

LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS USED IN ENGLISH INSTAGRAM COPYWRITING OF THE ALANA HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER SOLO

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Abstract

Language has various functions in communication, both spoken and written. The use of language is very crucial in the digital era along with the development of social media, especially Instagram because Instagram requires copywriting or writing techniques so that messages can be conveyed properly. The purpose of this study was to analyze the function of language used in the copywriting of The Alana Hotel & Convention Center Solo's Instagram account. This research was employed in qualitative research with library research method. The theory of the five functions of language from Geoffrey Leech was used to analyze the sentences used in writing Instagram captions. The language functions include informative, directive, phatic, expressive, and aesthetic functions. The data was taken from the Instagram captions of The Alana Hotel & Convention Center Solo during the last one month, December 2022. The results showed that the directive and phatic functions were the dominant functions in writing Instagram captions. This shows that Instagram is used as social roles, which are marketing and communication media with consumers, through the sentences in the Instagram caption.

Kata kunci: language function, copywriting, hotel marketing, social media.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is undeniably necessary in society as it plays the essential role in everyday life. It is surely beneficial for society since it serves various functions. Language is generally for delivering knowledge or information and facilitating cooperation in society. (Geoffrey Leech, 1969). In other words, language functions are basically classified into two types which are sharing information and communication. In terms of communication, it leads to concept that language has social function. Language becomes communication tool for people as it bridges people through utterance, text, or sign. As (Korneeva et al., 2019) states that,

“Language as a sign mechanism of communication, a system of discrete signs that serve to communicate and are able to express the totality of a person's portion of the world as a social phenomenon. The social stipulation is expressed in the social functions of the language as a means of people communication”

As a means of people communication, language can be presented verbally, either in spoken or written way. Written communication encompasses textual forms like letters, bulletin, and magazine for the classic ones. In digital era, written communication can be found in email

and social media. Social media is more relevant in recent years and copywriting becomes vital part in it. Along with the development of digitalization, social media does not only become communication platform but also promotion or marketing tools. Social networks, for instance Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, offer the exclusive promotion services. (Abreu & Antonio, 2017). Instagram is one of the most popular platforms for promotion. It provides both image and text for description. Hence, copywriting is crucial for posting since it requires the right words to deliver the message.

Recently, Instagram is used in all sectors including hotel industry for certain purposes like marketing or brand awareness only. However, posting the attractive picture is not enough in order to communicate the main purpose. It should be completed with the right description by writing caption or copywriting. By analyzing the text in copywriting, its purpose can be identified using language function theory. According to Leech's language functions theory, language has five fundamental functions, as follows: informational, expressive, directive, phatic, and aesthetic function. (Geoffrey Leech, 1969). Having analyzed the functions of language dominantly used in that copywriting,

the purpose of Instagram usage can be determined.

This research aims to identify the language functions used by The Alana Hotel & Convention Center Solo to write captions in Instagram. Following it, this research analyzes the purpose of copywriting through the dominant language function. This research is conducted under qualitative method and applies library research. Language function in copywriting is analyzed in five functions of language theory by Geoffrey Leech using Pragmatic approach. Initially, the findings will lead to the main purpose of Instagram copywriting used by The Alana Hotel & Convention Center Solo, whether it is for brand awareness or marketing purpose.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is conducted under qualitative method. Denzin and Lincoln in (Aspers & Corte, 2019) states that qualitative research emphasizes on collecting empirical materials, for instances observation, life story, visual texts, case study, interview, and so on. Unlike quantitative method, qualitative method is not measured by quantity aspects. This method does not examine numerical data processing but focuses on non-numerical data such as documents. In line with it, Cresswell in (McNabb, 2020) points out that qualitative research needs researcher to collect and gather data through analyzing documents. It does not rely on a single data source but needs multiple sources or documents to review and organize into specific categories.

For data gathering method, this research applies library research by collecting data from relevant documents, for instances books, journals, mass media articles, and other electronic sources. Primary data is taken from English copywriting of the latest Instagram posts from The Alana Hotel & Convention Center Solo. Data sample is taken from Instagram posts during December 2022. Data analysis procedure is conducted in several steps. First, read the primary data and analyze them based on theoretical framework. Following it, data are clustered and categorized based on certain categories. These categories encompass Leech's five functions of language which are informational, expressive, directive, phatic, and aesthetic function. Having categorized all data, it can define the dominant function found in data

and analyze this finding to determine the main purpose of using Instagram copywriting.

