

**AN ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH USE IN NATIONWIDE BRANDS'  
INSTAGRAM CONTENT IN ATTRACTING MULTIGENERATIONAL  
CUSTOMERS**



**THESIS**

**Submitted to Faculty of Cultural Science Hasanuddin University in Partial  
Fulfilment of the Requirements to Obtain a Bachelor's Degree in  
English Literature Study Program**

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**2022**

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
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LEGITIMATION

AN ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH USE IN NATIONWIDE BRANDS'  
INSTAGRAM CONTENT IN ATTRACTING MULTIGENERATIONAL  
CUSTOMERS

BY

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It has been examined before the Board of Thesis Examination on April 19th, 2022  
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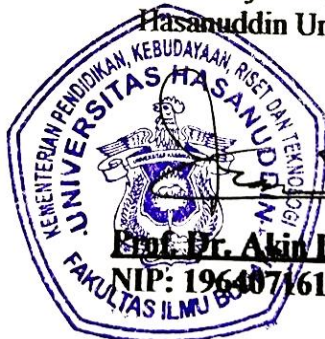
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Today, , the Board of Thesis Examination has kindly approved a thesis by **Amala Rosalind Anjanette** (No. F041181343) entitled, **AN ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH USE IN NATIONWIDE BRANDS' INSTAGRAM CONTENT IN ATTRACTING MULTIGENERATIONAL CUSTOMERS**, submitted in fulfillment of one of the requirements of undergraduate thesis examination to obtain Sarjana Humaniora (S. Hum.) Degree at the English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

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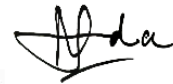
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Yang membuat pernyataan,



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, the writer gives her utmost thanks to the Lord Almighty, Jesus Christ, who has always been the writer's dwelling place, for the strength and courage He provides throughout the writer's four-year journey in campus. It is only by His amazing grace that the writer is able to reach the finish line, for He is good all the time, and all the time He is good.

The writer is also beyond grateful for the guidance and help from Dra. Nasmilah, M. Hum., Ph.D as first supervisor, and Dra. Nadirah Mahaseng, M.Ed., as second supervisor. Thank you for every suggestion, correction, and direction, and most of all, thank you for being extremely supportive.

For the writer's pillars of hope, Erwin & Sisca Yanan, and Joyce Imelda, thank you, for every prayer you sent out, for every words of encouragement you gave out, for every sacrifice you have made. This one is for you.

To the ones who stayed by the writer's side no matter what, Meyfi Turambi, Melda Vicasari, Fatimah Adelaida, Noviana Tiqa, Lin Naomi, Amany Zhafira, Aul. Biggest thank you, for the helping hand, the shoulder to cry on, the ears to listen to the writer's struggles and rambles, the writer would have not made it without your support.

Also to Aunty Cilla, Kak Tesa and Ko Rey who had been such a big help throughout this thesis' writing process, the writer is very much grateful for the endless help you have given.

Finally, to **the person**. Four years passed. The writer has finally made it. Although we both have parted ways, the writer hopes that you are as proud of the writer as she is of herself.

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## ABSTRACT

**Amala Rosalind Anjanette**, 2022, *An Analysis of English Use in Nationwide Brands' Instagram Content in Attracting Multigenerational Customers*, supervised by Nasmilah and Nadirah Mahaseng.

This research was conducted to find out the effect English language has when used by local brands on Instagram upon attracting customers from different age groups. To attain that, the writer proposes two questions: 1) To what extent does the use of English language on the brands' Instagram page affect their potential customers, and 2) Would certain age groups prefer brands using English rather than Bahasa Indonesia?

Data collection process involved 40 respondents from Makassar who filled out an online questionnaire form containing 10 question items that helped figure out respondents' preferences and behaviors when making purchasing decision on local brands' Instagram account. The received responses were then translated and analyzed.

The findings of this research showed that the word choices used in local brand's Instagram content (mainly *post* and *story*) affected the respondents' purchase decision the most. In addition, from the comparison of two different generations, the group of those who were born later (namely Generation Z) are more attracted to local brands that utilize English use as a part of their marketing strategy.

