

## Language Production in Digital Indonesian: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Maudy Ayunda's Instagram Captions

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### ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of social media has fundamentally reshaped patterns of language use and production in everyday communication. Instagram, as a visually oriented platform, promotes concise, expressive, and multimodal forms of written discourse, particularly through captions. This study investigates language production in Instagram captions authored by Maudy Ayunda from a psycholinguistic perspective. Employing a qualitative document analysis approach, the research examines key linguistic features, including sentence structure, lexical choice, code-mixing between Indonesian and English, emotional expression, and the use of emojis. The findings reveal that the captions are characterized by syntactic simplicity, the frequent use of emotionally salient vocabulary, and flexible bilingual language planning. Additionally, multimodal elements such as emojis function as supportive devices that enhance meaning-making and communicative efficiency. These patterns suggest that language production in digital contexts is shaped by cognitive efficiency, emotional processing, and the communicative demands of online environments. Overall, this study contributes to psycholinguistic scholarship by demonstrating how language production adapts to contemporary digital discourse, highlighting the dynamic interplay between cognition, language, and technology.

**Keyword:** language production, psycholinguistics, Instagram captions, digital discourse, code-mixing

### ABSTRAK

Pesatnya perkembangan media sosial telah secara mendasar mengubah pola penggunaan dan produksi bahasa dalam komunikasi sehari-hari. Instagram, sebagai platform yang berorientasi visual, mendorong bentuk wacana tertulis yang ringkas, ekspresif, dan multimodal, terutama melalui keterangan foto. Penelitian ini mengkaji produksi bahasa dalam keterangan foto Instagram yang ditulis oleh Maudy Ayunda dari perspektif psikolinguistik. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan analisis dokumen kualitatif, penelitian ini mengkaji fitur-fitur linguistik utama, termasuk struktur kalimat, pilihan leksikal, pencampuran kode antara bahasa Indonesia dan Inggris, ekspresi emosional, serta penggunaan emoji. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa keterangan foto tersebut ditandai oleh kesederhanaan sintaksis, penggunaan kosakata yang menonjolkan emosi secara sering, dan perencanaan bahasa dwibahasa yang fleksibel. Selain itu, elemen multimodal seperti emoji berfungsi sebagai perangkat pendukung yang memperkuat pembentukan makna dan efisiensi komunikasi. Pola-pola ini menunjukkan bahwa produksi bahasa dalam konteks digital dipengaruhi oleh efisiensi kognitif, pemrosesan emosional, dan tuntutan komunikatif lingkungan daring. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini berkontribusi pada kajian psikolinguistik dengan menunjukkan bagaimana produksi bahasa beradaptasi dengan wacana digital kontemporer, sekaligus menyoroti interaksi dinamis antara kognisi, bahasa, dan teknologi.

**Kata kunci:** produksi bahasa, psikolinguistik, keterangan foto Instagram, wacana digital, pencampuran kode.

### A. Introduction

Language production is a central

topic in psycholinguistics, referring to the cognitive processes through which individuals transform thoughts,

intentions, and emotions into linguistic expressions. Traditionally, research on language production has focused primarily on spoken language and experimental settings. However, the rapid growth of digital communication has expanded language use into written and multimodal contexts, particularly on social media platforms. Instagram is one of the most widely used social media platforms and places strong emphasis on visual content accompanied by short written captions. These captions often reflect spontaneous yet carefully planned language production, as users aim to convey meaning, emotion, and identity within limited textual space. As a result, Instagram captions provide valuable data for examining how language production adapts to digital environments.

Maudy Ayunda is a prominent Indonesian public figure who actively uses Instagram to share personal reflections, educational experiences, and social initiatives. Her captions are typically concise, emotionally expressive, and frequently involve Indonesian–English code-mixing. These features make her Instagram captions an appropriate source of data for analyzing psycholinguistic aspects of language production in digital contexts. From a psycholinguistic perspective, Instagram captions represent an efficient form of language production shaped by cognitive constraints, emotional processing, and audience awareness. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how language production is realized in Maudy Ayunda's Instagram captions and how linguistic choices reflect underlying cognitive processes in digital

communication.

