

**The use of persuasive tools in influencer marketing
– Discourse analysis of the Instagram posts of
@gracebeverley**

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Master's Thesis

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This thesis explores the language of influencer marketing and how different persuasive tools are used when products are endorsed on Instagram. The study looks at one influencer and how they use different persuasive tools in their Instagram captions. The influencer chosen for the study is Grace Beverley. The topicality of influencer marketing as well as the rising popularity of social media provide an interesting field of study.

The thesis examines the feed posts of Grace Beverley and focuses on the captions of her posts, where products are endorsed. The theoretical background for the study was built upon the theories of persuasive language introduced by Beasley and Danesi (2002). Secondly, the theories of advertising language explained by Goatly (2008) were applied.

The results of the study showed that persuasive language can be used as a tool in influencer marketing. Additionally, the combination of different modes – namely text and image can be used to establish creative Instagram posts. As a conclusive point, Instagram as a platform offers possibilities for versatile implementations of persuasion.

On a general note, the findings of the study indicate that when used purposefully, language can be utilized in the creation of successful influencer marketing. Secondly, as the study focused on a relatively niche aspect of social media language, it can be concluded that as a field of study, social media language offers many possibilities.

Key words: social media, social media language, influencer marketing, persuasive language, Instagram, multimodality

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1 Introduction

Social media has become growingly prominent in today's society. It offers platforms where people can share and explore ideas. These platforms, such as Instagram, are the birthplace of new phenomena, such as influencers. The most popular social media content creators often have a large and dedicated following. These individuals or groups of individuals, who have established a dedicated following on social media are commonly referred to as influencers (Gross & von Wangenheim, 2018, 31). Influencers, like the definition itself suggests, can influence others – their followers. For many, influencing has become a profession. This becomes possible as companies pay influencers to promote different products on their platform. Companies can market their products to larger and targeted audiences through social media influencers (*ibid.*). For many consumers, social media has become an important source of information, which is why companies are focusing an increasingly large part of their marketing on social media channels.

How skillfully the influencers word the captions of their posts, where they are advertising a product plays an essential part in how well the message is received by their audience. Using specific language choices is important when the aim of the message is to influence people (Johannessen 2010, 6). In this thesis the aim is to study the role of language in influencer marketing and how rhetoric, specifically persuasive language is used in the captions on Instagram, in posts, where a product is advertised/featured. In addition, this study will look at the use of multimodality and the relationship between image and text on social media. The focus will be on the captions of the posts, but as Instagram is a picture sharing platform, the study will also examine how the posts convey a message through both picture and text. Being a relatively new field in advertising, influencer marketing provides a topical subject of interest. Moreover, its growing value and prominence in marketing provides an engaging field of study worth exploring. Additionally, the language used on social media platforms has its own characteristics that are affected by the affordance of the platform in question, for example the limitations on text length on Instagram - which makes social media language an intriguing topic for study.

The data for this study will be gathered from Instagram, as it is currently the most significant platform for influencer marketing. Following Lin et al., "Amongst the multitude of platforms

on which influencer marketing takes place, Instagram plays an important role. The visually engaging nature of the platform and the 1 billion active users make it a relevant channel for influencer marketing.” (2019). The study will inspect one influencer’s feed posts that market a product and explore how different linguistic tools of persuasion are used to sell a product to the audience. The influencer chosen for this study is Grace Beverley (@gracebeverley), who currently has a couple businesses of her own and who in addition to lifestyle content, promotes her own products on her feed. The main objective of the thesis is to analyze the use of persuasive discourse in influencer marketing. The research questions of this study are twofold:

- 1) How persuasive language is used in the captions of @gracebeverley as a way of promoting products?
- 2) How does the relationship between image and text contribute to building a message?

Following Amirudin et al., Instagram can be considered a medium of worth language phenomena (2018, 129). Consequently, the hypothesis of the study is that language can be used as a tool in creating effective captions on Instagram posts, where an endorsed product is featured. Not considering algorithms or the popularity of an influencer the hypothesis suggests that one of the common denominators of the Instagram posts that perform well is the creative use of linguistic tools, such a persuasiveness.

The thesis will next explain the background of the study followed by the theoretical framework, which also presents the key concepts of the study. The framework follows the concepts of persuasion explained by Beasley and Danesi and the theories of advertising language presented by Goatly. The material and methods are then explained. The thesis will then move on to the analysis. The analysis of the data is presented in two parts: first the captions of the posts are discussed, followed by the analysis of the pictures. The captions are organized in the analysis according to their lengths and are displayed in three sections. Firstly, the long captions are studied, followed by the medium length captions. Thirdly, the short captions are analysed. Separating the captions by length allows for the exploration of what linguistic tools are used when more linguistic material is present versus when there is less material. The study will then move on to the analysis of the core pictures of the posts. After the analysis, the study moves on to the discussion of the findings followed by the conclusion of the thesis.

2 Background

This part of the thesis will look at the background of the study. First, the concept of influencer marketing is explained, followed by a brief introduction to social media language.

2.1 Influencer marketing

Influencers are content creators, who share some aspects of their lives on social media. They share their everyday “lives, personal experiences and opinions -- through blogging, vlogging or short-form content, such as Instagram” (De Veirman et al. 2017, 801). There are many types of influencers – some share content about their family life, some focus on beauty and lifestyle and some influencers build their content around their hobbies or jobs. The rising popularity of influencers has provided brands with new platforms through which they can market their products to a large and targeted audience. Following De Veirman et al. “As brands continue to abandon traditional advertising techniques, efforts are increasingly focused on these influencers to endorse their products among their followers and beyond.” (2017, 798). Using social media and specifically influencers to sell products to consumers has become the new trend in marketing and consequently, brands are focusing more and more of their marketing on social media.

As Lou and Yuan explain, in contrast to traditional celebrities, influencers are ultimately normal people that have gained a following by sharing personal content on social media (2019, 58). Thus, people that use social media can oftentimes relate to the influencers they follow. Additionally, many perceive influencers as easily approachable and see them as people that are personally close to them. Therefore they consider that the content posted by influencers is authentic and thus, when products are marketed to them by these influencers, they believe that the opinion of the influencer is true. Essentially, in the eyes of the follower, the influencers are also consumers of a product, although they get compensated for endorsing a product. As De Veirman et al. explain, “[a] similar message is perceived as more authentic and credible when it is communicated by a fellow consumer compared to than when it would have been put forward by an advertiser.” (2017, 800).

Following Belanche et al. influencer marketing is “marketing communications in which influencers promote a brand’s offerings on their own social media pages” (2021, 186). Influencer marketing can be executed in multiple ways; most commonly an influencer gets an offer to promote a product and they either accept or decline the offer. If they accept it, they will

promote the product on their platform. On Instagram, which essentially is a photo sharing platform, the influencers can feature the product either on their stories or on their feed. Story posts are visible for 24 hours, whereas feed posts will stay on the platform for as long as the influencer chooses. This study will look at posts that were published on @gracebeverley's Instagram feed, since these posts will most likely stay available during the time of working on this thesis as opposed to story posts that disappear after 24 hours.

2.2 Language of social media

The language used on social media platforms has its own characteristics. It often mimics spoken language, since social media platforms essentially are places where people communicate with each other. According to Deumert, “[we] follow conversational maxims which are different from those at work in non-playful encounters: truth, relevance and clarity are no longer required for communicative cooperation” (2014, 27). The language used on social media platforms is less formal and additionally, many platforms allow its users to take linguistic liberties in their language use. For example, on one of her posts on Instagram, Beverley writes “*sea you sunday*” where “see” would be the correct spelling of the word, but “sea” is used instead. In the picture, Beverley is wearing her brand's clothes that are blue like the sea, thus in this context the wrong spelling makes sense, as it creates a pun. In addition, on a picture sharing platform like Instagram specifically, it is possible to complete the message of the post with the combination of a picture and a caption. For example, Beverley captions one of her posts “*what do you do to de stress*” which is a question she answers with the picture attached, where she is working out at the gym, essentially saying that working out helps her reduce stress.

Additionally, expressions such as “so obsessed”, “photo dump” and “slay” are typically used on social media platforms, creating its own type of slang distinctive to the platform. Similarly to regular conversation between people where slang naturally arises, social media slang is generated in the same way, just in an online environment. Following Zappavigna, most of the research that has been done on internet slang suggests that it is related to the perception of community and identity as well as group boundaries (2013, 126). In a sense, the use of platform specific slang words can be a means of expressing that one is part of a community. This study will not examine social media slang in close detail, but as slang terms may be present in the data, it is worth explaining here.

What contributes to the study of the captions in this thesis is the limitation that Instagram has on the length of the captions of the posts. Instagram allows for captions of 2,200 characters to be written. Moreover, when a caption exceeds 125 characters, it is truncated – meaning that one must press “show more” to make the full caption visible. This might encourage Instagram users to write shorter, more concise captions at least when the goal is to market a product, or it might not.

3 Theoretical framework

This part of the thesis will explain the theoretical framework of the study. Firstly, the concept of persuasive language is explained. Secondly, the study will explain the key concepts used in the process of analyzing the data. Lastly the idea of multimodality will be defined in this section.

3.1 Language of persuasion

Language of persuasion has its roots in ancient rhetoric. Hogan (2012, 2) explains, that in the rhetorical tradition, persuasion has remained as a dominant theme. Persuasive language can be found in many different contexts, such as in politics, and in public or promotional discourse. This thesis will focus on persuasive language in the promotional context and examine how it is used in Instagram captions, to help promote a product. Following Bhatia “The most traditional form of promotional discourse is found in advertisement, which is often viewed as a form of discourse intended to inform and promote in order to sell ideas, goods, or services to a selected group of people”. (2005, 214). Persuasive language tools, such as the use of flattery or hyperboles can be used when promoting products effectively. The challenge in studying the language of advertising and the role of persuasive language in advertising is twofold: firstly, one needs to precisely describe the linguistic nature of advertising and secondly interpret the way the interaction between the contextual factors of all communication and the desire to persuade play out (Bruthiaux 2000, 298).

Regarding Instagram and the context of influencer marketing, most of the “selling” is done in the caption of a post, together with the picture(s) attached. Oftentimes, to keep the reader interested, these captions are kept short in length, consisting of only a few sentences. Additionally, Instagram has limited the length of captions to 2,200 characters. These limitations force the influencers to be creative with their captions. Persuasive language tends to draw the readers’ attention, is creative and oftentimes exploits language resources to the maximum. Moreover, to attract the readers, it uses emotive words, informal expressions, metaphors, catchphrases, and comparisons (Labrador et al. 2014, 40). The goal of advertising is to eventually sway the person to buy the advertised product, so to do that effectively, the advertiser or in the context of this study the influencer must use persuasive tools creatively. For example, in a post published in July of 2021, @gracebeverley uses triples in her caption to support her argument, “Flattering, recycled, made to perform”. The use of triples is a persuasive tool where three points are used when presenting an argument. In the same caption she continues with a

hyperbole, which means that she uses exaggerated language to create an effect “so obsessed with this collection that I had to go shoot it myself”. In the pictures of the post, she is wearing the clothes that her company sells, visualizing to her viewers the collection that she is “so obsessed with”. The use of persuasiveness in advertising, when used well, can help sell the product to consumers.