**Keyword: Instagram, local brand, English language, age group, purchase decision**

## ABSTRAK

**Amala Rosalind Anjanette**, 2022, *An Analysis of English Use in Nationwide Brands' Instagram Content in Attracting Multigenerational Customers*, supervised by Nasmilah and Nadirah Mahaseng.

Penelitian ini dilaksanakan untuk mengetahui pengaruh Bahasa Inggris ketika digunakan oleh toko lokal *online* di Instagram untuk menarik pembeli dari jenjang umur yang berbeda. Untuk mencapai hal itu, peneliti mengangkat dua pertanyaan riset: 1) Sejauh mana penggunaan Bahasa Inggris oleh toko lokal di Instagram mempengaruhi calon pelanggan mereka, dan 2) Apakah golongan dengan jenjang umur tertentu akan lebih memilih Bahasa Inggris dibanding Bahasa Indonesia?

Proses pengumpulan data melibatkan 40 responden dari Kota Makassar yang mengisi kuesioner *online* yang berisi 10 pertanyaan yang dapat membantu menjawab preferensi dan perilaku calon pelanggan ketika berbelanja di toko lokal *online* di Instagram. Data yang terkumpul kemudian diterjemahkan dan dianalisis.

Hasil dari penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa pemilihan kata yang digunakan oleh toko lokal *online* di Instagram (khususnya *post* dan *story*) paling mempengaruhi keputusan beli calon pelanggan. Terlebih dari itu, dari perbandingan dua golongan usia, golongan yang lahir kemudian (Generasi Z) lebih cenderung untuk tertarik terhadap toko lokal *online* yang menggunakan Bahasa Inggris di Instagram sebagai strategi penjualan mereka.

**Kata kunci:** Instagram, *brand* lokal, Bahasa Inggris, golongan usia, keputusan pembelian

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

From thousands of years ago, human's life has always been tangled to the use of language, as it is a powerful tool that dictates our thought patterns and how we communicate. Fast forward to this current era of globalization, English as a language has grown so rapidly that it now has more than one billion speakers. Crystal (2003) stated that English has also gained the role of a global language, where it is recognized and used as primary or secondary language in many countries around the world.

In Rao (2019) words, English is a *lingua franca* or a common language, therefore more people from different countries are speaking and learning the language, for its' widespread has made it become the standard and dominating language in various disciplines and fields such as science and technology, medicine, education, and mainly in business and trade.

In Indonesia itself, it is easier today to spot schools who offer English as a formal education course compared to how it was a decade ago, highlighting the fact that Indonesian people are now more aware of the importance of English. Aside from formal education, Indonesians are familiarizing themselves with English with the help of the internet. In the words of Rini (2014), Indonesians are exposed to more opportunities of reading and writing in English thanks to the versatility of the internet.

Conforming to the previous fact, according to Johnson (2021), it is known that English is the most commonly used language on the internet, making up 25.9% of its' worldwide users. It dominates the contents we read, hear, or watch on websites, blogs, and social medias- each with its' own intended purposes: either for business, education, or entertainment purposes.

In the year of 2021, Nurhayati-Wolff stated that Indonesia has more than 191 million internet users, making social media use in particular has become so popular for Indonesians. One of the widely used social media platforms in Indonesia is Instagram, that is a photo and video based interactive platform that could also function as an e-commerce media. Instagram has features such as *Instagram story*, *reels*, *posts*, and *shop*, which can all be used to create contents for engagement purposes. Therefore, not only individuals from all range of ages can be found on Instagram, but also organizations, companies, and brands are also making its' way through Instagram to promote and market their products and services.

Hence nowadays, international and local brands opening stores in Indonesia are utilizing Instagram to promote their products using certain brand messaging strategies to attract and engage with customers from different target markets, mainly classified by age and preferences. They create posts and contents containing interactive information regarding the products they sell, and by knowing for a fact that choice of wording affects engagement performance, not tiny amount of these brands would opt and employ the use of English as their content language.

Previously, a few similar studies regarding this topic have been conducted by different researchers. In 2016, Wulandari examined how the use of English is so relied upon in fostering online business in Indonesia due to its' important role in marketing. Rachmawati in 2016 had also studied how English holds a significant influence upon purchase-making decisions, because it is considered to hold much more credibility compared to marketing strategies using Bahasa Indonesia.

