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Analysis of Language Function in Product Advertisement on Instagram: An SFL Study

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the language functions in product advertisements aired on Instagram by using the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach developed by Halliday. The focus of the analysis lies on three metafunctions of language, namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual, which are used to construct meaning, build relationships with the audience, and organize the structure of information in the advertising text. The data in this study are four product advertisements taken from the Instagram platform and analyzed qualitatively-descriptively. The results show that product advertisements utilize language processes such as material, relational, and mental to describe product benefits factually and emotionally. In addition, the choice of language style, tone, and the use of pronouns also strengthen the relationship between producers and consumers. The systematic arrangement of advertising information, the use of typography, and visual elements support the meaning to be conveyed. The findings confirm that language in digital advertising not only functions as an information tool, but also as an effective persuasive strategy in shaping consumer perceptions and decisions.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, Instagram has become one of the dominant social media used as a means of product promotion (Aryani & Murtiariyati 2022). Utami & Defhany (2024) also stated that this platform not only relies on the power of visuals, but also utilizes verbal elements such as captions, hashtags, and ad narratives to convey messages to audiences. Among these verbal elements, language plays an important role as a persuasive and strategic communication tool. The use of language in Instagram ads not only aims to convey information about the product, but also to build an emotional connection with potential consumers and influence their decisions. Therefore, understanding the function of language

in the context of advertising is very important, especially in seeing how language is used as an effective and efficient marketing communication strategy.

Language in advertising is strategic because it is designed to convey messages briefly but still meaningful and evocative (Yustina et al., 2025). The choice of words, sentence structure, and language style used can shape consumers' perceptions of a product, and even influence their emotions and attitudes. Through language, advertisements are able to create closeness with the audience, foster trust, and persuade them to take certain actions, such as buying or trying products (Wulandari & Hindun 2024). Therefore, linguistic studies of advertising texts are important to

understand how meaning is formed, structured, and conveyed to audiences. A functional approach, particularly through the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework put forward by Halliday (1978), can provide deep insight into the role of language in shaping ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings in advertisements.

To examine how meaning is constructed in advertising texts, this study adopts the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach developed by Halliday as its main theoretical foundation. SFL views language as a system that serves social functions and is used to meet human communication needs in everyday life. Within this framework, language is analyzed through three main metafunctions: ideational, which refers to how language represents experiences and events; interpersonal, which concerns how language establishes relationships between the writer or speaker and the reader or listener; and textual, which deals with how information is organized to be conveyed cohesively and coherently. These three aspects are highly relevant in uncovering linguistic strategies in product advertisements on Instagram, which are not only informative but also persuasive and structurally organized. Therefore, the SFL approach is considered appropriate for comprehensively analyzing advertising texts in the context of the ever-evolving digital communication landscape.

This research focuses on analyzing the functions of language in product advertisement texts published on the Instagram platform, specifically those related to food, beauty, and fashion products. The choice of Instagram as a data source is based on its popularity and effectiveness in delivering promotional messages in a brief yet engaging manner through a combination of visual and verbal elements. According to Sari & Septiani (2021), although Instagram advertisements are dominated by visual components, this study specifically emphasizes the verbal aspect, namely the advertising text in the form of captions or narratives. These texts function as linguistic representations of the messages that producers intend to convey to consumers and can therefore be analyzed using the SFL approach to reveal how language structures construct meaning, build interpersonal relationships, and organize information effectively. With this focus, the research aims to provide deeper insight into the role of language in shaping advertising messages on social media.

Based on this background, the study aims to

identify and analyze how language functions are utilized in product advertisement texts on Instagram. The analysis focuses on how producers or marketers construct their advertising messages to represent meaning, engage audiences, and structure information effectively. The Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework is employed to examine the three primary functions of language ideational, interpersonal, and textual each of which plays a crucial role in shaping advertising communication strategies. Accordingly, the research question posed in this study is: How are language functions used in product advertisements on Instagram based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics framework? This question serves as the foundation for exploring linguistic meanings and functions in advertising texts on social media, as well as for opening up opportunities for a deeper understanding of how language operates in the context of digital promotion.

