

Multimodality in Influencer Culture and Language: An Autoethnography - Sayma Tasfia Safa (172013051)

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**Multimodality in Influencer Culture and Language:
An Autoethnography**



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3rd June, Spring

Multimodality in Influencer Culture and Language: An Autoethnography

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.

(Supervisor Name)

Designation

Department of English and Humanities

DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

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Dedication

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I would like to dedicate this thesis paper to myself for not giving up in the last four years.

Acknowledgements

My deepest gratitude goes out to some of the most amazing people I have met in ULAB. Among them, my supervisor Dr Mahmud Hasan Khan, Arifa Rahman, Muntasir Mamun and Nishat Atiya Shoilee will always be my biggest inspirations. Being able to grow up around them has been a blessing

I am grateful to the entire DEH family for always treating me with love and warmth, for making my journey so smooth and giving me some lifetime friends.

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Abstract

The thesis paper is based on how and in what way multimodality is being used by social media influencers. It is an autoethnography as the content for the analysis or discussion of this paper will mostly come from my Instagram blog account. The paper talks about different features of an app called “Instagram” which popularized the word “Influencer” in recent times. This research will specifically work on the area of Influencer’s language of different modes and how these modes influence the followers of them. It will establish the connection between modes of languages and their power of controlling the followers of bloggers and influencers starting from their personal life to purchasing behavior and overall psychology. Readers will have a clearer vision on how this multimodal system works in the influencer marketing field at the end of the research.

Chapter ONE

Introduction

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In recent years, social media has become an important advertising platform for brands looking to reach consumers online. Not to mention, it has been the only in and out for any sort of communication and shopping in the ongoing pandemic and quarantine life. To put it simply out there, social media influencers are the people who influence the general audiences' consumerism behavior. The way they influence this behavior has everything to do with the multimodality of language they use. The research stands out as it focuses on the linguistic aspect of "Influencer Culture" which is still a very new topic that hasn't been talked or written about much. It will help to understand how language in different forms nudges people to engage in the broader spectrum of online businesses and communication with the help of social media influencers. Influencers are rapidly building this new online economy, charging hundreds/thousands of dollars per sponsored post according to the number of their followers. Bloggers or influencers have few fixed terms when it comes to promoting businesses as they know they have to capture the attention of the social media users. That is why language tactics are a very important part of their work as it determines how much an audience would be convinced by the post they are seeing and engaging with. The main focus of the research would be on how multimodality works for social media influencers (Instagram, Facebook) as they post their contents that use different types of multimodal texts to spread their creativity that keeps the online market buzzing all the time.

The Internet has been our savior in the past few years but it has proven to be the ultimate source of entertainment, income, staying connected to people we know in the time of covid 19. That is when the influencer culture has resurfaced quite strongly which kind of made

sure that small ventures stay in the business, people can justify a product before buying from online. The way Influencers worked from home and united for greater campaigns like safety during Covid 19, young UN volunteers, groceries for everyone, rickshaw pullers drive- help them survive etc. reflected their ways of using language in multiple forms to connect with their followers. It is the right use of the multimodality that keeps people engaged in it as the followers develop some sort of faith on the influencers they follow because of how they portray their mindset, lifestyle and beliefs.

As an Influencer, I have been a part of all the mentioned campaigns during Covid 19 where we were paid a good amount to make people aware of each campaign. All we had to do was make sure to make each of our posts striking with our visuals or captions. The amount of likes or interactions on the post depends on how well we execute the content. If it is well made and the message is clearly visible, followers will stop to put down their thoughts otherwise they will just simply ignore this just like thousands of other posts. That is why the power of multimodal texts or the visuals at the same time is so important in Influencer Culture.

This particular Multimodal research will provide us with the opportunity to look at the use of language by bloggers or influencers in social media from more than one perspective. It is a theoretical approach which brings different forms of communication and representation used by us under one roof. Multimodal research opts for more than one method to collect data. In that way, it is possible to generate multiple forms of the same kind of data. Multimodal research consists of ideas generated from different modes of communication. Usually we see two types of multimodal texts, one being the Paper Based Multimodal Texts and the other one is Live Multimodal Texts. Paper based multimodal texts consist of graphic novels, books with pictures

or pictorials, comics, posters etc. Live multimodal texts include oral storytelling, dance performance or express meaning through other ways such as gestures, audio, sign, oral language etc. The data type could be aural, visual or written. For example, a study on the visuals as in the pictures posted on social feeds with the written caption would be a multimodal analysis which contains both the picture and a text.