This research employs Geoffrey Leech's five functions of language, including informational, expressive, directive, phatic, and aesthetic function, as method of analysis. Leech's language functions theory analyzes the dominant functions used in Instagram copywriting. The dominant language functions are analyzed in copywriting theory by Tom Albrighton in order to reveal the main purpose of using copywriting for Instagram.

3. LITERARY REVIEW

3.1. Relevant Studies

(Susanthi et al., 2021) in their journal entitled *The Language Functions Used in Guiding Conversation: Pragmatics Approach*, analyze the formulation language in guiding conversation in Ubud tourist destinations. This formulation is examined in Leech's five functions of language. This research employs surveys among guides as the method and applies note-taking and recording technique to collect data. It results the language functions used in guiding conversation are informative, expressive, directive, and phatic functions. Regardless of the same theory and discipline (Tourism area), my research is distinguished from this research as my research object focuses on hotel Instagram copywriting.

(Kurniawan et al., 2021) in their journal entitled *"Analysis of Social Media Instagram Effectivity in Hotel Industries (A Case Study Approach)"*, analyze the Instagram effectiveness for hotel to attract customer. This research applies analytics tools and content analysis as the method. The finding shows that four and five-star hotels use Instagram effectively for marketing purpose. My research is different seen in theoretical framework and approach. My analysis specifically points out the language used in copywriting to determine hotel purpose in using Instagram.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

As a tool of communication, language serves several functions for society. Basically, language delivers the certain message from the speaker to the listener including delivering information. As (Kanaza, 2020) also states that language is used to interact within humans as a medium to communicate each other like

exchanging information, opinion, or ideas. Beside for communication tool, language actually has various functions based on the purpose. The function of language has been studied in several theories. One of those theories is Geoffrey Leech's language function theory. Geoffrey Leech categorizes language function into five functions which are informational, expressive, phatic, directive, and aesthetic functions. (Manzoor et al., 2019).

a. Informational Function

As its name, language is use to convey information. Through language, people deliver information, data, or knowledge to other people. This function emphasizes language as a tool for sharing information or knowledge.

Example in a sentence: *"Alana is 5-star hotel in Surakarta"*.

This sentence aims to give information to people that Alana is 5-star hotel located in Surakarta.

b. Expressive Function

According to Leech in (Manzoor et al., 2019) expressive function refers to speaker's or writer's attitude or feeling toward something. In other words, language is used to express someone's feeling or attitude. It includes swears and exclamations. Since it is about the speaker's feeling, expressive function focuses on the speaker itself.

Example in sentence: *"It is such a lovely day to spend holiday at this beautiful beach"*.

Through this sentence, the speaker expresses his/ her happiness to spend holiday at the beach. Moreover, the speaker also expresses his/ her thought about the beach which he/ she considers the beach is beautiful.

c. Phatic Function

The term "phatic" is initially introduced by Malinowski. Basically, phatic concept is used to create the harmonic social interactions through communication (Sutrisno, 2019). Phatic concept is then developed by Jakobson. Jakobson in (Linask, 2018) explains that phatic is a way of communication including to begin, maintain, and end the communication. In line with it, Leech in (Manzoor et al., 2019) explains that language has a phatic function in order to open communication and maintain social relations. The common forms of phatic communication are greeting, farewell, or courtesy. Phatic communication can be easily

found in daily life such as "Hi!", "Good morning!", "See you later!", and many more.

d. Directive Function

Leech defines language has directive function which aims to make other people to do something. (Ayu et al., 2022). In other words, language is used to influence other people's behavior and attitude. The common forms of directive function can be found in request, command, invitation, direction, suggestion, or advice. Unlike the expressive function which focuses on the speaker itself, directive function emphasizes the listener or the reader. The purpose is in the listener's or the reader's behavior or attitude.

Example in a sentence: *"Let's study hard before the final exam!"*

This sentence obviously shows that the speaker wants to ask the listener to study hard before they face the final exam. The listener is expected to do what the speaker says.

e. Aesthetic Function

The term "aesthetic" in lexical meaning refers to beauty. In words, beauty is represented in poetic aspects. According to Leech, language also has aesthetic function. However, language usage only emphasizes on the linguistic artifact itself. It means that there is no certain ulterior expressed in a sentence. (UKEssays, 2021). This function is commonly found in poetry which requires poetic aspects in language.