3.1.1 Key concepts

The minimum requirements for persuasion to occur consist of three “components: a source or speaker, a message and a recipient or hearer” (Schmidt and Kess 1986, 7). Moreover, even if the situation had all three components, it is not certain that persuasion will occur (ibid.). In the context of Instagram and this study’s material, the speaker of the situation is the influencer, hence the creator of the post, the message is the post itself and the recipient is the follower of the influencer or anyone, who sees the post on the platform. To study these situations, this study will follow the key concepts of persuasive language in advertising introduced by Beasley and Danesi (2002). In addition, the study will utilize the linguistic features of advertising language introduced by Andrew Goatly in the book *The language of Advertising*, edited by Guy Cook, 2008. Provided that there is a lack of a mention or a description of a linguistic feature in either of these source materials, other materials will additionally be utilized in this study to ensure an appropriate basis for the analysis. Both secondary sources will be discussed in this part of the thesis. Any other research literature that is applied in the analysis is also explained in this section.

3.1.2 Beasley and Danesi 2002

In their book *Persuasive signs: The Semiotics of Advertising*, Beasley and Danesi discuss different persuasive signs of advertising by using real-life ads as examples. Firstly, they explain that the primary strategy for strengthening the image of a product is textuality (Beasley and Danesi, 2002, 95). They explain that textuality functions on two levels, the surface, and the underlying level. Essentially, the surface level is the text, and the underlying level is the subtext (Beasley and Danesi, 2002, 96). Moreover, the surface level consists of the same kinds of advertising techniques used by different advertisers, such as jingles. The underlying level of textuality is the signification system structured around connotations that are meant to benefit from the consumers buying motive (ibid.). For instance, an ad might give the consumer the idea

that by buying the product one will become popular – the underlying motive, i.e. the subtext here being popularity.

Beasley and Danesi define textuality as “the specific mode or modes of making advertisements and commercials on the basis of specific signification systems built intentionally into products” (2002, 65). Moreover, they add that it is “one of the techniques used by advertisers to promote their products” (Beasley and Danesi 2002, 95). They discuss different verbal and nonverbal techniques of persuasive language that are used to generate product textuality. As this study will focus mainly on the captions of Instagram posts, the verbal techniques of persuasiveness are in greater focus. However, nonverbal techniques will be discussed in the analysis of the core pictures. In this chapter of the thesis, these techniques are discussed in the context of Instagram, so they will be explained as how they would be used in the captions. The techniques mentioned by Beasley and Danesi that are used in advertisements that are in video form, such as jingles and slogans, will be omitted here, as they will not be relevant in this study. The verbal techniques relevant for this study are discussed below.

Figurative language

Following Colston, “Figurative language expresses meaning beyond its correct figurative interpretation” (2015, 3). In essence, whenever the language of a post goes beyond the actual meaning of words, it is considered figurative language. Figurative language can be divided into subsections such as, symbolisms, similes, and metaphors. The first two are explained by Fadaee. Symbolism “is a kind of figures of speech used for increasing the beauty of the text and has figurative meaning besides its literal meaning” (2011, 20). Essentially symbols are used as “stand-ins” for objects or people. Secondly, simile is “the comparison of two objects with some similarities” (2011, 22). Metaphors are explained by Beasley and Danesi as statements that do not make literal sense, for example in the product name of a perfume called “Poison” (2002, 115). The meaning of “poison” refers to “the culture-specific connotations perceived in poison - namely, as something harmful or destructive to happiness or welfare” (ibid.). Moreover, it refers to metaphors such as “poison the mind” or “poison the soul” (ibid.). Beasley and Danesi only really discuss metaphors in more detail in their book, but this study will examine the other types of figurative language as well.

Alliteration

Alliterations are repetitions of sounds, in essence, using words starting with the same letter or sound. These are often used to make one remember a name of a brand. They can also be used

in advertisements in general. An example of an alliteration would be the slogan of the beer brand Guinness “Guinness is good for you” (Beasley and Danesi, 2002, 120). In the example there is the alliteration of the letter g.

In addition, the following tools will be examined in the study: the use of inclusive and exclusive pronouns, in essence, using “we” and “our” to make it seem like the reader and the writer are on the same side and using “you” when directly addressing the viewer. Emotive language, i.e. the use of words that bear an emotive effect on a reader, which can be either positive or negative. Anecdotes, which are short personal stories to make a point, in this context: explaining an issue that the product offers a solution for. Lastly, the use of adverbs and adjectives and the use of full sentences or shortened sentences and words.

Syntax

Bruthiaux (2000) explains that the use of different syntactic features in advertising language varies depending on the intended relationship between the writer and the reader. He discusses that more text is used in ads, such as employment ads, where the goal is to create a relationship between the author and the reader that is long-lasting and personal (Bruthiaux 2000, 302). In essence, he suggests that in these ads, the writers use more sophisticated and skillful language in the hopes of attracting readers that are equally skillful language users (2000, 303). In the scope of this study, it can be suggested that Beverley’s goal when selling her products to her followers is to establish long-term personal relationships with them as opposed to brief, non-personal relationships, since it would be beneficial for her to build trust with her followers through that relationship. It can be argued that her followers would likely spend more money on her products, when they feel like they have a personal connection to her. Eventually creating these types of relationships with her followers i.e., her customers, would generate more sales for her companies.

Moreover, Bruthiaux explains that oftentimes in ads there are spatial constraints that would allow writers to omit specific linguistic features from ads such as articles or prepositions. However, he describes that in advertising catalogs, where the space for text is comparable between different ads, full sentences were used in most cases (ibid.). He explains that “The overall impression is one of substantial syntactic elaboration leading to the inclusion of items and features normally absent from spatially constrained texts such as pronouns and articles, as in the perfect companion for an active lifestyle” (2000, 304). As social media language allows

for such linguistic liberties to be taken, it will be interesting to see whether such linguistic features like pronouns are omitted in the captions or whether full sentences are used. Syntactic elaboration is not however examined in detail in the analysis.

3.1.3 Andrew Goatly 2008

In the chapter “Advertising and Consumerism” Goatly discusses different linguistic features that are used in advertising in addition to the role of identity and its contribution to consumer behavior. Moreover, he explains that there are six aspects of consumerist ideology that advertisers use as strategies when selling products (Goatly 2008, 84). These include “desire and power, buying as problem solving, acquiring qualities, choosing an identity, distinguishing yourself: exclusivity, uniqueness and tradition, and buying a lifestyle” (ibid.). As this study will focus mainly on linguistic features of advertising language, these ideologies will not be discussed in much detail. However, “choosing an identity” will be discussed further since it is relevant in the context of influencers. Following Jin et al. “Instagram influencers, therefore, can be more effective in resonating with audiences as they are perceived as more similar to regular audiences -- and are easier to associate or identify with than traditional celebrities” (2019, 570). Goatly explains that modern people have an identity crisis, which advertisers take advantage of when along with buying a product they promise the consumer an accompanying identity (Goatly 2008, 91). In the context of Beverley, when she endorses her products on her Instagram feed by wearing them herself it is as though the consumer will be like her if they buy the same product. It is likely that Beverley is seen by her followers as a successful woman with a desirable lifestyle thus by buying her products the followers will also receive her desirable qualities. As Lester Faigley (1992, 13) explains, “The desire to consume is predicated on the lack of a stable identity. Purchasing and using a consumer object is a temporary and unstable attempt to occupy an imagined identity provoked by an image”. This study will focus more on the linguistic features used by Beverley in her captions, but choosing an identity might be the main selling strategy that she utilizes. It cannot be said for certain whether she uses the strategy intentionally, but it is there, nonetheless.

Goatly discusses different linguistic features used in advertising that will be used in the analysis of this study as well. Firstly, these include interpersonal linguistic features such as, pronouns, interrogative mood “questions”, fake dialogue and minor sentences or other shortenings (Goatly 2008, 99-100). The alternating use of the pronouns you and we, where you can be seen as giving emphasis on the individuality of the reader, whereas we is more exclusive, consisting of the reader and the brand of the product in the advert (Goatly 2008, 100).

3.2 Multimodality

Bateman et al. describe multimodality as a means of defining communicative situations, where different forms and combinations of communication are used to create effective messages (2017, 7). In the context of social media, these different forms of communication are pictures, videos of different lengths, and text.

Social media platforms, like Instagram allow its users to combine text and pictures creatively, allowing for many kinds of posts to be made. “If you want to influence people to act the way you want, words and images can be used powerfully” (Johanessen et al. 2010, 10).

Although this study will mainly focus on captions on Instagram, the pictures in the data will be considered to some extent, as Instagram essentially is a picture sharing platform. Moreover, this study will explore the relationship between image and text, which calls for the exploration of pictures as well. In advertisements, the images give us a sense of “glamour and fulfillment”, whereas words provide us with “the information we need of the specifications of the product” (van Leeuwen 2008, 136). Oftentimes, pictures can complete the message of the caption and vice versa, thus the possibility of using multiple modes in creating a message will be considered. “The captions are related to the photos or videos that have more information of the photos and the role of the captions is describing the object, situation or mental state of photos” (Chofiyya et al. 2016, 94). On a platform like Instagram, image and text can be considered dependent on one another, especially when product endorsement is present. Without the caption, the specific features of a product are obscure. Moreover, without the image the visualization and realization of a product will remain incomplete. The analysis of the pictures will focus on how the product described in the caption is displayed in the pictures. The aim is to see how the visualization of the product is created, specifically how clear or unclear the product placement is to the viewer. Moreover, the analysis will explore how Beverley herself is portrayed in the pictures.

4 Material and methods

The material for this study was gathered from the Instagram feed of @gracebeverley. The material consists of eleven of her feed posts, posted between the 28th of June 2023 and the 10th of December 2021. The posts have captions of three different lengths – short (two or less lines of text), medium (three or more lines of text) and long (consisting of multiple paragraphs).

Grace Beverley i.e. @gracebeverley is an influencer, who nowadays owns two direct-to-consumer companies, meaning that she sells products straight to consumers, with no third parties involved. Both of her companies are in the lifestyle and wellness field. On her Instagram page, she posts a lot of lifestyle content as well as content related to her businesses. She is very transparent about her companies and shares a lot about how she manages them.

Beverley has graduated from the University of Oxford in 2019, where she studied music, but has since shifted her focus into business. She has an activewear company called TALA and on their Instagram bio (@wearetala) they describe that they sell “sustainably and ethically made active and loungewear”. The second company she owns is Shreddy, which is an app that provides a selection of at home and at the gym workout programs. This study only focuses on her brand TALA and its products, for the simple reason that Beverley posts more about TALA than she does about Shreddy. Beverley doesn’t represent influencer marketing in the “traditional” sense, since for the most part she promotes her own products on her feed, but her posts will still provide interesting material for this study. I have personally followed her for many years now and am therefore quite familiar with her and her content.

Some influencers might use a template to write their captions, but having followed Beverley for many years I am confident that she does not use one for her posts. Her style of writing has remained the same, even after she started endorsing her products on her feed, which would suggest that she writes the captions herself. Her not using a template to write her captions cannot however be proved entirely.

As it is possible that Beverley later edits her posts or deletes them altogether, the posts will be analyzed in the form that they were at the time of the collecting of data. The data was collected in January of 2024. The posts gathered as data were chosen according to the following criteria: the post had to contain at least one picture of Beverley herself wearing her brand’s @wearatala clothes with the brand tagged. This acts as the common denominator of all the posts. These pictures will be referred to in the study as “core pictures”. In addition, videos were omitted

altogether as they would have complicated the collecting and managing of the data. Lastly, any posts that had a caption consisting of one word or less were omitted as they were considered unsuitable for the purpose of this study. Captions consisting of one or less words were omitted as the persuasive tools examined in this study would likely not be present. It will be interesting to examine, how Beverley captions her posts that contain essentially only one similar aspect – the core picture, and how she uses persuasive tools when the goal of every post is the same.

