

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Technology in communication has been growing up rapidly. Few decades ago, people need to meet face to face to communicate or they can write on a letter and wait for a quite long time to get feedback from the one whom they send the letter to. Today, people do not need to wait for a long time and no need to meet the one whom they want to speak to. Technology has solved those problems. In the past, people just want to share their feelings, experiences and problems to close friend, or family members. But now, they can share everything to the world in a short time by using various social media platform. One of the most popular platform is Instagram.

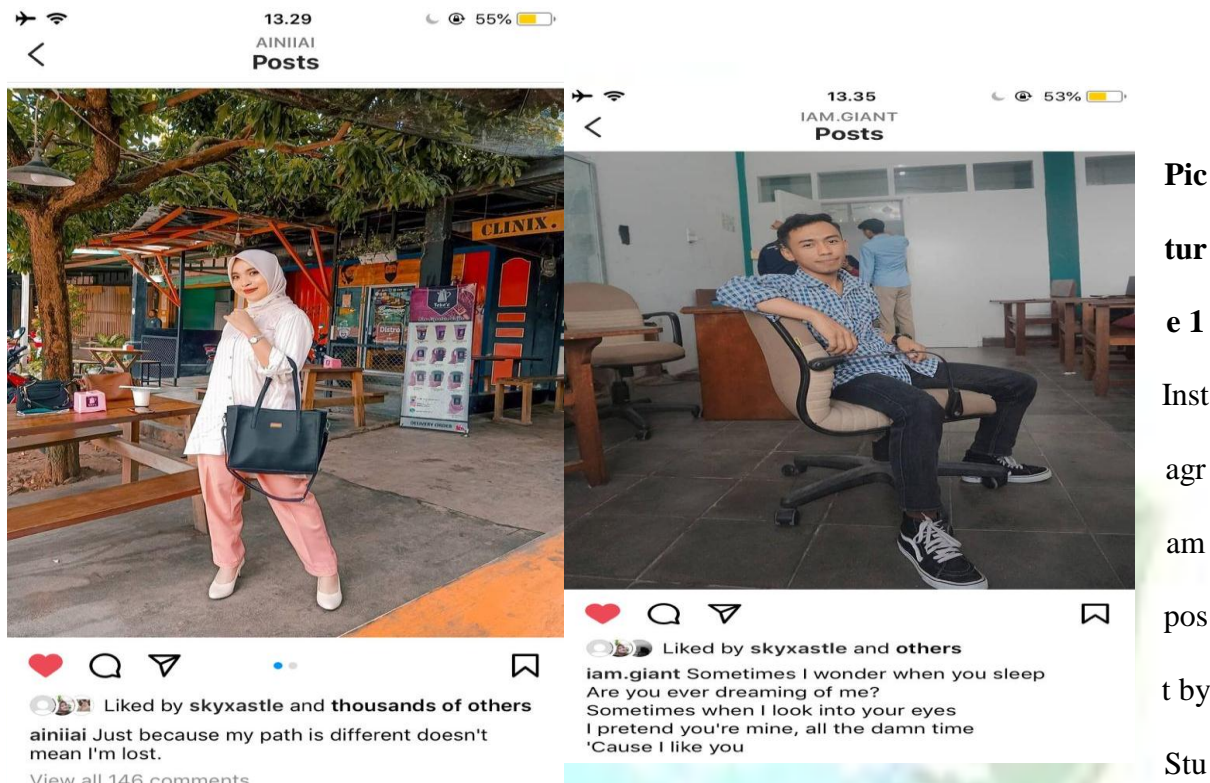
Instagram is a social media released on April 3, 2012 which now downloaded by more than 1 billion users all over the world. Instagram offers many interesting features to its users. This application has a motto “bringing you closer to the people and things you love.” The users of Instagram can connect with friends, share what they are up to, or see what is new from others all over the world. The users can be free to be themselves and share everything from their daily moments to life’s highlights. Furthermore, Instagram enables the users to express themselves and connect with friends, add photos and videos to INSTA story that disappear after 24 hours, and bring them to life with fun creative tools, message friends in direct, start fun conversation about what they see on Feed and Stories, post photos, and videos to their feed that can be followed by informative or interesting writings which are called as caption.

Caption refers to message or writing that follows the photos or videos posted by Instagram users in their profiles. Caption has many functions for the Instagram users, for example informing something, expressing feelings, experiences, describing the posted photos

or videos, improving students' critical thinking¹, and even as a starting point to be celebrity².

Instagram is also used by students of English education in State Islamic University of North Sumatera. Some of them use Instagram to post photos and followed by caption. The

following are the examples:



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dents of English Education Department.