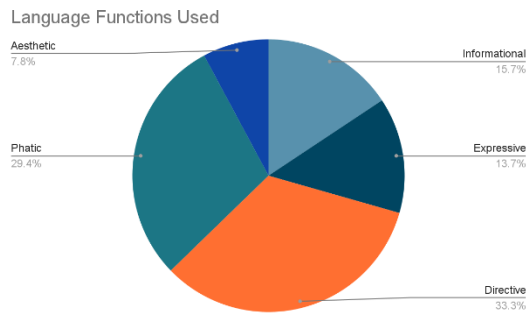
Example in a sentence: *"The smell of roses and the chirping birds beautifies this spring."*

This sentences vividly portrays the beauty of spring season by the roses and the birds. There is no ulterior message represented in this sentence since this sentence purely describes the beauty of the words. In other words, this sentence does not tend to deliver hidden message.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result finds that there are five language functions used in Instagram copywriting of Alana Hotel Solo. Directive function is found dominantly with 33.3% among the copywriting and followed by Phatic function with 29.4%. Besides, Informational function is found with 15.7% while Expressive function is found with 13.7%. Aesthetic function is found least with 7.8% among all copywriting.

Chart 1. The Language Functions Percentage



The analysis of each function represented in copywritings as follows:

a. Directive Function

“Lunch at Cinnamon Restaurant will be perfect today and we have special wine and dine for Your Christmas. Just swipe left and for further information, WhatsApp us on +62271 745 1555.”

Directive function basically aims to influence someone else’s behavior or action. This copywriting explicitly shows that Alana Hotel requests for the customer to book a seat at its restaurant. This request is shown in the statement **“WhatsApp us on +62271 745 1555”** so that the customer can find the information and make a reservation through this number. However, it begins with the informational statement before it makes a request statement.

Picture 1. The Detailed Dinner Package Offer



Source: The Alana Solo Instagram

Alana Hotel Solo gives the detailed information about lunch at the restaurant by adding **“just swipe left”**. This complete information contains the menu package, price, schedule, and inclusion. After the customers swipe the post and find the detailed information about the

restaurant, they are expected to make a reservation.

In Copywriting, it is defined as Call to Action (CTA). CTA is one of elements in Copywriting technique. According to Albrighton, CTA is a statement containing particular purposes like invitation for people to take real action. The most common actions are purchasing product, expressing enjoyment or interest, and many more based on the purpose of the copy. (Jesslyn & Agustiniingsih, 2021). CTA in this caption is used to invite people to purchase product by making reservation through the contact number provided.

“Oven Baked Salmon, enjoy a fantastic meal in a wonderful holiday atmosphere. Come to Cinnamon Restaurant and taste it.”

This statement obviously shows that Alana Hotel Solo persuasively asks the customer to come and dine at its restaurant. In the previous statement, Alana Hotel Solo also gives the information about the menu. By giving the detailed menu, it will attract the customer’s attention and consider coming. In Copywriting technique, this is a strategy to persuade customer. Albrighton states that copywriting is an optimal communication aiming to promote or persuade. (Jesslyn & Agustiniingsih, 2021). **“Come to”** and **“taste it”** in this context, do not mean as a command. Both statements tend to show the direct invitation for the customers. Alana Hotel Solo wants to ask the customer to experience its great menu with the great holiday ambience offered.

“Have you ever felt the kiss of an elf? It will lead You to fly to a dream with its combination of sweet, sour, and a flavor of tea. Enjoy it. With Us, create an Amazing Christmas. How can that be? Simply swipe left.”

This caption basically represents the directive function seen in the last sentences. However, it begins with the illustration first. Elf is a Christmas term referring to a tiny imaginary creature who assists Santa Clause during Christmas. Christmas brings happiness for everyone who celebrates it. **“Have you ever felt the kiss of an elf? It will lead You to fly to a dream with its combination of sweet, sour, and a flavor of tea”** shows that an Elf will fly and

wander the earth during Christmas to spread the goodness. Those sentences implies that people will feel happiness after they taste the sweet-sour beverage.