At the beginning of conducting this study a direct message was sent to Beverley on Instagram. The message asked for her permission to use her posts as data for the study, with the reasons why her posts would provide excellent data for the analysis. However, Beverley did not read nor respond to the message. Since her Instagram page is public and has over 1 million followers at the time of conducting this research, it was concluded that there is no ethical issue regarding the use of her posts for this study. Moreover, there was an attempt to discuss this research with her personally, which was left unanswered on Beverley’s behalf.

The posts used for data were screenshotted from Instagram and uploaded to Tropy (<https://tropy.org/>). Tropy is a free software that provides a way for organizing and describing pictures that are used as research material. Tropy makes it easier to browse and study the screenshots of the posts and helps keep the data neatly in one place.

Upon uploading the screenshots to Tropy, the posts were labelled and organized according to the date that each post was posted on Instagram by Beverley. The text of each caption was transcribed onto the “note” space on Tropy under the screenshot, where the caption was shown. This made it easy to copy and paste examples from the captions into the analysis. When analyzing the data, close reading was used as a method. By using close reading as a method, it was possible to study both the content of the captions and the posts in general as well as look at the way in which Beverley presents that content. To illustrate the lengths and the contents of the posts, the following table is presented:

Date of the post	The number of words in the caption	The number of pictures in the post
28.6.2023	400 words	8 pictures
3.6.2023	2 words	10 pictures
18.5.2023	372 words	8 pictures
23.3.2023	11 words	7 pictures
18.12.2022	36 words	7 pictures
6.11.2022	43 words	5 pictures

19.5.2022	56 words	10 pictures
12.5.2022	14 words	8 pictures
13.1.2022	263 words	9 pictures
22.12.2021	61 words	10 pictures
10.12.2021	36 words	8 pictures

Table 1: The dates and lengths of the captions.

Table 1 presents the dates of the captions that are analyzed in this study. In addition, it shows the number of words in the captions as well as the number of pictures in each post. The first column shows the date when the post was published. The dates are organized from newest to oldest. These dates are used as a label in the analysis, when referring to specific captions and posts. The second column displays the number of words included in each caption. The third column illustrates the number of pictures included in the post. Most of the posts analyzed in this study are so called “carousel posts” meaning that the post includes multiple photos and videos with one shared caption. As explained in earlier sections, videos have been omitted from this study altogether, to make the gathering and analyzing of data more manageable.

For a post to be applicable as data for this research, it needed to include at least one picture, where Beverley is featured herself, wearing her brands clothes, with the brand @wearetala tagged in the picture. The study will refer to these specific pictures as core pictures. The analysis of these core pictures will be examined in detail, as they are the common factor present across all the posts. All posts included in the data were so called “carousel” posts, meaning that they contained multiple pictures. However, as the scope of these pictures was extremely varied, the study will only look at the core picture of each post since those were considered relevant to the scope of this research. The relationship between the core pictures and the captions is explored further in the Discussion part of this thesis.

To analyze these pictures, the study will apply the variables and values presented in Table 2. These variables and values are based on van Leeuwen’s theory of discourse and have been adapted from Mansikka (2019). Mansikka presented even more variables, but as this study focuses more on the captions, some of the variables were omitted, to ensure a compact enough analysis of the pictures. The omitted variables included gender, hair color and length, number of females and different photo angles. These variables were considered irrelevant for the analysis of the core pictures as the pictures only portrayed one person. The variables and values chosen for the purpose of this study are shown in Table 2. The first column presents the variables analyzed, followed by the values in the second column.

Variable	Values
1. Exposure of skin	<i>Unrevealing, Slightly revealing, Revealing, Very revealing</i>
2. Product display	<i>Clear, Unclear</i>
3. Facial expression	<i>Smiling, Serious, Unable to determine</i>
4. Portrayal of body	<i>Full body, Upper body, Lower body</i>
5. Direction of gaze	<i>Looking at the viewer, Not looking at the viewer</i>
6. Background	<i>Public, Domestic</i>

Table 2: Variables and values, adjusted from Mansikka (2019, 41)

As the pictures where Beverley's brand was tagged naturally portray clothes, the first variable, exposure of skin (1) was chosen. Its four values unrevealing, slightly revealing, revealing, and very revealing refer to different amounts of skin shown. Unrevealing was chosen when no or very little skin was shown. Slightly revealing referred to pictures that showed some skin, of the stomach, bust or the legs. When Beverley was showing a significant amount of skin, of the same parts of the body as slightly revealing but on a larger scale, revealing was the value chosen. Lastly, very revealing pictures referred to pictures, where there was more skin shown than was covered.

The second variable of product display (2) relates to the way the clothes are portrayed in the pictures. As all core pictures contained @wearetala clothes the first value (clear) looks at how clearly the clothes are portrayed in the photo, in essence if the clothes were shown fully. Moreover, clear was the value chosen, when Beverley's placement in the picture further served the product display. On the contrary, the value unclear was chosen, when Beverley was pictured in a position, where the design and style of the clothes was partially hidden.

The third variable facial expression (3) focused on Beverley's appearance. The values were threefold; the first value smiling was chosen whenever Beverley was pictured smiling. Whenever this was not the case, serious was the value chosen. If Beverley's face was hidden or her expression otherwise unclear, the third value unable to determine was chosen.

Portrayal of body (4) and its values full body, upper body and lower body aimed to explore which parts of Beverley's body were shown in the pictures. If Beverley's full body was shown,

either fully or from the ankles upwards, full body was chosen. If Beverley was portrayed from the knees upward, the value upper body was chosen. On the contrary, lower body referred to pictures, where Beverley was pictured from the navel down.

The second to last variable, direction of gaze (5) focuses on whether Beverley is looking at the camera in the picture. The values represent the two possibilities of yes or no.

As opposed to the first five variables, the last variable of background (6) does not focus on Beverley or the products. It will instead look at the background of the pictures. The values are twofold; public and domestic. Simply explained, whenever Beverley was pictured outside her home, the value public was chosen. If she was pictured at home, domestic was chosen.

5 Analysis

The analysis will first go through the captions of the posts, starting with the long captions. Secondly, the medium length captions are discussed. Thirdly, the short captions are explored. Lastly, the analysis will move forward and study the core pictures of the posts. The analysis of the captions is divided into three according to their lengths as it makes it easier to compare the use of persuasive tools. On one hand, comparisons can be made between captions of similar lengths, in essence it is possible to explore, whether similar tools were used in all long captions or in all medium captions and so on. On the other hand, it makes it easier to compare the use of tools between captions of different lengths, for example whether the long and short captions used the same kinds of tools.

5.1. The long captions

The data includes three long captions. These captions are comprised of multiple paragraphs and have the most amount of text. These captions are discussed first.

The post from the 28th of June 2023

The caption of the post from the 28th of June 2023 is one of the longer ones. It consists of five paragraphs. As discussed in chapter 3.1.1 of this thesis, more linguistic material is used when the goal is to create longer and more personal relationships between the writer and the reader. This caption is an example of Beverley using more linguistic material in a caption.

The whole caption can be thought of as an anecdote. The caption starts with Beverley mentioning her company's latest product drop. She writes that to everyone else the drop might not be as significant, but to her it is very meaningful. She continues by writing an anecdote of her experience working on her business @wearetala. She uses the new product drop as a way of giving her followers insight to what being an entrepreneur is. The assumption was that Beverley bases her marketing on the idea of selling an identity, as explained in section 3.1.3 by Lester Faigley (1992, 13), "The desire to consume is predicated on the lack of a stable identity.

Purchasing and using a consumer object is a temporary and unstable attempt to occupy an imagined identity provoked by an image”. Moreover, this means that Beverley’s followers believe that by purchasing Beverley’s products, they also receive a part of her identity as a successful and beautiful woman. By showing her followers that even she has harder days and not everything she does is perfect, she makes herself more relatable and makes her identity seem more believable. Thus, encouraging her followers to purchase products as they believe Beverley’s identity is something that they too, can achieve.

Beverley also uses emotive language throughout the caption, meaning that she uses words and expressions that elicit strong emotions. In the beginning of the caption, most of the emotions she expresses are negative. In the first paragraph she writes that seeing the new campaign come to life made her *“tear up multiple times”* expressing sadness. Moreover, she writes *“it so often just feels like fighting fire after fire after fire”* expressing frustration. Additionally, she mentions how *“I know it might not seem a lot to anyone else, because this drop wasn’t anything out of the ordinary”* and later on *“I know this probably looks like just another campaign, and I even debated posting this”* expressing shame over her own feelings on the new campaign.

As the caption continues, Beverley moves on to use expressions that elicit more positive emotions. For example, she uses expressions such as *“getting it wrong, fixing it”* expressing hope. Moreover, she expresses gratitude; *“this launch has just been such a ‘step back and look around’ moment for me!”* and *“It just goes to show that building a business truly is just one foot in front of the other until you look back and can see how far you’ve come.”*

In the last paragraph of the caption, she starts with expressing gratitude again *“watching this company and team grow has been the biggest privilege and every day I feel luckier to be given the opportunity”* but then returns to the negative feeling of sadness by continuing with *“I promise you in 3-5 business days I’ll feel out of my depth again and probs be crying in the office toilet”* By mixing negative and positive emotions throughout the caption she creates contrast and makes her anecdote come across stronger.

Beverley uses figurative language in the caption when writing that *“it really is all about making the rocket ship while you’re on it”* This seems to be the only time she uses figurative language in this caption.

Beverley uses adjectives and adverbs throughout the caption. She uses words like *“beautiful”* *“truly”*, *“true”* and *“absolutely”*. In addition, she uses feel-good language *“so happy”* and *“beautiful”*.

Beverley also uses different registers in the caption by implementing expressions that most likely make sense to only those involved in the business world. For example, she writes *“finding the growth inflection points”*, *“processes, execution, hiring”* and *“doubling our headcount”*. However, around these expressions she writes in her regular writing style, i.e. the style she uses in most of her story posts and posts that do not contain product placement. Moreover, she even uses abbreviations that are popular on social media, for example in *“would look at me like a creep w absolutely no clue who I am bc we’ve grown so much”*. Here she uses abbreviations “w” [with] and “bc” [because]. Mixing registers makes Beverley seem professional as a businesswoman, while simultaneously remaining relatable to her followers. By mixing registers she shows professionalism but remains unserious enough for her followers to relate to her and understand her point.

Beverley uses different pronouns in the caption. Throughout the caption she uses first-person pronouns “I”, “me” and “my” to create personal appeal in the caption. In the first paragraph she uses “our” when referring to her and her team’s latest campaign. Here the “our” is exclusive to include only her and her team. She uses the same exclusive “our” in the third paragraph, *“the imagery looks straight out of a catalogue for brands 10x our size”*. At the end of the third paragraph, she uses the second-person pronoun “you” when talking about building a business; *“until you look back and can see how far you’ve come”*. Beverley refers to the reader by using the second person you, in the hopes of making the reader feel included in her message.

At the very end of the caption, she writes *“we enjoy it while it lasts!!!”*. Here she uses the first person “we” but as opposed to the exclusive “our” in the first and third paragraphs, this “we” can be perceived as inclusive to include her, her team, and the reader. By using an inclusive “we” she makes the reader feel included in the story she is telling.