From the Picture 1, it can be seen that students of English Department use Instagram to post their activity in certain places and followed by the captions. The picture on the left shows that *AINIAI* (user's account) posts a photo when she is visiting a café or restaurant and the caption says "Just because my path is different doesn't mean I'm lost". Meanwhile, the picture on the right, shows that a student, whose account's name is *IAM.GIANT*, posts a photo when he is sitting on a chair in a classroom and the photo followed caption that says

¹Astri Sofya Citra, "Caption as a Text to Promote Students' Critical Thinking in Reading Comprehension of Senior High School," *RETAIN* 08, no. 02 (2020): 41–48, <http://dx.doi.org/10.23887/jpp.v53i3.29210>.

²Lailatul Maghfiroh, "A Celebrification of Celebgram on Instagram: A Case Study of @ Shireenz," *Allusion* 04, no. 01 (2015): 57–62, <http://dx.doi.org/10.55326/ccby.nc143.20160>.

“Sometimes I wonder when you sleep. Are you ever dreaming of me? Sometimes when I look into your eyes I pretend you’re mine, all the damn time. Cause I like you.”

In delivering the same message, people use different styles in different social contexts³. In formal contexts, people use formal style and in informal contexts people use informal style. According to Trudgill, language styles can be classified into seven categories namely formal, informal, colloquial, frozen, consultative, casual, and intimate style⁴. Formal style is the language used in the formal situation and it is used in perfect form. Informal style is the standard language used in informal situations which is not conservative, short, and direct. Colloquial style refers to the use of popular words, morphologies, and syntactic structures together with the form of the colloquial style. Frozen style is the language used in a very formal context or situation which has symbolic value, for example in formal ceremonies, court, and governmental meetings. Consultative style is a style which is used in small groups, to meet new acquaintances, and strangers. Casual style is the language used between friends or family members. Intimate style is the most casual style which is used by family members, husbands and wives, and intimate friends.

Those styles are functional. It means that people who use the language styles have their own purposes. According to Holmes, the functions of language styles can be classified into six categories namely expressive, directive, referential, metalinguistic, poetic, and phatic⁵. Expressive means the language users want to express their feelings or emotions. Directive means to get someone to do something for some purposes. Referential means utterances which provide information. Metalinguistic means utterances that comment on language itself which is uncommonly used. Poetic means utterances which focus on the aesthetic features of

³Janet Holmes and Nick Wilson, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, Routledge, Fifth Edition. (New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁴Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*, ed. David Crystal, Penguin Books, Fourth. (London: Penguin Books, 2000).

⁵Holmes and Wilson, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*.

language. Phatic means utterances which has function to express solidarity and empathy to others.

In *Facebook* status, the language styles of the users are influenced by their educational background and their ages⁶. It is found that the casual style is the most dominant style used by *Facebook* users. Casual style is used because they feel comfortable to express their feelings, and thoughts in the way they are. From the findings, it can be inferred that the suitable way to communicate or to convey message effectively to those Facebook users is by using casual style. A message would be received effectively if conveyed in the same language style they use.

In commercial Product advertisement, it is found that the dominant style used by the product advertisers is hard-sell style⁷. This style is used because the product advertisers want to grab the customers' attention by presenting the rational information about the product they offer. The advertisement messages are designed to touch the readers' mind and to create responses based on logic.

Meanwhile, in *Magnum* (ice cream product) advertisement, it is found that the advertiser uses hyperbole in their advertisement message⁸. It is used to attract the consumers' attention through the exaggeration of the product so that the consumers are provoked to buy and taste it. Based on the research findings, it can be stated that the use of language styles are important and beneficial in marketing field. Having a good understanding about the consumers characteristics, enable the advertisers to use the effective styles to promote their

⁶Indra Hamzah, "An Analysis of Language Style of Teenagers Found In Facebook Status," *E-Journal of English Language and Literature* 7, no. 1 (2018): 8, <http://dx.doi.org/10.23023/jell.546021>.

⁷Sinta P Amelia Ginting, Rahmadsyah Rangkuti, and Muhammad Yusuf, "Function of The Language Style Used in Women Commercial Product Advertisements: A Stylistic Analysis of Language," *Rainbow: Journal of Literature, Linguistics and Cultural Studies* 9, no. 2 (2020): 187–195, <http://dx.doi.org/10.15294/rainbow.v9i2.39987>.

⁸Sonia Niken Permatasari, "An Analysis on the Language Style of the Utterances in Magnum Advertisements," *LLT Journal* 16, no. 1 (2008): 31–40, <https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.2013.160104>.

products so that the people's attention can be drawn. Therefore, the study of language styles is important.