Although these previous researches managed to highlight the role of English in social media branding, they did not focus on the smaller, but impactful aspect, that is the target markets classified by age groups. It is relevant for brands and shops to know the preferences of their audience, so they could plan their marketing strategy accordingly. Thus, this research focuses to find out whether it is an appropriate strategy to use English in these local brands' social media page with the hope of attracting and engaging with their aimed audience from different generations.

## **1.2. Identification of the Problems**

In the past few years, with the fast-paced growth of digitalization, it is more common for people to shop through online shops or e-commerce media as a substitute for the conventional way of shopping. Hence, following the market's rapid transition from conventional to electronical way of shopping, business and brand owners in Indonesia are now becoming more likely to

utilize social media platforms to make known of their existence, engage with their customers, along with promoting their products.

Related with that, it is a must for these business owners to think of branding and marketing strategies so that their products could excel within the world of online shopping, and one of those strategies is by employing the use of language. Many Indonesian brands with different target markets build their online persona and existence using the English language as the primary language on their social media platforms.

By having different target markets, say based on age group, it increases the challenges of these brands to be able to fit in the criteria of these target markets' preferences, as different groups of customers usually have the tendency to have their own preferences and purchasing behaviors.

Therefore, some problems that could be identified are the following:

1. Due to the fast-paced growth of digitalization, most people now prefer online shopping as a substitute for the conventional way of shopping. (e.g through various e-commerce such as Shopee, Tokopedia, and Instagram)
2. Brands and business owners have to utilize social media features in different platforms to conform with the customers' demands. (e.g by creating creative contents in social media)

3. Brand owners also need to know which marketing strategies to pull off in the attempt of attracting customers. (e.g by knowing which trend to follow, which word choice to use)
4. It is more common nowadays even for local brands to use English instead of Bahasa Indonesia in their social media page.
5. Different age groups have different preferences and purchasing behaviors. (e.g language preferences, trend preferences)

### **1.3. Scope of the Problem**

Based on the identification of the problems above, this research will focus on figuring out the customers and users' language preferences upon interacting and purchasing from the local brands' Instagram's account, and whether the use of English will affect the customers' purchasing decision. It will solely focus on different age groups or generation; those are generation Y and Z who shop through Instagram in Makassar city.

### **1.4. Research Question**

1. To what extent does the use of English language on the brands' Instagram page affect their potential customers?
2. Would certain age groups prefer brands using English rather than Bahasa Indonesia?



### **1.5. Objectives of the Study**

1. To verify whether or not the use of English would be more efficient in attracting and engaging with potential customers.
2. To identify which age group prefers English-based content on the brands' Instagram page.

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

This study was conducted to benefit the following:

#### **1. Theoretical Benefit**

This study delivers information related to the effect of English language when used by local brands to attract different target markets. It contains insights on how respondents perceive the English language upon doing a purchase on local brands' shops, as well as their attitude and behavior towards it.

#### **2. Practical Benefit**

##### **a. For local brand owners**

The result of this study is expected to give future local brand owners a more concrete and data-based analysis that will help them to determine their marketing strategy (that is the use of language) on Instagram wisely in order to reach their intended target markets, that is by being able to identify their customers' behavior and preferences based on the age range classified in this study.

b. For customers

At some point, most people will become a buyer. Therefore, the result of this study is expected to help future customers to navigate through local brands' online shops and find the products and services that fit to their needs precisely, also those that match their preferred contents.

c. For future researchers

The result this study reveals can be used as a reference for future researchers in similar field. Future researchers can get insight on how language affects purchase decision making in different age ranges.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Previous Study**

Several researches that focus on the effectiveness and the role within the use of English on the internet to promote or advertise certain products have been conducted before:

##### **1. Novi Wulandari (2016) “The Role of English in Fostering Online Business in Indonesia”**

In her research, Wulandari stated that English has become a major trend among social media users, especially the youth in Indonesia. Therefore, her research aims to examine the significance of English in fostering online business in Indonesia. Wulandari mentioned that the use of English dominates majority of online shops in social media, and that it has an important role to improve the effectiveness of marketing. The method used in this research was descriptive method by collecting real-time information that describes existing problems and symptoms in detail. Data is collected through participative observation, where the researcher participated in activities related to the online shop.