The post from the 18th of May 2023

The caption on the post from the 18th of May 2023 is one of the three longer captions analyzed. It consists of ten paragraphs. Similarly to the caption on the post from the 28th of June 2023, this one too is an anecdote. Beverley starts the caption by writing that she can’t believe her business, @wearetala is four years old. She then continues to write about how she founded the company. As a whole, the caption is quite similar to the one posted on the 28th of June as she uses similar tools of persuasiveness.

In the first paragraph Beverley begins her anecdote “@wearetala was born during my uni finals + the journey since has been the most rewarding - and challenging - of my life”. She describes her journey using superlatives “the most rewarding – and challenging”. First, she uses a very positive superlative expressing gratitude and contrasts it by using a negative superlative expressing frustration. She highlights this contrast by comparing different phases of her journey with the next sentence “There have been times I genuinely didn’t think I’d come out the other end, and there have been my best moments ever”. The use of contrast makes her anecdote more compelling and makes the intent of her anecdote clearer – highlighting her eventful journey as an entrepreneur. She uses contrast later in the caption as well “[n]ot hype, not influencer merch, genuine customer love”.

As mentioned, Beverley uses superlatives in the caption. In addition, she uses other adjectives; “genuine”, “best”, “flattering”, “innovative”, “effortless”, adverbs; “genuinely”, as well as a mix of both, such as “truly incredible”. All of these words have a positive connotation.

In this caption too, Beverley uses two registers. In the first paragraph she uses a register that is representative of social media language, with abbreviations and expressions often used on social media “pls enjoy this realistic throwback dump to mark the occasion”. She uses the abbreviation “pls” [please] and the expression “realistic throwback dump”, which refers to her “dumping” i.e. posting multiple pictures at once on her feed. The term “throwback” refers to these pictures being old. In the following paragraph, she uses words related to business “growth metrics - sales numbers, team numbers”. These are terms that her followers might not be familiar with – terms that Beverley might use outside of social media in a business setting. In the following paragraphs she uses sales numbers to underline how successful her company has been. These paragraphs are mostly written using a register that is often used in traditional marketing “*50% of our customers EVERY WEEK were returning customers - that means that we’re genuinely part of their wardrobe.”. She uses this register in the following five paragraphs. However, in the last paragraph she speaks directly to her customers and ends the caption with “Now we do it allagain *” (*=an emoji in the original caption), switching back to the social media register. It can be argued that mixing these two registers is a conscious choice on Beverley’s behalf to not come across too strong as a businesswoman, but still showing enough professionalism for her followers to trust her knowledge. By doing this, Beverley refrains from disturbing the parasocial relationship she has with her followers.

Beverley also mixes opinions and facts in her caption. On one hand, she presents an opinion as a fact “it’s easy to shout about growth metrics - sales numbers, team numbers etc”. On the

other hand, she presents a fact as an opinion “*so here are some fun facts that’ll show you far more about us than telling you that we doubled sales + team last year (we did *)*”. By presenting an opinion as a fact Beverley persuades her followers to trust her opinion. Furthermore, she plainly states facts to support her argument “**Our Trustpilot is now at 4.8 and scoring above ALL tracked competitors*”. She also uses facts to describe the qualities of her products “*basics made from wood pulp that wash 2x better than cotton*”.

In the latter paragraphs, Beverley uses statistics to underline the success of her company. She begins the third and the fourth paragraph with a percentage, “**50% of our customers EVERY WEEK were returning customers*” and “**50% of our customers each week are new to TALA*”. In these two paragraphs she also uses comparison by saying that half of the customers were returning customers and half were new. She states a fact that she bases on statistics and then explains what that fact means, giving her argument about her company’s success more strength. She explains that the fact that half were returning customers means that they [as a company] have become a part of their [the customers] wardrobe. Moreover, the fact that half of the customers were new means that they’re reaching thousands of new customers each week.

Beverley uses repetition in the caption to enhance her argument about the goal of her company “*I hope it’s clear that we’re not only interested in the numbers. We’re interested in building something truly incredible*”. Here repetition is used to make the argument stronger, but she also uses repetition differently. In the caption Beverley writes “*you grab day after day*” instead of saying “*you grab repeatedly*” or “*continuously*”. Here the repetition creates an idiom, which is a type of figurative language. By using figurative language, the idea of how her products are used and what they are for becomes more understandable to the follower.

Beverley also uses figurative language when talking about the goal of her company “*[w]e’re interested in building something truly incredible - a place where you know you’ll get the most flattering fits, true innovative fabrics, your trusty favourite black leggings that you grab day after day*”. The “*place*” that she mentions they are building is not an actual, physical place but more so refers to her brand’s mission and goal that she is aiming to achieve.

Additionally, alliteration is used in the caption. For instance, there is an alliteration of “*f*” in “*flattering fits*” as well as in “*fun facts*”.

Beverley also uses the marketing tactic of acquiring qualities in the caption. In the second to last paragraph, she writes “*that effortless put-together outfit you’re always getting compliments*”.

on.”. The argument in this sentence makes the follower feel that by buying Beverley’s products they will acquire compliments and admiration from other people.

In this caption too, Beverley uses exclusive and inclusive personal pronouns. She uses the exclusive “we” that refers to herself and her team in *“making the things we care about happen”* and in *“we doubled sales + team last year (we did *)”*. Moreover, the exclusive “we” is used in *“we’re genuinely part of their wardrobe”* and in *“we’re reaching thousands of new customers every week”*. In addition, she uses the possessive “our” when similarly referring to herself and her team as in *“our customers”* and in *“[o]ur average customer service response time”*. In the third to last paragraph, she uses the inclusive “you” and directly speaks to the follower by using the second person “you”. In the paragraph she alternates between using the exclusive “we” and inclusive “you” as in *“whether you’re looking for high performance, shapewear meets activewear, casual outfitting or basics made from wood pulp that wash 2x better than cotton, we’ve got you covered”*.

The post from the 13th of January 2022

The caption of the post from the 13th of January 2022 is the third longer caption analyzed. It consists of seven paragraphs. Similarly to the other two long captions, this one too is an anecdote, which Beverley starts in the first sentence of the caption *“Lemme tell you a quick story please & thank you *”*. In the sentence she uses fake dialogue to catch the attention of the reader. The anecdote of the caption is about the reasons why Beverley’s new collection “DayFlex” was created.

She continues by stating a fact *“[a]ll the best ‘athleisure’ wear is made for yoga.”*. The factuality of the statement is not however proven in anyway and therefore the statement can be depicted as an opinion. Beverley then writes about the characteristics of yoga wear. Her whole anecdote is based on the qualities of yoga wear and the cons thereof. Her marketing tactic that she uses in the caption is buying as problem solving – she proposes a problem to which her new product offers a solution for. She explains that good quality yoga wear is expensive and not necessarily made using sustainable fabrics. Moreover, if one wants to buy ‘athleisure’ wear instead of yoga wear, there are no products that work adequately if one wants to wear them both in and outside the gym. Beverley concludes her point by saying that *“you have to pick between lower priced pieces that aren’t truly made for when you sweat or move, and higher priced true workout wear.”* She then uses fake dialogue just like she did in the beginning of the caption and

ends her paragraph by saying that “[y]ou know that when we see that type of landscape, we gotta do something about it.”

She continues by writing a full paragraph;

“The brief was clear - create a collection that provides what we believe the industry still truly needs; a collection with performance qualities inspired by yoga-wear but versatile, comfortable and stylish enough to be worn everyday.”

In the quote above she presents the current problem with athleisure clothes. She then moves on to introduce her new collection, which offers a solution to the problem.

Beverley uses many adjectives in the caption, “*flattering*”, “*versatile*” and “*stylish*”. Additionally, she uses feel good expressions to describe the feel of her products “*maximum comfort*”. She also uses adverbs “*truly*” and “*aesthetically*”. Moreover, she uses triples to build a strong argument “*good quality, lasting, performance-ready yoga wear*”. However, her use of triples is not consistent, meaning that she does not present three points in every argument, as she also writes “*[i]t’s minimalist, flattering versatile and comfortable.*”. This would suggest that her use of triples might not be consciously done.

In this caption too, Beverley uses two registers. The beginning sentence is written using social media language “*Lemme tell you a quick story please & thank you **”. She uses the abbreviation “*lemme*” [let me]. The rest of her caption is written using more traditional marketing language. The last full paragraph specifically, is an example of traditional marketing language. Beverley starts the paragraph with “*Introducing DayFlex: Our new weightless quick-dry fabric*”. In the paragraph she writes about the qualities of DayFlex, listing things such as “*elasticated waistbands*” and “*hidden pockets*”. In addition, she uses exaggeration to describe DayFlex “*in shapes so perfect you’ll be annoyed when they’re in the wash*”. Moreover, Beverley uses alliteration in the paragraph in “*packs the power of performance in fit and fabric*”. The first half of the sentence has an alliteration of “p”, while the second half has the alliteration of “f”. She concludes the paragraph by adding a separate sentence saying “*[a]vailable now in Shadow Black, Sage Green, Mineral Blue and Zinc Grey. *****”

In line with the two other long captions, in this caption as well Beverley mixes exclusive and inclusive pronouns. The mix of the two is particularly highlighted in this caption as Beverley explains that we [her and her team] have created a solution for a problem that you [Beverley’s followers] have. An example of this is the following paragraph:

“But when you look at good quality, lasting, performance-ready yoga wear in the industry, it’s all £80+ for a pair of leggings, and that’s with very little of it made using sustainable fabrics. Then, when you look at pieces created for ‘athleisure’, they’re not performance-suited enough to really take you from brunch to the gym - you have to pick between lower priced pieces that aren’t truly made for when you sweat or move, and higher priced true workout wear.

You know that when we see that type of landscape, we gotta do something about it.”

Here she refers to her followers with the second person inclusive “you”. By doing this, the follower will likely be able to relate to the issue portrayed in the paragraph thus making the issue seem more authentic. Beverley then uses the exclusive “we” when outlining a solution for the issue. It is her together with her team that have created a solution for the problem that her followers have had to bear with. However, the use of the first-person plural “we” is different at the very end of the caption, where Beverley writes “*TALA TO THE WORLD BABY!!! 2022 is when we do the big things **”. The use of the first-person plural “we” here can be perceived as either inclusive or exclusive. It remains exclusive if Beverley refers to herself and her team and their combined efforts in the upcoming year. However, it can also be inclusive and include the followers as well if Beverley suggests that by herself and her team working hard and by her followers purchasing her products and therefore supporting her brand, they together make big things happen.

5.1.1 Summary of long captions

As the three long captions were compiled of the most linguistic material, i.e. text, they showed use of multiple persuasive tools. All three captions were anecdotes that aimed to build more personal relationships with the viewers. Additionally, the varying use of two registers is present in all three captions. This was highlighted as there is more linguistic data, which shows the change more drastically. The change was between the same two registers across all three captions and was visible in similar ways – social media register through shortenings and word choices, business register through employing numbers and statistics as well as using business related terms. Moreover, the use of exclusive and inclusive pronouns was present in all three captions in addition to the use of adjectives and adverbs.

Other tools that were present in the long captions but the use of which was not as consistent were emotive language, figurative language, mixing facts and opinions, alliterations, contrast,

and repetition. Moreover, the marketing tactic of acquiring qualities was evident, but only in one of the captions.

It can be concluded that in these long captions, the use of different persuasive tools was versatile, as there was more text to utilize. The use of some tools, most notably anecdotes, change of registers, and the use of adverbs, adjectives and pronouns was consistent, but individual variation was also apparent.