Picture 2. The Detailed Christmas Package Offer
Source: The Alana Solo Instagram

Following it, Alana Hotel Solo invites the people to enjoy that pleasing beverage. Furthermore, Alana Hotel Solo invites people to celebrate an amazing Christmas there. It infers that Alana Hotel Solo can provide the happiness for people during Christmas by featuring the detailed information about the menu package. *“Simply swipe left”* explicitly asks the people to observe the menu offered by only swiping left. People can check the complete information including the rate, inclusion, discount, and contact information for ordering. By giving the complete information, people are expected to finally reserve the menu package.

b. Phatic Function

“Welcome to The Alana Hotel & Convention Center Solo, Mr. Hatta Rajasa (Coordinating Minister for Economy of Indonesia 2009 - 2014), and thank you for choosing Us for the great staycation experience.”

Phatic function refers to the way of communication including to open, keep, and end the communication. This caption indicates that Alana Hotel Solo tries to communicate with one of its customers, exactly Mr. Hatta Rajasa, former Coordinating Minister for Economy of Indonesia. *“Welcome”* is used as greeting especially to greet someone as he/ she arrives. This caption shows that Alana Hotel Solo greets

its VIP customer when he arrives there. Furthermore, Alana Hotel Solo also delivers its appreciation to Mr. Hatta Rajasa for staying at its hotel by saying *“thank you”*. Thank-you is an expression to appreciate someone who has done something. It can be inferred that Alana Hotel Solo builds interaction with its customers by greeting and giving appreciation for their reservations.

Greeting is one of the common phatic communication forms. This is the polite way to welcome someone else. Greeting is also found in this following sentence:

“Welcome to The Alana Hotel & Convention Center Solo, Persija Jakarta, @persija , have a great match !!!”

Similar to the previous sentences, Alana Hotel Solo also greets its customer by saying *“welcome to”*. It depicts hotel hospitality to the guest, especially the special guest. Besides, Alana Hotel Solo delivers its hope for Persija Jakarta, a football club from Jakarta, depicted in *“have a great match”*. This sentence infers that Alana Hotel Solo hopes that Persija Jakarta could successfully win the match. In this context, Alana Hotel Solo intends to maintain its relations with the customer.

Maintaining the relations with the customers is also done in another occasion, especially in special day such as Christmas. It can be represented in the following sentence:

“Merry Christmas with lots of love.”

“Merry Christmas” is shortened version of *“We wish you a merry Christmas”*. *“Merry Christmas”* is a popular festive greeting in December. The word “merry” has similar meaning with happy or enjoyment. This expression means that we hope someone else can enjoy happy time at Christmas. Through this expression, it can be inferred that Alana Hotel Solo wants to greet everyone by wishing them a happiness and love at Christmas celebration. This is a way to build connection or relation between hotel and customer through festive greeting.

c. Informational Function

“Tilapia Pesmol, presenting a traditional Sundanese menu with an unique flavor that tells a tale for each bite.”

Language has informational function which means as a way to convey information to the other people. This caption obviously shows that Alana Hotel Solo gives the information about Tilapia Pesmol menu by explaining the origin and the taste. It is stated that Tilapia Pesmol is a traditional food from Sundanese, an ethnic group in West Java. Furthermore, Alana Hotel Solo explains that Tilapia Pesmol has a unique taste in every bite. Through its sentence, Alana Hotel Solo informs the customer that it provides unique traditional menu from Sunda, West Java.

Informational function does not imply the certain message since it purposely delivers information. This caption has no certain tendency. Unlike the directive function containing the tendency to influence people's behaviors, this caption purely delivers information to people. There is no directive expression found. Delivering information is found in another caption below.

“Otok-otok kayu is a wood-based traditional toy with an unique sound when played. In our lobby, you can find Otok-otok Kayu and other traditional toys.”

This caption shows that Alana Hotel Solo gives the information about traditional toy named Otok-otok kayu. It is kind of wooden toys which produces unique sound when it is played. Alana Hotel Solo also adds that it provides traditional toys as the decoration at the lobby. *“You can find”* here informs the people that when they visit or stay at Alana Hotel Solo, they can see the traditional toys at the lobby. This caption infers that Alana Hotel Solo wants to inform the facility provided in there. Sharing information is also found in another caption below.

“The Alana Hotel & Convention Center Karanganyar collaborated with Putra Putri Lawu to organize Wonder Experience as part of the Karanganyar 105th anniversary celebration on a beautiful morning at

Colomadu Car Free Day. We appreciate everyone that joined us.”