Language production involves a series of cognitive processes that enable speakers or writers to convert ideas into linguistic output. Levelt (1989) proposes that language production consists of three main stages: conceptualization, formulation, and articulation. Conceptualization refers to planning what to say, formulation involves selecting lexical items and syntactic structures, and articulation refers to producing the final spoken or written form. In written digital communication, articulation occurs through typing rather than speech. However, the stages of conceptualization and formulation remain essential. Writers must decide which ideas to express, select words from the mental lexicon, and organize them into meaningful structures. Psycholinguistic analysis of written texts therefore provides insight into cognitive processes beyond spoken language.

Digital communication is commonly characterized by informality, brevity, and multimodality. According to Crystal (2011), online language encourages creativity while also promoting efficiency due to technological constraints and audience expectations. Social media users tend to favor short sentences, familiar vocabulary, and expressive elements such as emojis. On Instagram, captions function as complementary texts that support visual content. This relationship between text and image influences language production, as users may rely on images to convey information and use captions primarily to express emotion, evaluation, or reflection.

Instagram captions represent naturally occurring written language produced in real communicative contexts. Unlike elicited data, captions are created voluntarily and reflect genuine language use. Previous studies have shown that captions frequently include code-mixing, informal structures, and multimodal elements, all of which play important roles in meaning construction and identity expression. For these reasons, Instagram captions are increasingly used as data in linguistic and psycholinguistic research.

## **B. Research Method**

This study employs a qualitative research design using document analysis. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the aim of the study is to explore patterns and characteristics of language production rather than to measure frequencies statistically. Document analysis allows for close examination of written texts and enables interpretation of linguistic features in relation to psycholinguistic theory. Instagram captions were treated as naturally occurring documents produced in a digital environment. This approach allows the researcher to analyze authentic language use without experimental manipulation.

The data were taken from captions posted on Maudy Ayunda's verified public Instagram account. Maudy Ayunda was selected because she consistently uses Instagram to communicate personal experiences, reflections, and social messages. Her background as a bilingual and highly

educated public figure also makes her language use particularly relevant for examining code-mixing and cognitive aspects of language production. The captions analyzed in this study were published over an extended period, ranging from 2016 to 2025. This time span was chosen to capture a broad range of contexts and themes in her digital communication. However, the study does not aim to compare specific years, but rather to identify recurring linguistic patterns across the dataset.

The captions were selected purposively based on the following criteria:

1. The captions were publicly accessible and taken from Maudy Ayunda's official Instagram account.
2. The captions were written primarily in Indonesian, although English words or phrases were allowed.
3. The captions reflected informal, reflective, or emotionally expressive language use.
4. The captions consisted of short to medium-length texts typical of Instagram communication

The data collection process involved several steps. First, the researcher accessed Maudy Ayunda's Instagram account and reviewed posts that met the selection criteria. Captions were then selected from different periods to ensure variation in content. Second,

the selected captions were manually transcribed into a data table. Original spelling, punctuation, and emoji usage were preserved to maintain the authenticity of the data. Hashtags and usernames that were not relevant to linguistic analysis were excluded. Finally, contextual notes regarding the general theme of each caption were recorded to support interpretation during analysis.

The analysis was conducted through repeated reading and qualitative interpretation. Each caption was examined to identify dominant linguistic features. The analysis focused on sentence structure, lexical choice, code-mixing, and emoji use. These features were interpreted using psycholinguistic concepts such as cognitive efficiency, lexical accessibility, emotional processing, and bilingual language planning. The findings were then discussed in relation to existing theories and previous studies.

### C. Result and Discussion

One prominent characteristic found in Maudy Ayunda's Instagram captions is the frequent use of very short and structurally simple expressions. Many captions are composed of sentence fragments or minimal phrases rather than complete syntactic constructions. An example of this pattern can be observed in Figure 1, which presents the caption "*Favorite humans.*" accompanied by an emoji.



**Figure 1. Favourite humans caption**

The caption does not contain a verb or a complete clause, yet it successfully conveys a clear and emotionally meaningful message to the audience. From a psycholinguistic perspective, this minimal structure reflects cognitive efficiency in language production. According to models of language production, particularly Levelt's (1989) framework, speakers and writers aim to minimize cognitive load during the formulation stage. In digital environments such as Instagram, this tendency becomes more prominent due to time constraints, audience expectations, and platform norms. Short phrases allow writers to transform intentions into linguistic output quickly without engaging in complex syntactic planning.