5.2. The medium captions

The data includes five medium length captions. These captions consist of three or more lines of text, but do not have multiple paragraphs.

The post from the 10th of December 2021

In the caption of the post from the 10th of December 2021 Beverley lists things that had made her smile that month. She lists four things: *“my mummy getting engaged, puppies in the snow, my baby businesses winning some awards and my dog proudly perfecting the side eye he learnt from yours truly”*. She elicits positive emotions in her caption by listing things that made her happy. The second thing on her list *“puppies in the snow”* has a vastly positive connotation - the idea of puppies most often evokes exclusively positive emotions. Moreover, “puppy” is a diminutive way of saying “dog”, which strengthens the connotation further.

Beverley also uses alliterations in the caption. Firstly, she writes *“baby businesses”* which contains the alliteration of “b”. Secondly, she writes *“proudly perfecting”* which has the alliteration of “p”.

In addition, the expression *“my baby businesses”* can be interpreted as a metaphor, where “baby” does not refer to an actual baby but is instead used as an endearment. The businesses were created by Beverley herself and she nurtures them like she would actual babies.

In the caption Beverley uses social media language throughout. She begins her list of things with the word *feat.*, which is a shortening of the word “featuring”. “Feat.” is often used in song titles whenever a song has a featuring artist. By using “feat.” as opposed to “including” for

example, the caption mimics spoken language, which is typical for social media language. Additionally, Beverley uses expressions that are popular if not only used on social media platforms. An example of this is the expression “*side eye*”, which originates from the social media platform Tiktok. “Side eye” became popular after the sound “bombastic side eye” started making rounds on the platform.

Beverley uses two adverbs in the caption “*proudly*” and “*truly*”. She does not use adjectives in this caption.

The post from the the 22nd of December 2021

Beverley begins the caption by writing that “*it’s the last photo dump of 2021*”. “Photo dump” refers to a post where multiple photos are posted in the same post at the same time. In the caption she writes about her plans for Christmas break. Similarly to the caption from the 10th of December, here Beverley also uses social media language. This is visible in her word choices such as “*photo dump*”, “*logging off*” and “*girlsleeping*” that are exclusively used on social media platforms. Moreover, she writes “*bye bitchhhh*”, where the word “bitch” is written with extra letters as well as “*cannot WAIT*”, where the verb is written in all caps. By doing this, the text grabs the attention of the viewer better, while the message still remains understandable. These tweaks can also be interpreted as a way of modeling spoken language.

Beverley also states an opinion as a fact in the caption by writing “*no one asked but I’ll be logging off from tomorrow till 3rd January*”. There is no way of knowing whether anyone asked, but by adding “no one asked” to her sentence, Beverley states that her informing her followers about her Christmas break was not requested, but she will inform them in any case. It also allows for her sentence to come across negative to some, as many might associate the expression “no one asked” as something dismissive.

Additionally, Beverley appeals to her followers’ feelings in the caption. The post was posted a few days before Christmas, which is a holiday associated with family and togetherness. Beverley writes in the caption “*I hope you all have a wonderful christmas and new year and sending so much love to anyone who can’t see their family*”. On one hand, she wishes her followers a happy Christmas, but on the other she acknowledges those, who cannot spend the holiday with their family.

Beverley uses feel-good adjectives and expressions in the caption, such as “*wonderful*” and “*so much love*”. She does not use adverbs in the caption.

The post from the 19th of May 2022

The caption of the post from the 19th of May 2022 starts as an anecdote, where Beverley explains that she always saves photos for a photo dump. Oftentimes the photos featured in photo dumps are unedited and do not always have relevance to one another. Social media language is used in this post too and an example of it is the use of the word “dump”, which is mentioned in the caption six times. Beverley also plays with the word and creates an adjective “dumpy”, when referring to her collection of photos. “Dumpy” works in this context but might not be applicable outside of social media. Moreover, the whole caption is one sentence with no stops or commas, which makes it resemble spoken language and is an expression of Beverley’s line of thought.

Beverley uses exaggeration in the caption to make her anecdote stronger as she writes “*and then before you know it I have 72 thousand pictures and don’t know which ones to choose for the dump*”. She most likely does not actually have 72 thousand pictures, but by claiming that she does, her anecdote becomes more relatable.

The post from the 6th of November 2022

The caption discusses Beverley’s team behind her businesses. She begins with a rhetorical question “*do you know what’s cooler than any collection could ever be?*” and continues with an answer “*having the best team in the world.*”. She then uses triples to list the places where her team’s work can be seen “*behind the bar, on the door, on the graphics*”. She also uses repetition to make her argument stronger “*i’ll honestly never ever ever know*”.

In the caption Beverley uses a comparative “*cooler*” as well as a superlative “*the best*”. Additionally, she uses an adverb “*honestly*”. The adjectives elicit positive emotions, whereas the adverb expresses humbleness and in the full sentence “*i’ll honestly never ever ever know what I did to deserve these people.*” she expresses gratitude. The underlying expression of gratitude is present throughout the caption.

The post from the 18th of December 2022

This post was made during Beverley's trip to Sydney. In this caption, as well as in the other medium captions, she uses social media language. Here she again uses the term "*dump*". Moreover, she uses a full stop between the two sentences of the caption but refrains from using capital letters at the start of her sentences. In addition, she writes "Sydney" with a lower-case letter. The orthographical inconsistency is typical for social media.

Beverley uses repetition in the first sentence: "*big fat dump from a big fat first week in sydney*". By repeating "big fat" to describe both her photo dump as well as her first week in Sydney, she creates a comparison. Additionally, she uses two adjectives that both refer to something that is large to strengthen her message. Furthermore, Beverley tries to create a pun by comparing a bond girl to a bondi girl and writes "*there's a bond girl bondi girl caption pun in here somewhere*" however, said pun is not visible in the caption.

5.2.1. Summary of medium captions

The medium captions included the greatest number of posts. As opposed to the long captions, there was more variation across the captions in the use of persuasive tools. The tools that were used most consistently were adverbs and adjectives, which were present in three of the five captions. Other tools that were employed included the use of social media language, specifically in terms of word choices. Moreover, the tools that showed evidence of use contained pun, repetition, comparison, rhetorical question, exaggeration, anecdote, emotive language, alliterations, and metaphor. Of these only anecdotes, emotive language, alliterations, comparison, and repetition were also present in the long captions. The mixing of exclusive and inclusive pronouns was not evident in the medium captions although it was used notably in the long captions.

5.3. The short captions

The data includes three short captions. These captions consist of two or less lines of text and will be discussed in this section. The short captions are analyzed in the order of most text to least text.

The post from the 12th of May 2022

The full caption of the post reads *“interestingly the water did not taste like fiji water when it went up my nose”*. The post includes two pictures, where Beverley is standing in a sea wearing a swimsuit. The caption is sarcastic and has a reference to “fiji water”. Fiji water is bottled water that is more expensive than regular bottled water and is therefore considered higher quality. The sarcasm in the caption stems from her use of the adverb “interestingly” and from her saying that it is somehow remarkable that the water did not taste like fiji water, as if the fact that it would was the expectation. Moreover, the first picture of the photo carousel in the post shows her standing in clear sea water, in some tropical place. By only looking at the picture, one might be able to believe that the water could in fact taste like fiji water, since the place Beverley is at looks so dreamy. By using such sarcasm, Beverley makes her post more relatable, as it diminishes the picture perfectness often associated with similar posts.

The post from the 23rd of March 2023

The caption of this post reads *“just a week in the life as a hustle porn star”*. “A week in the life” is a typical post to make on Instagram, where users share what they have done during the week. Beverley softens her caption by using the adverb “just” at the beginning. The expression *“hustle porn star”* is an allegory, where Beverley compares her own work pace to the work pace of a porn star. Oftentimes, there is a negative attitude towards people working in the porn industry, which evokes the question of why Beverley would want to compare herself to something that elicits negative emotions. However, it can be argued that by comparing herself to a porn star she more so refers to the idea of selling oneself. Beverley must sell both herself as well as her products as an entrepreneur, thus suggesting that this explanation is probable.

The post from the 3rd of June 2023

This caption consists of only two words and reads *“life lately”*. Although the caption has only little linguistic material, there is an alliteration present. The alliteration is of the letter “l”.

5.3.1 Summary of short captions

The three short captions contained the least amount of linguistic material. Naturally, there was the least use of persuasive tools. The three short captions showed the most variation between specific length captions as all of them showed evidence of different tools. One used sarcasm, one used an allegory, and one used an alliteration. Moreover, sarcasm and allegory were not used in the long or the medium captions but were used here. All three captions were notably different in their use of tools, as opposed to the long and medium captions, where at least some tools were evident in multiple captions.

5.4. The core pictures

The analysis will next look into the core pictures included in the data. The core picture that is included in each post in the data is of Beverley herself, wearing her brand's clothes, with the brand @wearetala tagged. Figures 1 and 2 provide examples of what these core pictures look like.



Figure 1 & 2: Post from the 13th of Jan 2022 and from the 10th of Dec 2021

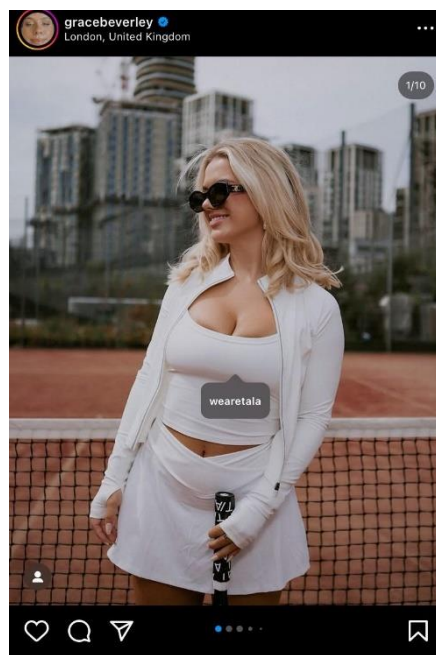
In total there are 13 of these pictures in the data, as two posts contain two pictures that fit the criteria. The variables and values introduced in Table 2 will be utilized here.

Exposure of skin (Variable 1) will be explored first. Of the 13 pictures, six featured only little exposure of skin and were thus considered unrevealing. An example of an unrevealing picture is the one in Figure 2, from the post made on the 10th of Dec 2021. Another five pictures were slightly revealing, showing a strip of skin, either of the stomach or the bust. Two pictures showed both the stomach and the bust. Additionally, one picture showed neither the stomach

nor the bust, but instead showed a significant amount of Beverley's legs as she is pictured wearing a very short skirt.

On the other end of the spectrum were two pictures, of which one was considered revealing and the other very revealing. The revealing picture is presented in Figure 1, from the post made on the 13th of Jan 2022. In this photo a lot of skin is exposed, mostly of the midriff and upper body. In the picture Beverley has hidden a part of her face behind her phone that she uses to take the picture with, but makes sure that her upper body, midriff and most of her legs are shown in the picture. By hiding her face, the viewers' focus goes to Beverley's body and to the clothes she is wearing. The very revealing picture present Beverley wearing only a swimsuit. Similarly to the revealing picture, here Beverley has again hidden her face behind her phone. This time her face is completely covered behind her phone. Moreover, the viewers' focus is led to her body again as her face cannot be seen.

Secondly the study will look at the second variable of *product display*. As the brand has been tagged in each photo, the fact that a product is displayed is clear to the viewer. In nine of the photos the product is displayed clear. Examples of these can be seen in Figures 3 & 4.



Figures 3 & 4: Post from the 19th of May 2022 and from the 28th of June 2023.