Through this caption, Alana Hotel Solo informs that it facilitates collaborative event with other parties which is government institution of Karanganyar district. Alana Hotel Solo tries to inform that it organizes an event as the series of Karanganyar 105th anniversary celebration. Basically, it conveys the information about the facilities provided which is organizing an event. However, Alana Hotel Solo also delivers its gratitude everyone who has participated. In this caption, there are two functions found, informational and phatic functions. In the last sentence, Alana Hotel Solo also builds the communication with other people by expressing a gratitude. This caption combines both informational and phatic functions. It can be inferred that Alana Hotel Solo does not only convey the information about its facility but also expresses its gratitude toward people's participations.

d. Expressive Function

Like its name, expressive function is used to express the speaker's or the writer's feeling and attitude. It is found in the following captions:

“It is a blessed day for Us because we shared a lot of smile, happiness, and amazing experience with Grand Mother and Grand Father at Nursing Home GKJ Margoyudan. Let it be a hope and love in the Christmas spirit.”

This caption shows Alana Hotel Solo's blessing after it held a program with elderlies at GKJ Margoyudan Nursing Home. Alana Hotel Solo expresses its blessing by mentioning that this program brings happiness and amazing experience. The word “smile”, “happiness”, and “amazing” express the feeling of being blessed. Alana Hotel Solo also expresses its hope in the last sentence. It hopes that this program spreads love for the spirit of Christmas. The feeling of blessing is also expressed in another caption below:

“December is a great month, filled with joy and blessings. Thank you for allowing us to be blessed for the GKJ Margoyudan family's nursing home. We are ready for 2023.”

Through this caption, Alana Hotel Solo expresses its blessing and happiness. It says that December is a great month which refers to Christmas festive. In order to celebrate Christmas, Alana Hotel Solo visits GKJ Margoyudan Nursing Home, a nursing home managed by local church. It shows that this visit brings happiness and blessing for Alana Hotel Solo. From two captions above, it can be concluded that Alana Hotel Solo posts in Instagram to express its feelings, which are blessing and joy.

e. Aesthetic Function

Aesthetic function emphasizes the artifacts of the language itself. Hence, it has no certain purpose. Language delivers the beauty of the words and it is commonly used in poetry or literary works. Speaking of poetry, it is identical with figurative language usage such as metaphor, personification, or metonymy. (Ayu et al., 2022). It can use symbol or representation in language.

“Christmas is the season for kindling the fire of hospitality.”

This caption shows that Alana Hotel Solo describes Christmas as the time to build the spirit of hospitality. Fire symbolizes the spirit. Kindling the fire can be defined as building the spirit. Meanwhile, Christmas is considered as peak season which comes more guests than other seasons. Through this caption, Alana Hotel Solo implies that Christmas is the moment to build the spirit of hospitality since it needs extra service to assist more guests.

“Christmas is doing a little something extra for someone.”

Literally, Christmas is Christian holy day to celebrate Jesus Christ's birth. It is celebrated every December 25th and becomes the public holiday. This caption does not define Christmas as holiday but represents a special and meaningful moment. Alana Hotel Solo defines Christmas as a meaningful moment to treat someone specially.

5. SUMMARY AND SUGGESTION

a. Summary

Leech's 5 language functions are all founded in Instagram copywriting of Alana Hotel Solo. The dominant functions are directive and phatic followed by the informational and expressive functions. Meanwhile, aesthetic function is rarely used in this copywriting. Generally, directive function is used to invite the customer to make a reservation or purchase the product offered. Phatic function is used to maintain the relationship with the customer by greeting and showing gratitude. Informational function is used to present the information about the hotel products, for instance menu, facilities, and event organized by Alana Hotel Solo. Another minor function is expressive function which is used to express certain feelings such as blessing and joy, mostly in certain occasions like during the festive season. Although aesthetic function is rarely found in copywriting, it is still used. However, it does not imply any certain message but only general quotation or aesthetic words, especially in special occasion such as festive season.

Through the dominant functions, directive and phatic, used in copywriting, it can be inferred that Instagram account has social roles. In other words, Alana Hotel Solo tends to use Instagram for communication media like marketing and maintaining relations with the customers.

b. Suggestion

This research is expected to emerge further research covering wider objects. The scope of the studies can be added diversely. In the future, this research topic can be developed by the analysis of language functions used in social media copywriting of several hotels in Surakarta area.

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