In line with the aforementioned research question, the main objective of this study is to analyze and identify the use of language functions specifically the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions in product advertisement texts published on Instagram. Through the SFL approach, this study aims to uncover how linguistic structures and choices are strategically used to shape advertising messages that are not only informative but also persuasive. Previous studies, such as those conducted by Briones (2016) and Hoang (2021), have shown that metafunctional analysis in texts enables a deep understanding of how language is used for specific communicative purposes, including in promotional contexts. Moreover, research by O'Halloran (2008) and Cheong (2004) has also demonstrated that the SFL approach is effective in examining digital advertisements, especially in revealing the language strategies that build closeness between producers and consumers. By examining how linguistic elements are utilized in the context of digital communication, this study also intends to explain how language contributes to building audience engagement, conveying product image, and influencing consumer attitudes and decisions. This objective is expected to provide deeper insight into linguistic strategies in digital advertising and the contribution of linguistics to the field of modern marketing.

This study is expected to contribute in two domains: theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it can enrich linguistic studies, particularly in the field of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), through the application of language analysis in the

continuously evolving context of digital media. It also expands the understanding of how language functions contribute to constructing social meaning and communication strategies in digital advertising, thus serving as a reference for future related studies. Practically, the findings of this study can offer insights for business actors, marketers, and content creators in designing more effective and communicative advertising language. By understanding how language structure and choices influence audience perception, practitioners can craft promotional messages that are not only attractive but also capable of building emotional connections and driving consumer action. Therefore, this study offers value not only in academic aspects but also in its application in the digital marketing world.

II. METHODS

The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive research. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for describing and analyzing the use of language functions in advertisement texts in depth, based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory developed by Halliday. This research focuses on advertisement texts in the form of captions or narratives taken from the official Instagram accounts of several commercial products, particularly in the categories of beauty, food, and fashion. The data collected consist of posts containing promotional elements or persuasive messages directed at consumers, written in either Indonesian or English, and featuring sufficient linguistic structure to be analyzed.

Data collection was carried out through the documentation method by accessing and observing specific Instagram accounts, followed by copying or taking screenshots of relevant advertisement posts. The researcher selected approximately 10 to 15 advertisement posts as samples based on criteria of readability and completeness of linguistic elements. Data analysis was conducted using the framework of the three metafunctions in SFL, namely: (1) Ideational function, analyzed through the transitivity system to identify types of processes, participants, and circumstances in the sentences; (2) Interpersonal function, analyzed through the mood and modality system to understand attitudes, appeals, and the relationship between the writer and the reader; and (3) Textual function, analyzed through the theme-rheme structure to examine how information is organized in the text.

In this study, the researcher acts as the main

instrument responsible for selecting, classifying, and interpreting the data based on systemic functional linguistic theory. To support the analysis process, the researcher also used a linguistic analysis worksheet as a tool to identify and record the linguistic metafunctions found in each advertisement text. The results of the analysis are presented descriptively to reveal language use patterns that support the communicative purpose of product advertisements on Instagram.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis in this study focuses on four examples of digital advertisements, each with different product characteristics and communication strategies. The approach used refers to the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which emphasizes three metafunctions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Each advertisement is analyzed based on how language is used to construct meaning, influence the audience, and convey messages effectively. The following description presents the results of the language function analysis for each advertisement based on these three metafunctional aspects.



1. Ideational Function (Experiential Meaning)

The ideational function serves to represent experiential reality, both physical and mental experiences. In this advertisement, language is used to describe the cleaning service process in a clear and concise way, closely related to the everyday lives of boarding house residents.

a) Process Type

This advertisement is dominated by material processes, which describe real, tangible actions:

- “Lo gak sempet bersihin kamar?” material process bersihin (to clean)
- “Kamar kost lo bakalan kinclong!” material process bakalan kinclong (to become clean/shiny)

- “Gue kasih 1 jam gratis trial!” material process kasih (to give)

These processes highlight that the ad emphasizes concrete actions performed by the service provider.

b) Participants

- Actor: the cleaning service provider, referred to personally as “Gue” (I) or “kita” (we)
- Receiver: the consumer, boarding house residents, referred to as “Lo” (you)
- Object or Goal: “kamar kost” (boarding house room) the target of the cleaning process

The roles of these participants reflect a direct interaction between service provider and customer.

c) Circumstances

- Time: “dalam 3 jam” (within 3 hours) explains the service speed
- Quality guarantee: “dijamin kinclong” (guaranteed shiny) emphasizes the outcome
- Additional offer: “1 jam gratis trial” (1-hour free trial) shows an attractive promotional deal

2. Interpersonal Function (Interpersonal Meaning)

The interpersonal function refers to how speakers use language to interact, build relationships, and express attitudes or emotions. In this advertisement, the interpersonal function is strongly evident through its casual, personal, and persuasive language style.

a) Mood (Types of Sentences)

- Rhetorical declarative: “Lo gak sempet bersihin kamar?” builds empathy and connection
- Mild imperative and suggestion: “Gue kasih 1 jam gratis trial!” acts as an offer
- Informative declarative: “Gak usah khawatir! Ada kita di sini!” provides a solution

These sentences reflect an effort to build social solidarity and emotional closeness.

b) Use of Pronouns

- “Lo” (you) and “Gue” (I) indicate informal and equal relationships, commonly used among youth or peers
- “Kita” (we) reinforces a sense of collectiveness and interpersonal closeness

c) Tone and Attitude (Appraisal & Modality)

- An optimistic and reassuring tone, for example: “Dijamin kamar kost lo bakalan kinclong!”