This paper's center of attention would be on the variation of the language used through the written caption or the visual image posted by the blogger/influencer which will come from my auto-ethnographic experience. The way we use language to manipulate our followers to maintain the chain of online businesses says a lot about the impact we have over social media. However, influencer culture can get toxic as well as sometimes it broods on negativity, falsity, anxiety where it leads people to be unsure and insecure about them and their choices. So as a general user we have to keep in mind what sort of energy we are allowing to consume us while being in our virtual space. Choosing to follow people who match your values and give out the notion that their space is for celebrating life through a positive lens will give us the best view on Influencer Culture. That is why their language of putting contents out there on the Internet carry a lot of significance. When we follow people we trust and let their way of life influence us, we create an invisible bond over the internet. This works as proof that influencers do actually influence the audience in real life otherwise "Influencer Culture" wouldn't have been a trend to follow. This trend gave birth to a lot of other trends that come from bloggers and influencers for example they often depict their own ideas of health, fitness, body positivity and movements like #metoo for sexual assaults, supporting LGBTQ, #blacklivesmatter through their posts. We have

to keep in mind that all of these trends are massively reposted and shared and often give birth to associated trends through multimodality of language.

The statement of the research problem

Social media sites are easily accessible from all over the country now which is why the amount of the users are always going up. There is no denying in the fact that it is addictive and we always want to see more. We are always refreshing the feed for new posts and making sure that we do not miss a single thing out. This recurring habit of always checking our social accounts is very much new because it simply did not exist 3/4 years back when the “Influencer Culture” was yet to emerge. I could hardly find research online on my topic, but I have found articles as subbranches to my topic for example semiotic aspects of social networks, critical discourse of Instagram posts etc.

Therefore, the paper will be focusing on how the “Influencer Culture ” in social media offers predesigned templates in exchange of information and how users respond to this from the lens of my auto ethnographic approach through multimodal analysis. The research will also display how the structured language of social media builds up online businesses and influences the language knowledge of people from all ages.

Background to the problem:

Understanding the impact of the “Influencer Culture” can give us access to new ways of using language, new structures, words and slangs. The paper will adopt the multimodal

approach to analyze text based social media data and visual data taken from Instagram, Facebook to investigate how the language used in these platforms enter our daily life and influence our mentality, work, lifestyle etc. through my experience of being a blogger.

The impacts of the “Influencer Culture” may have its ups and downs which can also be determined by the quality of the language expressed through text based and visual data. The sponsored static posts, stories mentioning brands while receiving gifts or invitation cards from them, videos with prewritten scripts from the brand; the success of all these steps depend on the proper use of multimodality.

Objective:

#to explain the multimodal social media texts (e.g., templates, pictures, and videos) in the context of “influencer/blogger community” theoretically and methodologically.

Chapter TWO

Literature Review

Autoethnography and its structure:

My research being an autoethnography, I would like to start with a few points that would make my topic clearer and make the readers understand where I am coming from. Choosing to write about a topic that I have almost taken as my career and have been seeing closely for the last four years should be insightful as I think to share with others. So, ethnographers are known to be people who are inseparable from their research topic as they embody the whole process of it. Usually it is looked at as an approach to the research that revolves around cultural analysis keeping the self at the center. According to Heewon Chang (2008, p. 49), autoethnography is a mere narration of self to engage in cultural analysis and interpretation. She also brings classification in autoethnography research for us to successfully execute it which are:

1. Descriptive/self-affirmative
2. Analytical/interpretive
3. Confessional/self-critical (p. 39)

Autoethnography adds value to a research through a blend of personal experiences and cultural framework that enables readers to have a more meaningful understanding of the topic (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Wall, 2008). It encourages the author to be more independent while describing his/her point of view and let him/her incorporate the ideas of positionality and

experience (Adams, Jones, & Ellis, 2015; Stahlke Wall, 2018). So ultimately this method of research makes sure the author is solely attached to what is being written and it is accompanied with the personal experience that let the cultures being researched upon that (Pelias,2003). This is why the method is put together to be called (auto as in self and ethno as in culture) autoethnography (Ellis,2004).