**2. Rachmawati et al. (2016) “Influence of the Use of Brands in a Foreign Language (English) on the Purchase Decision Process of Cosmetic Products Made in Indonesia”**

Rachmawati et al. conducted a research which purpose is to analyse the influence of brands in English upon the purchase-decision process of the cosmetic consumers in Indonesia. The research used a quantitative approach and involved 400 respondents in Bandung. The data collected were processed using path analysis techniques. Towards the end of the research, results showed that English use in brands influenced the purchase-decision process of buying cosmetic products made in Indonesia, as product branding using Indonesian language is considered to be less credible compared to English use.

**3. Song et al. (2021) “Social Media Marketing Strategies for Tourism Destinations: Effects of Linguistic Features and Content Types”**

This recent study conducted by Song et al. focused on how linguistic features found in different content types on the context of tourism destination’s social media is effective to help optimize the social media engagement level. This study attempted to investigate Facebook contents of 50 states tourism Facebook pages, which then the collected data were analysed using social media analytics and linguistic analysis. Result of this study reveals that there are significant differences found in social media

engagement indicators when employing certain linguistic scores in different post or content types.

## **2.2 Theoretical Background**

### **2.2.1 Brand**

According to Kenton (2020), a brand is an identifying mark, name, symbol, or sentence that companies employ to differentiate their goods or services from other sellers. Heding, Knudtzen, and Bjerre (2009) also state that brand is connected to the recognition and identification of a product through the use of few aspects, such as the name, design, tagline, et cetera.

Brands are used in business for marketing and recognition, as well as to create a brand identity. As in the words of Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) brand identity is ‘a set of associations the brand strategist seek to create or maintain’, which then can be referred to as branding. Smithson (2015) explained that branding is a part of marketing practice where companies create an identity by having a distinguishable name or design, along with combining these elements with other aspects such as customer service, advertising, promotional merchandise, and logo to create an image of representation of how the company wants to be perceived. Wheeler (2017) then further elaborated that branding is a process in which the company tries to build awareness, attract new customers, as well as to extend customer loyalty.

Moreover, David Haigh (as cited in Wheeler, 2017) highlighted the three primary functions of a brand: navigation, reassurance, and engagement. This research will focus on one, the engagement, where brands

use language and association to encourage customers' interaction with the brand.

By engaging with the customers, brands use certain linguistic devices to help make their content more persuasive. Pogacar et al. (2018) pointed out some linguistic features that are used to facilitate communication between brands and customers, such as metaphors, rhetorical questions, puns, politeness, and assertive language. These various marketing stimuli create such effect for the customers upon responding to them.

### **2.2.2 Social Media**

According to Kapoor et al. (2018) social media is made from diverse user-based systems that facilitate compelling content, communication, and conversation to a broader audience. It is a virtual area created with the aid of using the human beings and for the human beings, and it presents a surrounding that is conducive for interactions and networking to arise at distinct levels (for instance, personal, professional, business, marketing, political, and societal).

From the existence of social media, comes along social media advertising where companies utilize social media to create promotions. Some of the most used social media platforms are Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Raudeliuniene et al. (2018) explained that the popularity and versatility of social media creates opportunity for

companies to reach their intended audience, and by using marketing tools as well as proper communication, not only will it deliver information, but also it will help build a relationship with the customers along with giving them the goods/service that they need.