Despite its simplicity, the caption communicates strong emotional attachment and interpersonal closeness. Meaning is supported not only by the lexical choice but also by the accompanying image, which provides contextual information. This interaction

between text and image demonstrates that linguistic economy in digital discourse does not reduce communicative effectiveness. Instead, it enables writers to rely on shared context and visual cues, resulting in efficient and emotionally resonant communication. This finding suggests that syntactic simplicity is an adaptive strategy shaped by both cognitive constraints and multimodal affordances of social media platforms.

### 1. Lexical Choice and Emotional Salience

Another salient feature observed in the data is the consistent use of emotionally charged and high-frequency vocabulary. Figure 2 presents a caption posted on Mother's Day, in which Maudy Ayunda expresses gratitude and affection toward her mother. The caption contains emotionally salient lexical items such as *thank you*, *love*, *patience*, and *positive*, which are commonly associated with personal relationships and affective experiences. From a psycholinguistic standpoint, emotionally salient words are more easily accessed in the mental lexicon and tend to be produced with greater fluency.

**Figure 2. Mother's Day caption**



210K 730 1  
Liked by zaskiadyamecca and others  
maudyayunda To all mothers out there; but especially to mine... selamat hari ibu. ❤️ Thank you for every bit of patience and love you give to me. But most of all, thank you for the positive life mindsets that you've passed on to me through our conversations. Love you, Ma! 🥰  
December 22, 2016

Research in psycholinguistics suggests that words with strong emotional associations are processed more quickly and remembered more effectively than neutral vocabulary. The frequent use of such words in Instagram captions indicates that emotional processing plays a central role in digital language production. Rather than employing complex or abstract expressions, the caption relies on familiar and emotionally resonant vocabulary. This lexical choice facilitates immediate comprehension and emotional engagement, particularly in a social media context where readers often engage with content briefly and selectively. The use of positive emotional language also contributes to the construction of an intimate and relatable public persona. Overall, the findings demonstrate that lexical choices in Maudy Ayunda's captions are guided not only by semantic meaning but also by emotional accessibility and communicative efficiency.

### 2. Code-Mixing and Bilingual Language Planning

The analysis further reveals frequent and systematic use of Indonesian–English code-mixing in Maudy Ayunda's Instagram captions. As illustrated in Figure 3, a caption addressing graduates combines Indonesian expressions with a longer English paragraph. The language alternation occurs smoothly and is contextually appropriate, suggesting deliberate linguistic planning rather than accidental switching. From a

psycholinguistic perspective, this pattern reflects flexible bilingual language planning during the formulation stage of language production. Bilingual speakers possess access to multiple linguistic systems, and code-mixing allows them to select the language that best conveys specific meanings, tones, or social identities.



**Figure 3. Graduation Day caption**

In the analyzed caption, Indonesian is used to express cultural closeness and national solidarity, while English is employed to deliver formal encouragement and globally oriented messages. This strategic distribution of languages enhances expressiveness and pragmatic effectiveness. English, in this context, carries associations with education, professionalism, and global discourse, which align with the theme of graduation and future challenges. The findings support psycholinguistic views that code-mixing is not a sign of linguistic deficiency, but rather a communicative resource that enables bilingual speakers to optimize meaning

and audience engagement in digital environments.

### 3. Emojis as Multimodal Support in Language Production

Emojis constitute another important feature of language production in Maudy Ayunda’s Instagram captions. Figure 4 illustrates this phenomenon through a graduation-related caption that includes celebratory and gratitude emojis. These emojis function as visual symbols that reinforce the emotional tone of the message. In psycholinguistic terms, emojis can be understood as non-verbal cues that complement verbal language and support emotional expression. Similar to facial expressions or gestures in spoken communication, emojis help clarify affective intent and reduce ambiguity. Their presence allows writers to convey emotions more efficiently without relying on lengthy textual explanations. The integration of emojis with written text demonstrates the



inherently multimodal nature of language production in digital contexts.

#### Figure 4. Graduation emojis caption

Meaning is constructed through the interaction of linguistic and visual elements, which together support emotional processing and interpretation. This multimodal strategy reduces cognitive load for both the writer and the reader, enabling faster production and comprehension. The findings suggest that emojis play a significant role in contemporary digital discourse by enhancing emotional clarity and communicative effectiveness.