Concept of the use of Multimodality:

Social media is a staple for the younger generation now. There is hardly any individual with no social media account these days as it is somehow the best way to keep up with friends, family, work, business, education etc. We are hooked to influencers doing promotional live, posing in pictures or making a “how to” video with the products that may or may not be necessary. It is because we are attracted to how they are constructing their language throughout this work. A static post with not enough information about the products or a promotional caption with grammatical or syntax error.

To promote the idea of ⁶multimodal conception of language, we have to keep in mind that to which extent the objects of our study are constructed by an interplay of the present state of theory, technology and discourse (Kuhn, 1962; Foucault, 1972). There was a time when the goal of a language was limited to the ¹³grammar of a language only, however now ⁶the goal goes beyond that. It is now more about the documentation of language exercise in order to establish a “lasting, multipurpose record of a language” (Himmelmann,2006, p.1). This is where the technology comes in which is related to our topic as it helps with the documentation of language that demands video recording of language in different scales including its varieties of use and social

interactions. So this clearly indicates our use of multimodality of language which will preserve language in the long run while making it the semiotically diverse modes of communication.

Only very few works have been done on multimodality of social media posts and users previously even though social media is the best example of different modes of communication. We also do not have many people who wrote on Influencers and their ways of constructing language for the purpose of e-commerce. I have come across a few articles and blogs that touch the surface of my research topic which I have tried to incorporate and relate with my area of work.

Social media Influencer:

Micro Celebrities as known as “Influencers” as well, ⁷ a term coined by Senft (2013), are popular ⁷ for what they do to strategically attract followers by exchanging personal information for marketing purposes, mobilizing online identity as a brand in itself, involving online self-presentation practices (Marwick, 2015; Senft, 2013). Their way of self-presenting to establish a brand of their face solely depends on the language portraying through the different modes like speech, images, writing, illustration, digital screen (Hurley, 2019). Each of these modes is structured in accordance with semiotic resource concepts that are recognized in a social context. Videos, photos, sounds, voice, text, captions, and hashtags are the multimodal semiotic tools of the social media application Instagram. Such semiotic technical tools come together to establish social definitions that take place over time in combinations and alter to constitute and represent social boundaries. All of these articles talk about how influencers or micro celebrities construct their own identity by modes of languages. They represent themselves through their

personal contents for a certain period of time, until they gain a significant number of followers. After that they would be more inclined to promote businesses with the help of written caption, photos or hashtags. These hashtags are very interesting as well because it allows users to find and follow conversations on specific topics. Hashtags are short yet meaningful but it always doesn't have to be a full word rather it can be shortcuts for example, #tb meaning throwback, #ngl meaning not going to lie etc.

Social media sites have also produced ¹ their own words. Words like Hashtag, Selfie, GIF, dm, photobomb, meme, troll, noob and many more were nonexistent ¹ before the advent of social media, but now with the emergence of social media, these words are more common than ever.

Another study has been done by Evans, Phua and Jun on the ⁴ conceptual understanding of how customers interpret and respond to persuasive messages by the Persuasion Information Model (PKM). These persuasive messages are the game changer as these enable the ⁴ use of coping strategies such as heightened skepticism, resistance, and counter-arguing while advertising entailment. All these promotional activities of Influencers are meant to be persuasive otherwise they will actually not be "influencing" anyone with their posts. If somehow a user or consumer (as you may say) fail to recognize the persuasion message in the caption, the visual image or any other modes, the PKM stays disabled meaning that the language used really didn't work and the promotion is a failure. They talk about the advertising disclosure language of social media sites which detects the language for sponsored posts, paid ads. These nonorganic posts have their good and bad effects on the followers. Research shows that disclosures in differing capacities can impact effective, cognitive, and behavioral effects. Studies investigating the effect

of disclosures show a substantial negative impact on attitudes related to the brand. So it all comes down to how well put together the sponsored or paid caption is and how natural and realistic it appears to the followers.

The use of emojis and emoticons is another evolution in the vocabulary of social media.

Since the early days of the internet, before social media appeared, emoticons have been in use. Emoticon use has been traced back to the 19th century (Heid, 2015). Professor Scott Fahlman's first use of emoticons in the new, digital era was in 1982. Professor Fahlman suggested using ':-) and':-(on the computer science message board for Carnegie Mellon University to differentiate jokes from more serious posts. "There is a new wave of emoticons, called emojis, which are progressively used in mobile communications and social media" (Novak et al 1), writes Petra Kralj Novak, a researcher at the Department of Knowledge Technologies. Each emoji can express a whole mood, sometimes enough to just put in the caption all by itself. The emojis can define if the post is negative or positive when the bloggers or influencers don't want to put much work on the caption or the content writing and that is why they are also called pseudo language.