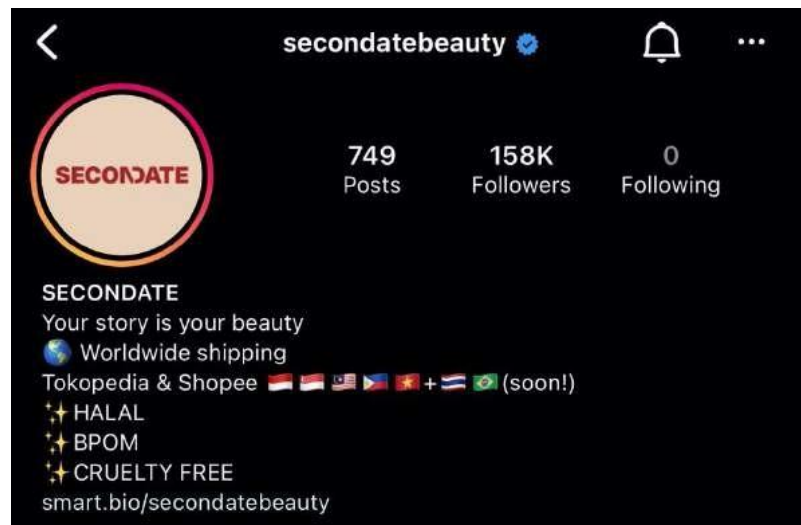
### **2.2.3 Instagram**

Hochman & Schwartz (2012) elaborated that essentially, Instagram is a mobile-based application that enables users to take photos or pictures, apply manipulation tools to transform the appearance of images, and share them instantly with friends.

First launched in 2010, this social media platform has grown into a massive social networking site with many added on features and tools that makes it easier for its' users to engage and interact with each other. Some features often utilized by companies and brands are as follows:

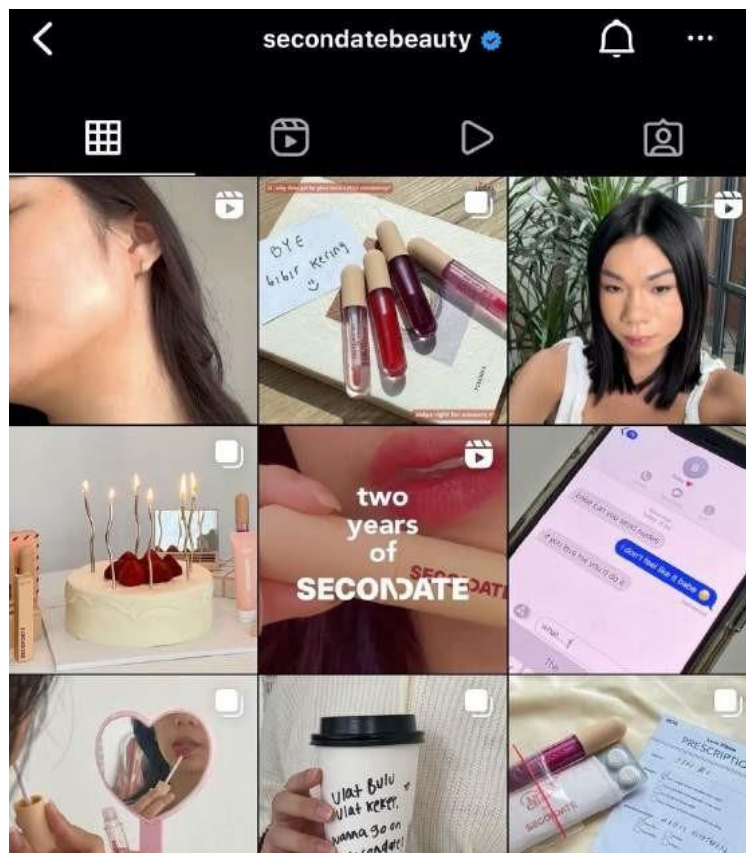


**2.2.3.1 Instagram Bio**, a section on the top page of an account that contains a short description of the brand's identity. Other than to describe the goods and services a brand is offering, this feature is also often used by brands to link their contact and their other e-market pages for customers to click and access easily.



**Picture 1.1**

**2.2.3.2 Post**, is practically the main feature on Instagram. Through this feature, brands can share a mix of up to 10 pictures and videos and it will show up on the main page. A post can contain a caption that allows brands to write anything related with the goods and services they offer. This feature also allows interaction in between the brand and customers or followers, and it is proven to help enhance engagement by clicking the *like*, *comment*, and *share* buttons on the post.



**Picture 1.2**

**2.2.3.3 Story** is another feature that allows brands to share a mixture of either photos or videos for maximum duration of 15 seconds. Brands usually utilize this feature to make polls or ask questions, and to interact with customers since customers can reply or give interaction in the form of likes and emojis.