People have their own ways in delivering messages, feeling, thought, idea, opinion and etc. In communication, people use the language can be in written or spoken form and the way they use the language is called language style. Students of English Education Department have their own styles in delivering the message through Instagram caption as the above pictures. The styles they use are individual differences between those students. There is an evidence that the language style used by students is a reliable individual difference⁹. Language styles help providing knowledge about how individuals deliver their feelings, experiences, and thoughts. There are several studies about language styles in other media. But there is still limited study about language styles in Instagram. Therefore, this present study tries to investigate the language styles used in Instagram caption. English education department students of State Islamic University of North Sumatera have their own language styles in writing captions on Instagram. Based on Keraaf's theory about language styles, their captions can be analyzed as the following:

Data 1: (*AINIIAI's Caption*) "Just because my path is different doesn't mean I'm lost."

From Data 1, the account's owner writes her caption in informal style. Informal style is the language style which used in informal context. This style is characterized by the medium length sentence. The caption tells the readers that she (The caption's writer) is different but she believes in herself. She has self-confidence. Based on her Instagram caption, it can be inferred that she is an expressive person. The language style she uses in her caption is meant to create a certain mood to the readers. Anyone who reads and understands her caption will be affected by the writer's feeling of confidence.

⁹James W Pennebaker and Laura A King, "Linguistic Styles : Language Use as an Individual Difference," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 77, no. 06 (2015): 1296–1312, <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.77.6.1296>.

Then, the second student whose account's name is *IAM.GIANT* also has his own style in conveying his message. The analysis can be seen as follow:

Data 2: (*IAM.GIANT's Caption*) "Sometimes I wonder when you sleep. Are you ever dreaming of me? Sometimes when I look into your eyes, I pretend you're mine, all the damn time. Cause I like you."

From Data 2 it can be seen that the writer uses casual style in his Instagram caption. Casual style refers to a style used in an informal and a relaxed situation. This style is usually not in good grammatical sentence. As can be seen from his sentence "Are you ever dreaming of me?" It supposed to be "Have you ever dreamed of me?" The function of language style he uses can be categorized as expressive which is meant to express his feeling about someone. The readers, who read his caption, will immediately notice that the writer is an expressive and a shy person who cannot show his true feeling directly to the person he meant in the caption. Or perhaps the writer only wants to create a certain mood to his caption readers so that the readers get the same feeling as the writer tries to convey through his Instagram caption.

Based on those two data, it can be inferred that students of English education Department at UINSU have various ways in delivering their messages. Those various ways create an individual difference between them and as Trudgill says that the varieties of language which differ from one another is called as styles¹⁰. Having a better understanding about the differences help the language users to build and maintain an effective communication either in written or in spoken form.

An effective communication will be gained if people can use the appropriate style in certain context. Therefore, the understanding of language styles is important, especially if someone wants to be an effective speaker or writer. The language style reflects the writer's or

¹⁰Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*.

speaker's interest in particular subject, how well he/she know the subject, and even his/her characteristics¹¹. Knowing the communicant's characteristics helps the speaker or writer to determine what and how the messages will be conveyed effectively. Therefore, the analysis of students' language style in writing captions on Instagram is important to be conducted.

B. The Research Question

In line with the background of the study, the research problems can be formulated as follow:

1. What are the types of language styles used by the English Education Department students of State Islamic University of North Sumatera in writing captions on Instagram?
2. Why are those language styles used by the English education department students of State Islamic University of North Sumatera in writing captions on Instagram?

C. The Purposes of the Study

In line with the research questions, the purposes of the study are:

1. To identify the types of language styles used by the English education department students of State Islamic University of North Sumatera in writing captions on Instagram.
2. To find out the reasons of English education department students of State Islamic University of North Sumatera using those language styles in writing captions on Instagram.

D. The Significances of the Study

The significances of this study are expected to be beneficial theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretically

¹¹Aflahah, "Language Style of Habiburrahman El-Shirazy in the Dwilog of Ayat-Ayat Cinta: A Stylistic Study," *OKARA: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra* 11, no. 1 (2017): 85, <https://doi.org/10.19105/ojbs.v11i1.1239>.

The result of this research is expected to provide insight on how English education department students in State Islamic University of North Sumatera use language styles in writing Instagram captions. The finding of this research expected to discover the communication pattern of students in writing their Instagram captions so that it can be used by other students, researchers and everyone who has interest in the topic of sociolinguistic.

2. Practically

- a. For the researcher, this study is expected to improve her understanding and ability in conducting academic research especially in sociolinguistic field.
- b. For the students, this study is expected to give them encouragement to use language styles in written or spoken communication.
- c. For future researcher, this study is expected to be beneficial as an additional reference to conduct further research about language styles or other topic of sociolinguistic.