- Contains positive evaluations of the offered service
- No modality indicating doubt; the language is filled with certainty and confidence

3. Textual Function (Textual Meaning)

The textual function is concerned with how information is structured and delivered in a coherent and effective manner. In this advertisement, both textual and visual structures support the clarity and appeal of the message.

a) Theme-Rheme Structure

- The main theme is a common problem: “Lo gak sempet bersihin kamar?”
- Followed by the rheme: the solution, benefit, and offer
- Example: “Gak usah khawatir! Ada kita di sini! Dijamin kamar kost lo kinclong hanya dalam 3 jam!”

Each segment of information builds a logical structure:

Problem, Solution, Guarantee and Free Offer

b) Coherence and Cohesion

- Key words are repeated and elaborated: “kamar”, “kost”, “bersihin”, “kinclong”, “gratis trial”
- Language is brief and easy to understand, with no long or complex sentences
- There is semantic cohesion between visual and verbal elements

c) Visual and Layout

- The use of blue and purple colors creates a clean and professional impression
- Images of people using cleaning tools reinforce the meaning of the service
- Important text is highlighted with large fonts or bold print (e.g., “1 Jam Gratis Trial!”), emphasizes the offer.



1) Fungsi Ideational (Experiential Function)

The Fungsi ideational in this advertisement plays a crucial role in delivering factual information about

the product by emphasizing its nutritional content and health benefits. The language used contains proses relasional and proses eksistensial, which are types of processes aimed at stating what something is, what it contains, and what benefits it offers.

Examples from the text:

- “Source of protein” → indicates that the product is a source of protein.
- “Kandungan protein yang berfungsi membantu penyerapan kalsium...”
- “Source of vitamins and minerals”
- “Nilai GI rendah tidak akan mengakibatkan lonjakan gula darah...”

a) Jenis Proses (Process Types):

- Proses relasional is dominant:
 - Verbs such as “adalah,” “mengandung,” “berfungsi,” and “bisa” indicate an attributive relationship between the subject (SOYJOY) and the attribute (contents/benefits).
 - For example: “SOYJOY adalah sumber protein yang membantu...” → an attributive relational structure (Carrier + Attribute).
- Proses material also appears implicitly: “membantu penyerapan,” “meningkatkan sistem imun” → describe physiological actions in the body.

b) Peserta (Participants):

- Carrier: the product or contents (e.g., “protein,” “fiber,” “vitamins”).
- Attribute: health benefits, such as supporting metabolism, delaying hunger, and boosting immunity.
- No human actors or users are explicitly mentioned; everything is framed in a scientific and impersonal structure.

c) Keadaan (Circumstances):

- Used to clarify the context of the product’s effects or uses, for example:
- “Dalam tulang,” “oleh penderita diabetes,” “secara perlahan,” “lebih lama” → explain location, recipients, manner, or duration of the product’s effects.

2) Fungsi Interpersonal (Interactional Function)

The Fungsi interpersonal in the SOYJOY advertisement serves to build an objective and professional tone to gain consumer trust. The language style is impersonal and informative, without using first- or second-person pronouns such as “I,” “you,” or “we.”

a) Mood System (Jenis Kalimat):

- Dominated by declarative mood (informative

statements), such as:

- “Kandungan protein yang berfungsi...”
- “Nilai GI rendah tidak akan mengakibatkan...”
- There are no imperative (direct command) or interrogative (question) sentences.

b) Modality (Certainty and Attitude):

- Some modal verbs like “bisa” and “akan” indicate potential or possible effects.
- However, the tone remains confident and positive, using verbs like: “meningkatkan,” “membantu,” “mengandung.”

c) Evaluative Language (Attitude and Value):

- Although scientific in nature, some words imply positive evaluation:
 - “Solusi sehat dari kedelai”
 - “5 keajaiban dari SOYJOY” → gives an impression of exceptional benefit
 - “Aman dikonsumsi oleh penderita diabetes” → reinforces credibility and ethos