Although both *story* and *post* features enable brands to share multiple photos and videos with added caption or text, the most highlighted difference is that *story* will only appear for 24 hours in the brand's profile, unless put in the *Story Highlight*.



**Picture 1.3**

**2.2.3.4 Reels** is one of the newly added Instagram features. It showcases the best of trending culture on Instagram. “It is a 60-second multi-clip videos that come with the ability to add popular songs, AR effects, and other creative tools.” (Blackwood, 2021). It is often utilized by brands to create and edit videos with thousands options of popular audio sounds, hence creating an overall wider audience since it shows up on the *Explore Page*.



**Picture 1.4**

#### **2.2.4 Content**

Quoting from Lieb (2011), “Content is the bait. It is what captures the eyeballs, ears, attention, and engagement.” In publishing, content is the information and experiences that are directed toward an audience. Content contains something that needs to be expressed through a medium, it could be expressed through words, pictures, videos, infographics, etc. Therefore, social media contents are contents that are specifically created by individuals or companies for certain social media platform’s audience with certain purposes as well.

When talking about the contents produced and shared in a social media account, it specifies as the process of which information spread from a source to recipients, as defined by Roger (2003, cited in Stepaniuk & Jarosz, 2021). This content spread is based on specific relationships between the two parties, such as if the customers’ (recipients) common interests match with information that the source account is sharing, this is called social media algorithm.

The effect of social media algorithm it is very much related with the contents’ digital engagement rate. Van Doorn et al., (2010) defined engagement as the relationship between customers and brands. Van Asperen et al., (2018) elaborated that engagement also has been considered as a vital marketing tool to gain customers’ trust and loyalty. Scheinbaum (2016, as cited in Voorveld, van Nort, Muntinga, and Bronner, 2018) identified the indicators used to monitor social media engagement, those are the number

of likes, comments, shares, views, clicks, which can be monitored through the account's posts in general. The contents that brands create on their social media, especially Instagram in this case, determine the engagement rate they receive as a result for either positive or negative feedback.

### **2.2.5 Multigenerational (Customers)**

Upon using social media page like Instagram to engage with buyers, it is most important for brands to be able to identify the target market of its' offered products or services. Target market can be defined as a group of people that share similar characteristics, and is usually divided into segments such as age, gender, social class, etc.

According to Dimock (2019), there are currently five living generations that can be classified as follows:

- Silent Generation, born in between 1928-1945
- Baby Boomers, born in between 1946-1964
- Generation X, born in between 1965-1980
- Generation Y, born in between 1981-1996
- Generation Z, born in between 1997-2012

This research mainly focuses on a specific part of the segment; the generation that covers two classifications of age ranges namely the

Generation Y and Z (aged 9-40). Respondents taken from both generations ages' now range from 18 to 40 year old as of the year this study was conducted. The researcher took these generations as samples because they are the most relevant generations in relation to this study.

Adding to the fact above, according to the definition from Merriam-Webster dictionary, multigenerational is something that has relation to, or involves more than one generation. Therefore, multigenerational customer refers to buyers from these range of age groups.

#### **2.2.6 Language Expectancy Theory (LET)**

LET is a theory that explains why certain linguistic strategies influence the persuasiveness of messages (Burgoon, 1995). Burgoon assumes that language is a rule-governed system that has expectations based on societal and cultural norms. This theory argues that there are some factors that influence communication expectancies, and in this case those are as the following:

1. The communicator, where individual features are put into perspective, such as credibility, appearance, and personality. When linked with brand marketing strategy, these features are all a part of brand identity.
2. The relationship, where the connection between both parties (local brand and its' consumers) are put into perspective based on attraction, similarity, and social status.

When communication occurs outside of the expected norms, it can be considered as a violation. According to Burgoon (1995), if a message sources violated receiver's presumptions, then post message receiver attitude change can inhibit.

Language Expectancy Theory also proposes that strategic linguistic use can be significant for positive behavioural changes, as it helps to define how various features of a message could possibly conform to expectations of effective communication in a positive or negative way.

Therefore, it is highly important for local brand social media strategists to generate efficient persuasive messages that could deliver information to the customers based on what is expected.