In the pictures where the products (the clothes) are displayed clearly, the viewer can define what kind of clothing is featured. Moreover, the viewer is able to determine, whether they want

to purchase the product displayed. In the majority of pictures, like in Figures 3 and 4, Beverley is pictured from the front, as it shows the style and design of the clothes the best. It portrays how the clothes are worn and what they look like on.

In three pictures, the product display is considered unclear. This is due to Beverley's position in the picture or alternatively due to the distance that Beverley is from the camera. The picture from the post on the 6th of November 2022 showed a combination of both. The picture is shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5: Post from the 6th of November 2022.

In Figure 5, Beverley is on one hand pictured from afar. On the other hand, her full body is still included in the picture. The viewer can see her full body, but she is situated further from the camera. Moreover, she is sitting down, with her legs placed in front of her. The product displayed is the sweatshirt she is wearing, which however cannot clearly be seen in the picture, due to her position and the distance. The viewers' focus does not immediately go to the product. Without the brand tag, the product placement would not necessarily transpire to the viewer.

The third variable (facial expression) is considered next. In total, there were three pictures in which Beverley was clearly smiling. In addition, there were three pictures, where Beverley had her tongue out that could be interpreted as smiles, but as it is not possible to say for certain, these will be labelled under the unable to determine value. The second value of serious was chosen only to represent one picture. In the picture Beverley's mouth is closed, with no indication of a smile.

As mentioned, three pictures were Beverley had her tongue out could have been labelled as smiling but were interpreted as unable to determine. In addition, there were five more pictures, where her facial expression was not easily determined. In these, Beverley had either hidden her face behind her phone, or her expression was one that could not be interpreted for certain.

Next the portrayal of body (variable 4) is discussed. In total, Beverley's full body was shown in eight pictures. Of these, three pictures portrayed her sitting down, where a part of her midriff was hidden due to her position. These were still interpreted as full body pictures as her full body was included in the frame. In the other five pictures her full body was clearly shown. Figure 6 and 7 present examples of the full body photos.



Figures 6 & 7: Post from the 12th of May 2022 and from the 22nd of December 2021

On some occasions, Beverley was pictured from the side (Figures 6 and 7) and in some she was pictured from the front. As mentioned, she was also portrayed sitting down and from a

further distance. The pictures where she is standing, align her vertically and emphasize her height. On the contrary, her body is aligned horizontally in the pictures, where she is sitting down. The frames remain the same on both occasions however, as Instagram has a set ratio regarding the sizing of pictures.

Moving forward, there were five pictures, where upper body was the value chosen. Three of these pictures were cut right above Beverley's knees and two were cut a bit higher, right around her hips. The product in focus was her top in the two pictures, where she was shown from the hips up. The focus was alternatively on the full outfit in the pictures, where more of her body was shown.

The third value of lower body was not found in any of the photos.

The next variable will focus on the direction of gaze (5). The dichotomy of looking at the viewer versus not looking at the viewer is examined here. Beverley was pictured looking at the viewer in four pictures. Looking directly at the viewer is the equivalent to looking at them straight in the eyes. By doing this, she builds contact with her viewers. On the contrary, Beverley was not looking at the viewer in nine pictures. In these she was either hidden behind her phone or alternatively looking at the phone screen while taking the picture. In addition to these, one picture portrayed her from the side, and she was looking straight in front of her. Similarly, in another picture she was pictured from the front, with her head turned to the side with her gaze directed in that same direction. These two pictures were the only ones taken by someone other than herself. In the other pictures she was holding the phone herself and taking a picture. By not looking directly at the viewer Beverley detaches herself from the viewer and is presented more objectively.

The sixth and the last variable is the background (6). The values discussed are public and domestic. Beverley was in a public setting in ten pictures. Of these, three were taken inside and seven outside. The background of a picture signifies a setting. By wearing her products in a public setting, she builds an image of how versatile her clothes are and shows how the clothes can be worn in different environments and in different situations.

On the contrary, Beverley was in a domestic setting in three pictures. Home is a safe and comfortable place for many and by having that as her background, Beverley generates an image of coziness and comfort. Moreover, in all three pictures she is pictured wearing casual, comfortable looking clothes, in essence a sweatshirt and a co-ord lounge set. Her viewers

most likely wear similar attire at home, thus by displaying these clothes in a domestic setting, Beverley builds an image of reality.

As her brand's products are ultimately designed for athleisure, by showcasing them in both public and domestic settings, Beverley presents the versatility of the clothes. A notable remark was that in only one picture Beverley was in a setting related to sports or working out. In the picture she is standing in front of a net, holding a racket of sorts. This is the only occasion, where she is wearing the clothes in the environment that the clothes were designed to be worn in.

Persuasion is created in the core pictures in multiple ways. First and foremost, the pictures provide a visual representation for the products and complete the message of the caption. For example, whenever Beverley mentions features of the products in the caption, as in the post from the 13th of January 2022 by writing that *"aesthetically doesn't give itself away as "gym wear" "* The viewer can then visualize the product by looking at the picture, in this case they can determine whether the product comes across aesthetically as gym wear or not. Similarly, in the post from the 28th of June 2023 she mentions her latest campaign *"I know this probably looks like just another campaign."* By showcasing the products featured in the campaign the viewers can determine what the campaign was about.

In addition, Beverley understands the relationship she has with her followers. Beverley's followers believe that they are close her as they see so much of her life through Instagram. They trust that everything they see on Beverley's Instagram is authentic. Beverley utilizes this relationship by modeling the products herself in the pictures. On one hand, the followers are persuaded to believe in the quality of the clothes as they see Beverley wear them in many different occasions. On the other hand, they see that the products can be worn in many different settings and not only for working out – they see that the clothes can be worn both at home and in various public settings. If the followers only looked at the brand's website, they would not be able to see such variety for the use of the clothes. Moreover, by tagging her brand in the posts where she is wearing her products but where the caption does not mention the products at all the followers see that Beverley wears the clothes "in real life" too. By visualizing this, the followers trust that the products must be good, if Beverley wears them even when she is not directly promoting them. In essence, when she does not obviously have a motive for wearing the clothes, or at least the followers do not see the motive as clearly.

Lastly, persuasion is created in the pictures with the idea of selling an identity. As mentioned in the earlier sections, Beverley's followers believe that by buying the products, they can buy a part of her identity too. As Beverley is a young and beautiful woman, which is visualized in the pictures, her followers believe that they receive a part of that beauty if they buy the products Beverley is wearing. In general, influencers market their own lifestyles on social media. They make it seem like their lives are perfect, which then makes their followers want to achieve a similar lifestyle. The followers believe that part of this lifestyle can be bought for example by purchasing a piece of clothing that the influencer wears as that is considered a part of their lifestyle. Beverley also takes advantage of this fact by portraying her brand's clothes herself. In conclusion, the follower believes that when they buy Beverley's products, they receive a part of her identity along with a part of her lifestyle.

6 Discussion

The main objective of this study was to explore the use of different tools of persuasive language in influencer marketing. The research questions were twofold. Firstly, the aim was to find out how persuasive language is used in the captions of @gracebeverley as a way of promoting products. Secondly, the relationship between picture and text as a means of building a message was inspected. The analysis presented in the previous chapter first looked at the captions of the posts and continued with an exploration of the core pictures. The findings discovered will be discussed in this section in relation to previous studies. Moreover, this section will elaborate on the limitations of the study as well as on the possibilities for future research.

1.1. The study's findings and persuasion

The study found that language can be utilized as a tool for persuasion on Instagram. Moreover, Instagram as a platform offers possibilities for versatile implementations of persuasion. By utilizing persuasive tools, influencers can endorse and sell products to their followers effectively on the platform. Using specific types of signs such as words and images “in a highly creative manner”, it allows for a personality to be created for a product (Beasley and Danesi 2002, 20). The influencer, Grace Beverley, who was inspected in this study was able to use persuasive language with the intention of more successfully advertising products on her feed. By mixing different persuasive tools, an impression of creativity was established in the captions under inspection. The study looked at captions of different lengths, where a varying amount of linguistic material was used. The persuasive tools that showed most evidence of use in the long captions were anecdotes, pronouns, changes of register and lastly descriptive words, most notably adverbs and adjectives. Adverbs and adjectives were also widely present in the medium captions, in addition to alliterations. Thirdly, the short captions included use of sarcasm, allegory, and alliteration. By using these tools in combination with images, Beverley successfully promoted her products, using her platform as a medium.

The results showed that persuasive tools were used regardless of the length of the caption. However, as more linguistic material was used, naturally more tools of persuasion were

evident as more material equaled more possibilities for usage. Nonetheless, implementations of persuasion were found in all captions. Bruthiaux suggested that the center of persuasive language depends on writers operating with no spatial limitations. Moreover, the better they get to display their skill, the better they persuade (2002, 298). Evidently, Beverley could have always used the full space offered for a caption, but instead used space alternately. This could be due to the nature of her posts. When a post introduced a new product drop or a campaign, she used more space in the caption, i.e. the caption was longer. In contrast, whenever a post was about something else, for example a photo dump and not obviously product endorsement, her caption was shorter. Still, persuasion was present even when less space was occupied. There was no evidence of persuasive tools being used more skillfully, more so they were implemented more when more text was used. By looking at the complete data, the competent use of persuasive tools remained the same through all captions, regardless of length.

The underlying question present in the analysis was whether Beverley's use of persuasive tools was calculated and whether she intentionally adapted these techniques in her captions. It is not possible to say for certain as a more thorough comparative analysis of her captions would need to be established, to achieve a definite answer. The findings suggest however that as her use of these tools remained relatively consistent throughout the data that her implementation of these tools leans more towards spontaneous than calculated. What contributes to this notion was Beverley's use of similar tools, such as pronouns, adverbs, and adjectives throughout the data, but also her use of some tools, such as allegory and pun just on one occasion.

1.2. Image and text

One interest of study was the relationship between image and text. The data showed that Beverley's endorsement of her product was done both explicitly as well as implicitly. Whenever the caption of a post was more straightforward, for example in posts from the 13th of January 2022 and 28th of June 2023, the focus in the core picture was on the product. Both posts contained a long caption, where a new product drop was introduced. In the core pictures, focus was placed on the product and was achieved by Beverley hiding her face. In one of the pictures, she hides her face behind her phone and in the other she had turned her face away from the camera and was wearing large sunglasses. Consequently, she is not looking at the camera in either of the pictures, thus the viewer's focus does not go to her face.

Instead, the focus goes on the product displayed, in essence the clothes she is wearing. Moreover, both core pictures are of good quality, one taken by herself through a mirror, and one taken by a photographer. This too contributes to the notion of something being marketed in the posts.