3) Fungsi Tekstual (Textual Function)

The Fungsi teknikal contributes to structuring the message in a way that is easy to understand, visually appealing, and consistent in presentation.

a) Tema dan Rema (Theme-Rheme):

- Each section begins with a label of key nutritional content, such as:
 - “Source of Protein,” “Source of Fiber,” “Low GI”
 - Followed by rema in the form of explanations or benefits that elaborate the main point.

b) Cohesion (Kohärenz):

- Use of parallel structures (repetitive and consistent), such as:
 - Source of + [Nutrient]
 - Explanations in short sentences below each heading

c) Visual-Verbal Integration:

- Images of opened SOYJOY bars highlight the visualization of the product’s content.
- Illustrations of nuts, soybeans, and chocolate reinforce the verbal message.
- The green color represents “health,” supporting the overall theme.



1) Fungsi Ideational (Experiential Meaning)

The fungsi ideational explains how language is used to represent real-world experiences or perceptions of reality. In this advertisement, the constructed reality is about positive emotions, especially happiness in everyday life.

a) Process Type

- Mental Process: The sentence “Enjoy the little things” reflects inner experience or emotion. The word enjoy represents an affective process: a mental activity involving appreciating or valuing something small yet meaningful.
- Existential Process: The phrases “The International Day” and “The Happiness” express the existence of an event and an emotion. This implies that happy moments do exist and are celebrated.

b) Participants

- Sensor (the one who feels): the reader or general public is implicitly invited to feel and appreciate small moments.
- Phenomenon: “the little things” – small elements of life that are often overlooked, yet bring happiness.

c) Circumstances

- Time: “20th March” → indicates the context of the International Day of Happiness celebration.
- Manner: visually represented by laughing emojis and happy expressions → illustrating how the feeling arises.

2) Fungsi Interpersonal (Interactional Meaning)

The fungsi interpersonal describes how language is used to interact, persuade, and build social or emotional relationships between the message creator and the receiver.

a) Mood and Sentence Type

- Imperative-invitation sentence: “Let’s celebrate” → a collective call inviting the reader to participate.
- The tone used is optimistic, positive, and inclusive.
- The sentences are short and friendly, emphasizing a warm, informal atmosphere.

b) Appraisal and Attitude

- Words such as: “celebrate”, “happiness”, “enjoy” → imply a positive evaluation of life.
- The sentence “Enjoy the little things” is not only an invitation, but also a form of empathetic advice showing concern for emotional well-being.

c) Social Relationship

- There is no explicit use of personal pronouns (“you”, “I”, “we”), but the word Let’s implies collectiveness and familiarity, creating a sense of togetherness in celebrating happiness.
- The target audience is global and general, not directed at a specific group or individual.

3) Fungsi Tekstual (Textual Meaning)

The fungsi textual explains how language is organized to form a coherent, understandable, and visually appealing text. In this advertisement, the visual and verbal layout is designed to support the theme of happiness.

a) Theme-Rheme

- Main theme: The Happiness
- Rheme: Enjoy the little things, Let’s celebrate
- The sentence structure is designed to place the concept of happiness as the focal point, followed by actions or attitudes toward it.

b) Visual-Verbal Cohesion

- Dominant color: yellow → a bright color often associated with positive energy and cheerfulness.
- Laughing emojis (😂) are scattered → reinforcing the meaning of happiness non-verbally.
- A smiling woman figure → a visualization of joyful experience, representing the emotion conveyed by the text.

c) Typography and Focus

- Key words like “THE HAPPINESS” and “Let’s celebrate” are printed in large font and bright colors to attract attention.
- Symmetrical layout and white space around the text create a clean and focused impression.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study reveals that language in product advertisements on Instagram plays a strategic role in constructing meaning and influencing the audience, as analyzed through the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach. The three language metafunctions — ideational, interpersonal, and textual are synergistically

employed to convey product information, build emotional closeness with consumers, and structure advertising messages that are cohesive and easy to comprehend. The ideational metafunction is utilized to describe the activities, benefits, and qualities of the product through material and relational processes. The interpersonal metafunction is evident in the choice of words that establish a relationship between the producer and the consumer, either through formal or informal styles. Meanwhile, the textual metafunction helps to organize advertising information systematically and present it in a visually appealing way. Overall, the analysis shows that the use of language functions in advertisements is not only informative but also persuasive and aesthetic, effectively supporting marketing strategies on digital platforms such as Instagram. This research demonstrates that the SFL approach is capable of uncovering the deeper meanings behind advertising texts and is relevant for understanding commercial communication in social media contexts.

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