Instagram influencers do tend to get personal with their language to connect with their followers as well. They share personal stories and journeys to positively influence their followers. For example, Bangladeshi influencer Nabela Noor who is currently residing in the USA made her Instagram all about body positivity as she is a plus size. She also works with brands that are only suitable for plus size girls as she thinks there are enough regular size brands who work with regular size influencers. Her influencing style is very genuine and followers can

relate to her easily. She embraces her body and does not stop herself from enjoying anything that's only available to skinny girls conventionally (Johnson,2018). We have other beauty influencers as well who share their acne story, how it is okay to not have clear, perfect and filtered skin for the sake of selfies. They bond with their followers by using emotional language. They also would throw a strategic question to the followers to answer in the comment section. In that way they do not only open up different portals of conversations but also boost up the engagement of that particular post.

Multimodality, Expansion Theory and their application in digital field:

Language can be combined with visual, auditory and kinetic resources to develop a very complex output over time. For new kinds of meanings to be made it takes different types of media modalities. So to understand the meaning implemented in a social media message, it is a must to pinpoint the media modalities as this identifies what semiotic resources are to be considered. Any digital conversation, comment or activity across social media consisting of multimodal messages are brought together by inter semiotic relations. This means that a message that contains more than one mode is designed to be understood/read together. To understand this better, an intersemiotic framework has been developed by Halliday and Hasan (1976) named "Expansion Theory". It is a theory that talks about the resources that bind a text in multiple modes and gives it unity. This intersemiotic theory is used to figure out what each multimodal message means in the digital conversation, comments, activities and how they interact with each other and create fresh meanings. Meaning can be determined and understood in one of three ways with co-occurring modes, such as an image and text, by concurrence, complementarity or

enhancement. Concurrence is the first and most important intersemiotic resource that has three parts which are clarification, exposition and exemplification. Clarification happens when one multimodal mode for example, a written text clarifies another mode e.g. an image. Exposition orchestrates the re-expression of the picture or text's meaning in substitute mode and lastly exemplification happens when "may be an example or instance of what is in the text or the text may include an example of what is depicted more generally in the image" (Unsworth 2006, 1175). Complementarity, the second intersemiotic resource refers to one mode adding meaning to another mode. Lastly, the third resource Enhancement takes place when meanings are multiplied by one another. There are four kinds of Enhancement according to Unsworth, 2006 which are: condition, spatial, casual and temporal.

Chapter THREE

Methodology

The research will follow the method of the autoethnography as I myself am a blogger and the data will be collected from my online friends', selected influencer bloggers, and my feed. An autoethnography is a method of qualitative research where the author self reflects and incorporates her cultural experiences in a systematic way. Autoethnography combines characteristics of both autobiography and ethnography. Autobiography is more about the past experiences whereas ethnography studies culture, common beliefs and values etc. Ethnography is done in order to help outsiders and insiders understand better about the culture with in-depth knowledge.

The data will be collected from my Instagram account. The data will consist of my static post, promotional caption paid and unpaid post, igtv stories and videos, both paid and unpaid. The data will also be taken from my fellow blogger/influencer friend's feed in order to explore how Bangladeshi bloggers appear online. I will also include the engagement of each Instagram or facebook post in detail depending on the visual image or the caption used, and how persuasive the messages that are coming through them. The more the language structure of each post is arranged, the better the engagement of it. To make a post successful and worthy of the time and energy put behind it, it is very important to construct the written speech of it.

Making the research an autoethnography will enable my reader to understand my point of view better as I have real experiences and I do not have to rely on a third party to gather my

data. My data will be as raw as possible with an honest explanation of how and why bloggers work the way they work, what we have in mind when we are building a post and how far do we think before finalizing it. It will also include how a mishap happens because of misunderstanding that gets created through weakly structured language. The screenshots of the feeds of the bloggers will be the main data to analyze. Beside that I will also add my psychological opinion on what I think and brainstorm before working with a brand, creating a content for them and finally posting about it. The autoethnography will also present how brands approach bloggers and vice versa. The language of the email proposal, the framework of the contents to be done, the remuneration offered follow a very specific outline of the language.