On the contrary, in some of the posts, for example in the posts from 19th of May 2022 and from the 22nd of December 2021 the advertisement of product is done more implicitly. In the first picture the caption explains how Beverley saves pictures for a photo dump. The caption is not straightforward in terms of marketing a product. The pictures in the post are outfit posts, where the core picture, where Beverley is wearing her product is just one outfit among other outfits. Similarly, in the post from the 22nd of December Beverley explains her plans for the upcoming Christmas holiday. Again, the caption does not have anything to do with a product launch or the like. The pictures in the post are varied from random screenshots to snapshots of food to the core picture of Beverley wearing her product. In both posts, the endorsement of product is obscure, as the caption does not make it clear to the viewer that a product is marketed. On the contrary, the product is implemented among other pictures and without the brand tag, the product placement would not be evident to the viewer. Following Bruthiaux, viewers are persuaded to notice and purchase a product by the distinctive and exceptionally attractive appearance of a product. This is achieved “by appealing to a powerful sense of self-image” (2000, 307). Beverley executes this self-image by personally modeling her products and portraying them in realistic environments. Moreover, she fortifies this image by also complementing posts, where her product is portrayed professionally. Beverley carries her product along in her posts, even in ones where she does not directly market her product to her followers. She achieves this in the data, as seen in the core pictures, by tagging her brand in the pictures, where she is wearing her products. Following Beasley and Danesi, one way of creating recognizability for a product, is repetition (2002, 77). By tagging the brand, Beverley’s viewers could eventually recognize the brand’s products among the other products presented in the posts. As the study’s findings showed, persuasive tools were utilized in all the captions. Whenever Beverley’s marketing of products was more obvious, the relationship between the caption and the core picture was stronger. Moreover, the core picture was needed in order to complete the message presented in the caption. In contrast, when the marketing was more obscure, the relationship between the caption and the core picture was more detached. In essence, the message of the caption would have remained the same, even if the core picture was removed.

6.3 Limitations of the study

Next the limitations of the study are discussed. The main ethical implications of the study were already mentioned in the Material and Methods part of the thesis, but they will be revisited here. The main ethical issue was the use of Beverley's posts as material as she was personally featured in the pictures, meaning that she could be identified from the pictures. As mentioned, a message was sent to Beverley with the intention of asking her permission for the conducting of this research, using her posts as data. However, as she did not respond to the message it was concluded that since her Instagram page is public, with more than 1 million followers, the employment of her posts as research material was justified. As with any data gathered from a social media platform, the possibility of the data changing later remains present. In essence, Beverley could later either delete or edit the posts that were used as data for this study. This was resolved by determining that the posts were analysed in the form that they were at the time of collecting the data.

The other limitations of the study include the scope of the data. Ultimately the amount of data analyzed in this study was fairly compact, meaning that generalizations on the role of language in influencer marketing could not be made on a large scale. Moreover, since the study focused only on one influencer, general conclusions regarding influencer marketing could not be drawn.

Another limitation would be the lack of access to TALA's, in essence the brand under inspection's, inside information. It was not possible to access information regarding the brand's numbers of visitors on the website or their sales numbers, hence it was not possible to determine, how successful Beverley's promotion of the brand was on her Instagram. The study could only look at how persuasive tools were used, but not at how the posts contributed to the success of the brand.

6.4 Possibilities for future research

As a field of study, social media language remains new and thus provides extensive subjects for research. As the number of social media platforms and their users increases, so does the possibilities for research. Since social media language has its own characteristics, including the potential for taking linguistic liberties, various aspects of social media language could be

examined. Specifically, slang or grammaticality could provide interesting subjects for research.

Additionally, a dissimilar aspect of influencer marketing could be studied. One possibility would be to look at an influencer, who promotes other brands' products on their feed and how they use linguistic tools to market those products. The difference to this study would lie in the motivation of the influencer – as the product is not their own, the success of the promotion is not as personal as it is in Beverley's case. Follow-up research could be conducted based on this study by choosing a comparative approach. One option would be to compare Beverley to an influencer, who promotes different brands' products. An interesting question would be whether possible differences in linguistic competence are due to personal differences between Beverley and others or whether the differing motivation explains variation.

Another option for future research would be to choose a different mode of data. As this study utilized text and image as data, a study could look at instances of influencer marketing in video form. The data for video-based research could be collected from Instagram stories, where influencers often promote products in short videos. Moreover, a comparative study could be conducted by comparing the use of video as a mode to the use of image and text. This type of study could inspect Beverley for example and compare her story posts to her feed posts. Moreover, if the similarity would lie in the product, a comparison could be conducted, where Beverley's posts are compared to her brand's own Instagram page. This type of study could compare how linguistic tools are used on the brand's page versus on Beverley's page. The product would remain the same, but there would possibly be differences in language use.

7 Conclusion

This thesis has explored the use of persuasive tools in influencer marketing. As most of influencer marketing takes place on Instagram, it was the social media platform chosen for the purpose of this research. The aim of the study was to find out how different persuasive tools are used on the social media platform. Moreover, the relationship between image and text in conveying a message was examined. The influencer that was chosen for the study was Grace Beverley, who's company TALA and its products were under inspection in the research. The data consisted of 11 posts, where Beverley was promoting her products. Moreover, she was modelling the products herself in the posts gathered as data. The thesis examined the posts qualitatively, first focusing on the captions of the data, followed by the core pictures.

The theoretical background was built from theories of advertising language. The most notable was the theories explained by Goatly in the book edited by Cook "*The language of advertising*". The book provided theories of the characteristics of advertising language as well as the underlying motives used by advertisers. Secondly, the theoretical background included theories of persuasive language, conducted by Beasley and Danesi. Specifically, the verbal techniques of persuasiveness used to achieve product textuality were utilized in the research. To interpret the pictures, van Leeuwen's theory of social actors adapted by Mansikka, was employed.

The results of the study found that Beverley used different persuasive tools skillfully in her posts. Moreover, when more text was used, more persuasive tools were present. However, all captions in the data included tools of persuasiveness. The most used tools included anecdotes, adverbs and adjectives, pronouns, and employment of different registers. The pictures showed that product endorsement was done both explicitly and implicitly. Moreover, when endorsement was explicit, focus was brought to the product by Beverley not looking at the camera. Beverley's full body was portrayed in most of the pictures, with some showing her upper body. Pictures only showing her lower body were not evident in the data.

As the study only focused on one influencer, broad generalizations could not be drawn. However, the study's findings regarding influencer marketing showed that language can be used as a tool, when the aim is to produce creative posts promoting a product. In addition, the findings indicate that product endorsement does not necessarily have to be obvious but can be done more discreetly. Moreover, the study implied that although advertising language has

been thoroughly studied, the advertising language that takes place on social media as well as other online mediums is different. It presents new aspects of language that do not necessarily comply with the theories of traditional advertising language and therefore might call for new theories to be established.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 The posts analysed in the study

Date of the post	Caption without emojis	Number of pictures (and videos) in the post
28.6.2023	<p>I know it might not seem a lot to anyone else, because this drop wasn't anything out of the ordinary, but seeing our latest @wearetala campaign come to life made me tear up multiple times *</p> <p>With TALA, I've found the hardest thing to be working ON the business - the big picture, the money, finding the growth inflection points - at the same time as trying to improve the business from the inside - processes, execution, hiring, getting it wrong, fixing it...it really is all about making the rocket ship while you're on it + it so often just feels like fighting fire after fire after fire</p> <p>I know this probably looks like just another campaign, and I even debated posting this because it is * but this launch has just been such a 'step back and look around' moment for me!</p> <p>the products are beautiful, the imagery looks straight out of a catalogue for brands 10x our size, people I love to personally follow have been shouting about it. I remember this time last year feeling like I'd never be able to delegate enough to experience true growth no matter how hard I tried. I just felt like a terrible 'teacher' and so out of my depth doubling our headcount. It just goes to show that building a business truly is just one foot in front of the other until you look back and can see how far you've come.</p> <p>I wish I could've told grace two years ago, who had just restructured this company so it could grow far beyond me and being an influencer brand, and come so close to hitting mine and the business's limit, that not only was it going to be okay, but that it was going to be worth every breakdown 100x over. And that I as going to spend my time embarrassed that everyone I smile at in the street wearing tala would look at me like a creep w absolutely no clue who I am bc we've grown so much. I've never been so happy to look creepy!!!</p> <p>watching this company and team grow has been the biggest privilege and every day I feel luckier to be given the opportunity * I promise you in 3-5 business days I'll feel out of</p>	8 pictures, 2 videos

	my depth again and probs be crying in the office toilet so we enjoy it while it lasts!!!	
3.6.2023	life lately ***	10 pictures
18.5.2023	<p>I cannot believe TALA is officially four years old!!!</p> <p>@wearetala was born during my uni finals + the journey since has been the most rewarding - and challenging - of my life. There have been times I genuinely didn't think I'd come out the other end, and there have been my best moments ever. One day I'll tell the full story and you'll get it, but in the meantime, pls enjoy this realistic throwback dump to mark the occasion *</p> <p>it's easy to shout about growth metrics - sales numbers, team numbers etc, but really every day of running this company is about making the things we care about happen. so here are some fun facts that'll show you far more about us than telling you that we doubled sales + team last year (we did *)</p> <p>since tala turned 3:</p> <p>*50% of our customers EVERY WEEK were returning customers - that means that we're genuinely part of their wardrobe. Not hype, not influencer merch, genuine customer love</p> <p>*50% of our customers each week are new to TALA - which means we're reaching thousands of new customers every week, disrupting their purchasing patterns, and showing them how good activewear can be</p> <p>*Our average customer service response time for the WHOLE YEAR is 4 hours (tracked 24/7), sending over 125,000 messages</p> <p>*Our Trustpilot is now at 4.8 and scoring above ALL tracked competitors</p> <p>*In January last year, we offered only 1 seamless collection + 1 cut and sew collection - now, whether you're looking for high performance, shapewear meets activewear, casual outfitting or basics made from wood pulp that wash 2x better than cotton, we've got you covered (and most of our now all-time bestsellers released in the past year!)</p> <p>So when I talk about building tala, I hope it's clear that we're not only interested in the numbers.</p>	8 pictures, 2 videos

	<p>We're interested in building something truly incredible - a place where you know you'll get the most flattering fits, true innovative fabrics, your trusty favourite black leggings that you grab day after day AND that effortless put-together outfit you're always getting compliments on.</p> <p>As always the biggest thank you of all goes to tala customers. We love you!!</p> <p>Now we do it allagain *</p>	
23.3.2023	just a week in the life as a hustle porn star	7 pictures, 3 videos
18.12.2022	big fat dump from a big fat first week in sydney. there's a bond girl bondi girl caption pun in here somewhere but im afraid I just don't quite have the energy to track it down ***	7 pictures, 3 videos
6.11.2022	<p>do you know what's cooler than any collection could ever be? having the best team in the world.</p> <p>behind the bar, on the door, on the graphics, creating the vibes i'll honestly never ever ever know what I did to deserve these people.</p>	
19.5.2022	I always save photos to dump a photo dump one day and then i'll look at my dump and feel like it's not dumpy enough to dump and then before you know it I have 72 thousand pictures and don't know which ones to choose for the dump so here's an outfits of the week instead	10 pictures
12.5.2022	interestingly the water did not taste like fiji when it went up my nose	8 pictures, 2 videos
13.1.2022	<p>Lemme tell you a quick story please & thank you *</p> <p>All the best 'athleisure' wear is made for yoga. It's minimalist, flattering, versatile and comfortable.</p> <p>But when you look at good quality, lasting, performance-ready yoga wear in the industry, it's all £80+ for a pair of leggings, and that's with very little of it made using sustainable fabrics. Then, when you look at pieces created for 'athleisure', they're not performance-suited enough to really take you from brunch to the gym - you have to pick between lower priced pieces that aren't truly made for when you sweat or move, and higher priced true workout wear.</p> <p>You know that when we see that type of landscape, we gotta do something about it.</p>	9 pictures, 1 video

