trust and authority established by influencers naturally reinforce the persuasive power of the language they use.

While the influence of social media in marketing and the huge impact of beauty influencers is clear, there is still a lack of understanding about the specific language they use in Instagram ads, especially when it comes to promoting cosmetic products. Previous research has indeed confirmed the general impact of influencer endorsement on consumer behavior (Yang, 2018) and several studies have examined the language of persuasion in social media ads (Losi & Rosida, 2022; Rudito & Anita, 2020). However, in-depth language analysis that specifically focuses on the types and functions of persuasive language used by beauty influencers for cosmetic products on Instagram is still relatively under-researched in detail.

More specifically, although studies such as (Joy et al., 2024) have examined the persuasive language of beauty influencers on TikTok, and (Hidarto Anderson (Universitas Katolik Atma Jaya), 2021) conducted a combined text, image, and video analysis of persuasive language in Instagram advertisements involving influencers, language analysis that focuses on specific persuasive techniques-for example, within the framework of Persuasion Theory that looks at language functions (such as ideational, interpersonal, and textual meta functions from Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics)-in the context of beauty product promotion on Instagram for a certain period of time, is still urgently needed. Therefore, this study aims to make a valuable contribution to the understanding of digital communication strategies by conducting a detailed language analysis of how persuasive language functions in this specific, highly influential context, thus filling a void in the existing literature.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What features of persuasive language are used by beauty influencers in Instagram ads?

2. What are their reasons for choosing those features of persuasive language?

1.3 Research Purposes

1. To describe the features of persuasive language used by beauty influencers in Instagram ads.

2. To explain the reasons behind the influencers' choices in using those features of persuasive language.

1.4 Research Significance

This research is expected to provide benefits for various parties and help the development of knowledge, especially in the fields of language and digital marketing. In general, the purpose of this research is to help students, lecturers, and marketing practitioners understand how and why persuasive language is used in digital promotion, especially on social media such as Instagram.

This research also aims to present data on how beauty influencers use persuasive language in cosmetic advertisements on Instagram. With this data, it is hoped that it can add to the references in the study of advertising language, especially those on social media. This research can also be an addition to previous studies on the use of persuasive language on digital platforms.

For future researchers, this research can be used as a reference or basis for developing similar research, as well as expanding methods in researching

advertising language on social media. Meanwhile, for the general public, the results of this study are expected to help them better understand how persuasive language works in cosmetic advertisements, so that they can become more critical and less easily influenced consumers.

Lastly, for cosmetics industry players, this research is expected to provide an overview of effective language strategies for marketing products on Instagram. That way, they can create more attractive advertisements and can communicate better with potential buyers.

1.5 Research Limitations

This research focuses on analyzing the persuasive language used by beauty influencers in their Instagram advertisements. To make the analysis more focused and manageable, this study sets several limitations.

First, the number of beauty influencers in this research is limited to five (5) popular figures. This number allows for a meaningful comparison of how persuasive language is used, while still keeping the data manageable for in-depth analysis. The influencers are selected based on specific criteria, but this study only analyzes five to keep the scope limited.

Second, this study focuses only on verbal data, such as captions or spoken text from the video. It does not include non-verbal elements like pictures, gestures, music, or visual layout. This limitation is applied to match the focus of the theory used, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which studies how language creates meaning in context.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To help the readers understand this study clearly, some important terms are defined below based on how they are used in this research:

1. Persuasive Language

    Persuasive language is language that is used to influence someone's opinions or actions. In this study, it means the words or sentences used by beauty influencers on Instagram to make the audience interested in buying or trying a beauty product. According to Perloff (2017), persuasion is a type of communication that aims to change a person's beliefs, attitudes, or behavior in a situation where the person has freedom to choose.

2. Features of Persuasive Language

    Features of persuasive language are parts of language that help make a message persuasive. In this study, the features are explained using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). These include mood (sentence type), modality (expressions of certainty or suggestion), process types (action or thinking verbs), and theme-rheme structure (how the sentence starts and what follows it). These features show how the influencer's message tries to persuade the audience.

3. Beauty Influencers

    Beauty influencers are people who create content about makeup or skincare on Instagram and have a large number of followers. They are

known as independent third-party endorsers who can influence their audience through their posts (Freberg et al., 2011).

4. Instagram Advertisements

      Instagram advertisements in this study are video posts that promote beauty products, created by influencers and reposted by the brand's official Instagram account. These ads are part of the brand's marketing strategy and not just personal content from the influencer.

5. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

      Systemic Functional Linguistics is a theory by Halliday that sees language as something used to make meaning in a social situation. This theory looks at language in three functions:

  A. Ideational Metafunction (talking about ideas and experiences),

  B. Interpersonal Metafunction (building relationships with others), and

  C. Textual Metafunction (organizing the message in a sentence or text).

      This study uses SFL to understand how influencers use language to persuade their audience (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).