Chapter FOUR

Multimodality in “Influencer Culture”

Multimodality is a way of analyzing social interactions that revolves around language but not studying language as it is. With the word “multi” existing in it, it can easily be said that it has something to do with multiple literacies in one medium at the same time. It is a nonlinguistic aspect of language that includes facial expression, gestures and sometimes body language as well. It has two meanings to it, first it refers to the design of the text and second it refers to the procedures that had to be followed while doing the design. The main idea behind multimodality is to represent a smoother transition in oral, written, visual, audio, prints etc. modes when a reader/learner tries to make meanings out of any particular text. It is a seamless combination of graphics, text and touch input to give us an array of possibilities of understanding one text from multiple lenses. ⁸ Adopting a multimodal approach at linguistic analysis entails looking at how language is embedded within a broader social semiotic rather than a decision to “side-line” language. The relation to new media and technologies have been developed and improved at the same time with the help of the multimodal approach. It provides us with the concept, method and framework to analyze different modes as talked about above. There are few theoretical assumptions about multimodal approaches. Firstly, representation and communication are the key factors in multimodality as they play with multiplicity of modes to bring out meanings. Secondly, it is presumed that language resources are reshaped by the society over time to present the meaning demanded by the different societies/communities. Lastly and thirdly,

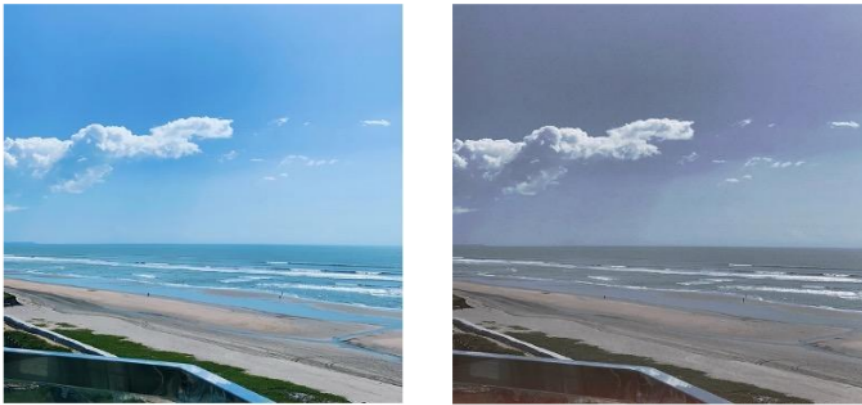
communication behavior is influenced by the motives of people existing in a specific social context and it is drawn by the pattern of delivering at the time of sign making.

Moving on, our next point to be understood is what is "Influencer Culture". To make it easier, an influencer is someone who has a decent number of followers and influences other general people through his/her work, lifestyle, beliefs and other actions. Now, a social media influencer is someone who has established themselves as a virtual persona with credibility in certain areas. An influencer develops his/her audiences by posting quality contents that inform and entertain that enables both the parties to bond and create a virtual liking and fondness. The definition of influencer might vary depending on the categories, reach, format of the content or even the social apps they use to build their career and drive the sales of particular brands. So, the definition of influencer is always subject to change but we will stick with the most common one for now. The "Influencer Culture", a very recently coined term which is inseparably knotted with consumerism and stands on the rise of technology. However it is completely not a new thing as commoners have been influenced by celebrities for years now. Celebrities influence us through their tv work, acting, singing, social work etc. but we do not get to relate to them in a personal way like we can do with a social media influencer as they try to keep their life as raw as possible there.

Now, influencer culture is existing and making its progress because of all the different modes of language it is exposed to. We have to remember that we as general followers fall for posts that are accurately put together with correct information and visual pictures that work as a clincher of our attention. A multimodal approach is a must for influencers to connect their followers with brands they are working with. Most posts on Instagram and Facebook are of

pictures/videos with short texts that somewhat describe what is in those pictures or videos. There has been an analysis done on the verbal and visual strategies of the influencers marketing using the analytical tools by the Systemic Functional Linguistic by Halliday (2004) and Visual Grammar by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) where they took nine individual posts from three different influencers and investigated them to compare and contrast in their use of multimodal strategies. The data indicated that there is a very similar pattern in every single post of the three influencers. The results made it quite clear that there is some sort of fixed strategy influencers follow for their sponsored post. Here, sponsored means that the influencers get paid by the brands to post about them or any of their particular products. In this case, they are given prior instructions by the brands on things like how they want to focus on the product, if the face of the influencer should be added or not, the timeline of the work and what should be in the caption, if the caption should giveaway the information that is a paid work etc.