#### 4. Digital Context and Adaptive Language Production

Maudy Ayunda's Instagram caption, as presented in Figure 5, illustrates a reflective tone, Indonesian-English code-mixing, and emotionally nuanced language use. In this caption, Ayunda adopts a highly introspective voice and deliberately mixes Indonesian with English to discuss feelings of burnout. The phrasing combines colloquial Indonesian expressions (e.g., "Kadang-kadang burnout tuh bukan datang dari rasa capek secara fisik") with English key terms such as burnout, alignment, and envision, reflecting strategic and purposeful code-mixing rather than random language switching. From a psycholinguistic perspective, this bilingual alternation demonstrates flexible language planning during the formulation stage of language production. English lexical items are employed to articulate abstract and globalized psychological concepts, while Indonesian sentence structures maintain a personal, conversational, and culturally

grounded tone. This distribution of languages suggests that Ayunda selects linguistic resources based on communicative function, emotional nuance, and audience accessibility. The caption further demonstrates high emotional awareness, as burnout is framed not merely as physical exhaustion but as a misalignment



between intention, action, and personal values.

#### Figure 5. Indonesian-English code-mixing caption

The digital context of Instagram also plays a crucial role in shaping this adaptive language production. As a platform characterized by brief attention spans and multimodal communication, Instagram encourages concise yet meaningful expression. Ayunda responds to these constraints by using relatively short clauses, reflective statements, and emotionally salient vocabulary, allowing complex internal states to be conveyed

efficiently. The accompanying image supports the textual message, reducing the need for elaborate verbal explanation and enabling readers to infer meaning through contextual cues. Additionally, the caption reflects strong audience awareness. By sharing personal reflection in a public yet intimate manner, Ayunda positions herself as relatable while maintaining a reflective and professional persona. The careful balance between personal disclosure and controlled language use indicates an understanding of social expectations within digital discourse. This adaptive strategy allows her to engage a broad audience while preserving clarity, emotional resonance, and communicative effectiveness.

Overall, this caption exemplifies how language production in digital environments is shaped by cognitive efficiency, emotional processing, and contextual awareness. The strategic use of bilingual resources, reflective lexical choices, and concise structure demonstrates that language adaptation in social media is not incidental, but a deliberate response to the cognitive and social demands of digital communication.

#### **D. Conclusion and Suggestion**

This study set out to examine language production in Instagram captions written by Maudy Ayunda from a psycholinguistic perspective. By analyzing naturally occurring digital texts, this research demonstrates that Instagram captions represent a meaningful site for observing how

cognitive processes, emotional expression, and social context interact in contemporary language use. The findings show that Maudy Ayunda's captions are predominantly characterized by syntactic simplicity, frequent use of emotionally salient and high-frequency vocabulary, flexible Indonesian–English code-mixing, and consistent use of emojis. From a psycholinguistic standpoint, these features reflect an emphasis on cognitive efficiency in language production. Short sentence structures and familiar lexical choices reduce processing demands during formulation, allowing messages to be produced and understood quickly in a fast-paced digital environment.

Furthermore, the presence of code-mixing highlights the role of bilingual language planning in digital discourse. Rather than signaling linguistic limitation, the alternation between Indonesian and English functions as a strategic communicative resource. English expressions are often used to emphasize key ideas, convey modern or global identities, or express concepts that are culturally associated with English. This finding supports psycholinguistic views that bilingual speakers can flexibly access multiple linguistic systems to achieve pragmatic and expressive goals. The use of emojis further illustrates the multimodal nature of language production on Instagram. Emojis serve as non-verbal cues that complement verbal expressions, enhance emotional clarity, and reduce the need for lengthy textual explanations. Psycholinguistically, this multimodal integration supports emotional

processing and contributes to more efficient meaning-making in digital communication.

Overall, this study suggests that language production in digital contexts is not a simplified or reduced form of language use, but rather an adaptive process shaped by cognitive constraints, technological affordances, and audience expectations. Instagram captions demonstrate how writers strategically balance brevity, emotional expression, and clarity to communicate effectively within platform-specific limitations. In conclusion, this research contributes to the field of psycholinguistics by extending the analysis of language production beyond traditional spoken and written forms. It highlights the importance of considering digital platforms as legitimate and valuable contexts for studying language behavior. Future studies may expand the scope of analysis by including larger datasets, comparing different public figures, or examining language production across multiple social media platforms to gain a more comprehensive understanding of digital language use.

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