For the reader to understand the relation between multimodality and influencer culture furthermore, I would like to give a more detailed example. Instagram app is one of the best multimodal tools and how do we know that? The initial step is to create a post with Instagram as this is what it is supposed to do rather than being just a picture taking app. However as it primarily started as a photography app, it offers a handful of filters and edit options to edit the photos before posting. So taking the photo and tweaking them a little bit with the filters are the basic things before actually posting them online. Here filters also carry significance as filters can Represent one's emotion or their taste in colors and even their psychological attitude etc. The two pictures poste below will give us a better idea about this.



Filter changes meaning/mood of a picture: different filters on the same picture can change the visualities hence it can display different emotions (happy/depressed).

So after that there is another mode added that is giving the visual image some life with a written caption. A written caption is a very important part in this whole process as users like to have some sort of idea about what is going on in the visual image or what the person wants to convey to the world. For instance, an adorable picture with your pet could either be of a good time or it could be the last memory of yours with it before it got lost or passed away. So unless it is not mentioned clearly in your caption the users will have no idea about your reasons behind posting that photo. Here, the use of emojis also tends to carry the meaning behind the post. Sometimes, emojis make captions clearer and clear out confusion. For example, if we look at the two photos below we will see how the caption and use of emojis influence the meaning behind it. The first one is a regular picture of me and my pet, the picture visualizes the essence of happiness but the caption confirms the emotion. However, the caption and the use of the broken heart emoji in the second picture confirms that something tragic might have happened. So the same photograph is giving out two different messages because of the written caption and emojis.



Fig 1

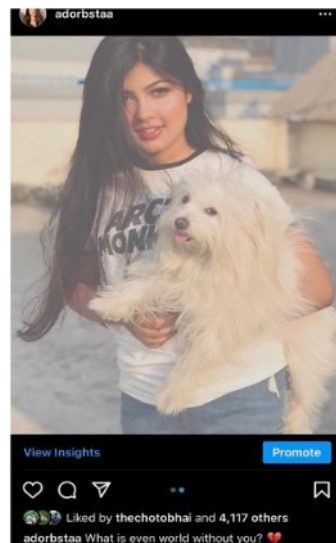
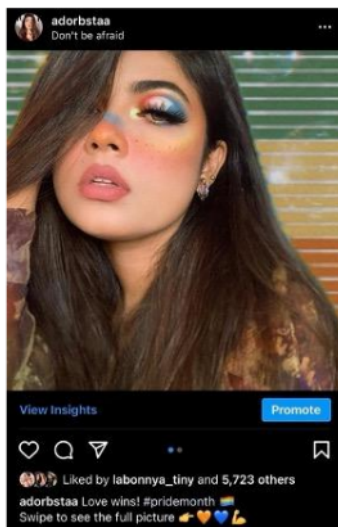


Fig 2

Next, to add more multimodal dimension to the post, one can use hashtags (#) which makes Instagram very interesting to use. While putting up certain hashtags with your post, you are releasing your picture in the broader spectrum of the Instagram world where anyone can see it by searching it up. Hashtags are direct links between the post and that specific theme so if anyone wants to find something specific in Instagram, they can easily do it with these hashtags. So after preparing your image and combining it with all the textual data it is now all prepared to set its sail in the sea of one of the biggest social media platforms. Thus, we can see that posting online takes a mixture of different modes to make meaning out of it and how all of these modes have potential to be meaningful which can illustrate the user's emotions through the photos (Poulsen, 2018, p. 132).



Here I have posted a picture that clearly shows my support for LGBTQ. The colors I have used for the makeup represent a rainbow which symbolizes my solidarity for the community. Pride month is known to be a month (June) which is dedicated to celebrate gay pride to honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan. The visual mode carries potential meanings in segments such as the eye makeup, the nose patch and the earring. However, if someone fails to recognize the meaning behind the visual mode (the makeup and getup); the text/caption will clear it out as it contains rainbow emojis and specially the hashtag which lets all the user access pictures that are about pride month or LGBTQ. Hashtags are also very important for ongoing protests like #freepalestine, #215Indigenouschildren, #freerozina, #amazonfire #covid19 etc. Influencers use these hashtags to raise awareness and capture the attention of news portals, other media and general users to gather help, generate donations. Some more visual examples are given below:



This was a collaborated campaign with a brand that raised donations for rickshaw pullers during the first wave of covid 19.



This was another campaign in collaboration with the UN for their 75th anniversary to encourage the volunteers who work for the UN.



All of these three pictures have double visual meaning as I am holding papers that send out messages as well.

This user-to-user interaction in Instagram was developed even more when the new feature “Stories” got released. Stories last for 24 hours and users can share every moment of the day through different modes such as picture, video, boomerang etc. This feature also gave birth to stickers, gifs (graphic interchange format), polls and many other beneficial options. Instagram stories now have become one of the most used features of social media because of its multimodality. It now offers polls, quizzes where our followers can directly send us messages and get connected. We can ask for donations or create a donation link that would directly go where it's intended to. Not to forget about the live broadcasting option where we can literally talk to our followers about any topic, showcase any product, or promote any business.

Instagram has also categorized influencers in different sections like advocative, promotive, exhibitionist, provocative, informative, entertainment etc. according to Kruk et al.

(2019). One does not necessarily have to fall under one section. Someone can be promotive and advocative at the same time but to gain and keep your followers interested it is suggested to stay relevant to your roots.

An advocative influencer wants to bring changes in the society through his/her writing, blog whereas a promotive influencer is someone who promotes businesses by making content for those brands. An exhibitionist influencer would be someone who mostly does freelancing and creates personal content.

Influencers now have made it so easy to shop, to donate, to fight against injustice, to get authentic news. As a promotive and exhibitionist/expressive influencer I have worked both in contract-based manner and independently. Sometimes brands that are paying the influencers do not want the audience to know about it. They want to keep the promotion as natural as possible so that the followers do not think that there might be some biasness. For example if we look at the picture below which is one of my works with the international franchise Miniso Bangladesh we can see that there is no mention of the words “sponsored” or “ad” as their contract strictly said to make my audience feel that I am just exhibiting a product that like and I am not being paid for that.



On the other hand, some brands don't care about facts like this as long as their products are getting promoted. They want it to be as mainstream as possible with a detailed caption that's going to describe their products better. For better understanding of this point we can look at the picture below, where the paid partnership has been clearly stated.



Ultimately we can see how much work goes behind a digital picture, data, conversation etc. in social media. An influencer has to make sure that both the visual and textual modes of his/her post makes sense in order to promote a brand. Once again, this is valid for both sponsored and personal posts. However, depending on my small survey on a few influencers (keeping myself included) posts that are indicated for sales follow a fixed pattern. Usually when a brand approaches us to make content for their brand we are first given with their expected number of posts and stories. Depending on the number of the content, the products, and the deadline to submit the posts we get back with the remuneration keeping our followers in mind. The textual information is also provided by the brand but sometimes they tell influencers to keep them as natural as possible. So the text in the caption can make or break the sponsored post. For example, if it's a dress that is being advertised by the influencer, they need to tag the official brand and put the caption in such a way that it gives some idea about the product displayed. Here the two modes are equally important as the visual image will represent how the clothing piece will look once worn and the text will refer to the quality, material or the unique design of it. On the other hand, while posting a 30-60 second video for brands like Savlon, Tresemme will illustrate the product through the motion picture and audio. Here a written caption will not be as necessary as it was for the clothing brand because the video already has two modes that send out the message perfectly fine.

Chapter FIVE

Conclusion

The language used by social media influencers immensely affects the lives of the general people. Language is getting distorted since the emergence of social media. Creating shortcuts out of words, making the spelling shorter to be more time efficient, even inventing vocabularies from social media sites; all have happened because of it. My research aims to provide the readers who are outsiders and insiders (who may or may not have the knowledge of what is the influencer culture) an overview of how language is the most important key while posting on social media sites, be it paid or unpaid. I have tried to discuss the whole/partial scenario of what goes inside and comes outside of the blogging industry in terms of the use of the different modes of language in this paper. It can be said that the internet is interesting because of multimodality. Over the course of time, we have seen how multimodality has merged with different features of instagram, how influencers have elevated the marketability of instagram and opened doors for small businesses with the help of multimodality.

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