	<p>The brief was clear - create a collection that provides what we believe the industry still truly needs; a collection with performance qualities inspired by yoga-wear but versatile, comfortable and stylish enough to be worn everyday.</p> <p>Introducing DayFlex: Our new weightless quick-dry fabric, with everything you need from a workout fabric and everything you want for the every day, in shapes so perfect you'll be annoyed when they're in the wash. Design features such as elasticated waistbands and side seams were stripped back to ensure maximum comfort without forfeiting functional elements such as hidden pockets. The collection packs the power of performance in fit and fabric but aesthetically doesn't give itself away as "gym wear".</p> <p>Available now in Shadow Black, Sage Green, Mineral Blue and Zinc Grey ****</p> <p>TALA TO THE WORLD BABY!!!</p> <p>2022 is when we do the big things*</p>	
22.12.2021	it's the last photo dump of 2021 bye bitchhhh. no one asked but I'll be logging off from tomorrow till 3rd january and I cannot WAIT. time for some girlsleeping. I hope you all have a wonderful christmas and new year and sending so much love to anyone who can't see their family. 2022 will be better I can feel it x	10 pictures
10.12.2021	things that have made me smile this month. feat. my mummy getting engaged, puppies in the snow, my baby businesses winning some awards and my dog proudly perfecting the side eye he learnt from yours truly	8 pictures, 2 videos

Appendix 2 Suomenkielinen lyhennelmä

Sosiaalinen media ja sen näkyvyys on kasvanut merkittäväksi osaksi nyky-yhteiskuntaa. Sosiaalinen media tarjoaa alustoja, joilla ihmiset voivat jakaa ideoitaan. Tällainen alusta on esimerkiksi kuvien jakamispalvelu Instagram. Instagramissa suosituksi ilmiöksi on noussut vaikuttaminen. Vaikuttamisella tarkoitetaan kirjaimellisesti muihin vaikuttamista. Henkilöitä, joilla on suuri ja omistautunut seuraajamäärä, kutsutaan vaikuttajiksi. Monille heistä vaikuttamisesta on tullut ammatti. Tämä on mahdollista, koska yritykset maksavat vaikuttajille heidän tuotteidensa mainostamisesta. Yritykset voivat vaikuttajien kautta markkinoida tuotteitaan laajalle ja tarkkaan valitulle yleisölle. Yritykset ovatkin keskittäneet kasvavan osuuden markkinoinnistaan vaikuttajamarkkinointiin, sillä kuluttajat luottavat vaikuttajien mielipiteisiin sekä usein hakevat tietoa uusista tuotteista sosiaalisesta mediasta.

Moni asia vaikuttaa siihen, miten hyvin vaikuttajien seuraajat vastaanottavat viestin markkinoiduista tuotteista. Yksi näistä on se, miten hyvin vaikuttajat osaavat sanoittaa Instagram-postauksensa, joissa he mainostavat jotakin tuotetta. Tämän lisäksi myös sanavalinnat ovat tärkeitä silloin, kun tavoitteena on vaikuttaa muihin. Tämä tutkimus pyrkii selvittämään kielen merkitystä vaikuttajamarkkinoinnissa. Tutkimus keskittyy vaikuttavaan kieleen ja siihen, miten kielellisiä keinoja hyödynnetään Instagram kuvateksteissä, joissa mainostetaan tuotteita. Lisäksi tutkimus tarkkailee multimodaalisuutta – tarkemmin sanoen tekstin ja kuvan välistä suhdetta sosiaalisessa mediassa. Vaikuttajamarkkinointi on suhteellisen uusi ilmiö minkä vuoksi se tarjoaa ajankohtaisen aiheen tutkimukselle. Lisäksi vaikuttajamarkkinoinnin kasvava merkitys markkinoinnissa tarjoaa mielenkiintoisen tutkimusaiheen. Koska eri alustat ja niiden rajoitteet ja konventiot luovat tietynlaisia määreitä kielen käytölle, on sosiaalisen median kielessä ainutlaatuisia piirteitä, joita on kiinnostavaa tutkia.

Tämän tutkimuksen materiaali kerätään Instagramista, sillä se on tällä hetkellä tärkein vaikuttajamarkkinoinnin alusta. Tutkimus keskittyy yhteen vaikuttajaan ja hänen Instagram-postauksiinsa, joissa hän markkinoi tuotteita. Tutkimukseen valittu vaikuttaja on Grace Beverley, joka omistaa usean yrityksen. Hän mainostaa yritystensä tuotteita Instagram-sivullaan. Tutkimuskysymykset ovat seuraavat:

1) Miten vaikuttavan kielen keinoja hyödynnetään Beverleyn kuvateksteissä, joissa tavoitteena on myydä tuotteita?

2) Millainen tekstin ja kuvan välinen suhde on viestin luomisessa?

Tutkimuksen tausta kertoo ensin vaikuttajamarkkinoinnista ja sen jälkeen esittelee sosiaalisen median kielen taustaa. Kuten mainittu, vaikuttajat ovat sisällöntuottajia, jotka jakavat elämäänsä sosiaalisessa mediassa. He postaavat kuvia, videoita ja kuvatekstejä arjestaan. Vaikuttajia on erilaisia, osa keskittyy perhe-elämään ja jakaa sen vaiheita sosiaalisessa mediassaan, toiset taas keskittyvät sisällössään harrastuksiinsa tai elämäntyyliinsä. Vaikuttajien kasvava suosio on innostanut markkinoijia keskittymään markkinoinnissaan nimenomaan vaikuttajiin, sillä heidän kauttansa markkinointi on mahdollista kohdistaa tietyille yleisölle. Vaikuttajamarkkinoinnin tehokkuus perustuu siihen, miten omistautuneita vaikuttajien seuraajat ovat. Koska ihmiset usein samaistuvat niihin vaikuttajiin, joita he seuraavat, näkevät he usein nämä henkilöt heille läheisinä. Vaikuttajat jakavat usein paljonkin elämästään ja sen vaiheista, jolloin seuraajat näkevät heidät kuin ystävinään. Vaikuttajien sisältö näyttyy heille autenttisena ja luotettavana. Tällöin seuraajat myös uskovat vaikuttajien mielipiteeseen, jos he esittelevät ja mainostavat tuotteita seuraajilleen.

Sosiaalisen median kielessä on ainutlaatuisia piirteitä. Se usein mukaillee puhuttua kieltä, sillä sosiaalisen median alustoilla ihmiset pääasiassa kommunikoiivat keskenään. Vaikka alustoilla käytetty kieli ei olisi kielipillisesti tai ortografisesti oikein, välittyy sen viesti kuitenkin. Sosiaalisen median alustoilla käytetty kieli on usein epäformaalia, ja monet alustat mahdollistavatkin kielellisten vapauksien ottamisen. Tämän lisäksi sosiaalisen median alustoilla esiintyy tietynlaisia ilmaisuja, joita ei välttämättä käytetä muualla. Voidaan sanoa, että sosiaalisessa mediassa käytetään omanlaista "slangia". Kuten puhutun kielen slangia, tämäkin on syntynyt ihmisten välisen kanssakäymisen myötä, mutta vain online-kontekstissa. Tietyn slangin käyttö tietyllä alustalla luo ajatusta yhteisöllisyydestä – slangia käyttämällä voi osoittaa kuuluvansa esimerkiksi Instagramin yhteisöön.

Tutkimuksen kolmas osio käsittelee tutkimuksen teoreettista taustaa. Osio esittelee ensin vaikuttavan kielen teoriaa ja sen jälkeen tutkimuksen keskeiset käsitteet. Viimeisenä esitellään multimodaalisuuden taustaa.

Vaikuttavaa kieltä esiintyy monessa eri kontekstissa, kuten politiikassa ja julkisessa diskurssissa. Vaikuttavan kielen juuret ovat antiikin retoriikassa ja se nähdään yhä dominoivana

teemana retoriikan tutkimuksessa. Tämä tutkimus keskittyy vaikuttavan kielen keinoihin tuotteiden mainostamisessa ja siihen miten vaikuttavan kielen keinoja voi hyödyntää vaikuttajamarkkinoinnissa. Näitä keinoja on muun muassa kuvainnollinen kieli, tunteisiin vetoava kieli, vertailut sekä metaforat. Vaikuttavassa kielessä usein käytetään luovuutta sekä hyödynnetään kielen keinoja mahdollisimman pitkälle. Tämän takia tutkimus keskittyykin pääosin Instagramin kuvateksteihin, joissa on tietyt rajat sille, miten paljon tekstiä kuvatekstissä voi olla. Tämä saattaa kannustaa vaikuttajia hyödyntämään kuvatekstiin annettua tilaa mahdollisimman tehokkaasti.

Seuraavaksi tutkimus esittelee sen keskeiset käsitteet. Käsitteet pohjautuvat pääosin Beasleyn ja Danesin vaikuttavan kielen teoriaan sekä Andrew Goatlyn markkinoinnin kielen teoriaan. Beasley ja Danesi esittelevät vaikuttavan kielen teoriaa ja peilaavat sitä oikean elämän esimerkkeihin. He kertovat myös vaikuttavasta kielestä mainonnan kontekstissa. Lisäksi he mainitsevat tekstuaalisuuden ja sen kaksi eri tasoa. Tekstuaalisuudella he tarkoittavat niitä mainonnan toteuttamisen keinoja, jotka nojautuvat tuotteisiin rakennettuun merkkisysteemiin. Heidän mukaansa tuotteiden tekstuaalisuutta voidaan toteuttaa sekä sanallisen, että sanattoman vaikuttavan kielen keinoin. Tämän tutkimuksen keskittyessä pääasiassa kuvateksteihin, on sanallisten keinojen tutkimus keskiössä. Beasley ja Danesi mainitsevat keinoista muun muassa kuvainnollisen kielen sekä alliteraation, joita molempia analysoidaan tutkimuksessa.

Andrew Goatly esittelee erilaisia kielellisiä keinoja, joita käytetään markkinoinnissa. Lisäksi hän keskustelee erilaisista kuluttajaideologioista, joista olennaisimpana tähän tutkimukseen mainitaan identiteetin myyminen. Identiteetin myyminen on yksi mainostajien käyttämistä myyntistrategioista, joilla tuotteita pyritään myymään kuluttajille. Ajatuksena on, että jonkin tuotteen ostamalla kuluttaja ostaa itselleen myös uuden identiteetin tai vähintään osan sitä. Tämän tutkimuksen keskittyessä vaikuttajamarkkinointiin ja tarkemmin Grace Beverleyn, identiteetin myynti koetaan relevantiksi, sillä Beverleyn itse mainostaessa tuotteitaan hänen seuraajansa kuvittelevat saavansa osan hänen identiteettiään tuotteita ostamalla. Beverley esittäytyy Instagramissa menestyksekkäänä, nuorena ja kauniina naisena, jolloin identiteetin myyminen on hänelle selkeä myyntistrategia.

Viimeisenä teoriaosuus esittää multimodaalisuuden käsitteen. Koska tutkimuksen toinen tutkimuskysymys keskittyy kuvan ja tekstin väliseen suhteeseen, on multimodaalisuuden käsite olennainen. Multimodaalisuus selitetään Batemanin et al. pohjalta, joiden mukaan sillä voidaan

määrittää kommunikatiivisia tilanteita, joissa tehokkaita viestejä luodaan erilaisten kommunikaatiokeinojen avulla. Sosiaalisen median kontekstissa näitä keinoja ovat kuvat, eripituiset videot sekä teksti. Esimerkiksi Instagram on alustana sellainen, joka mahdollistaa erilaisten keinojen luovan yhdistelemisen. Erityisesti vaikuttamisen kontekstissa erilaisten keinojen yhdisteleminen koetaan olennaiseksi.

Tutkimuksen seuraava osuus esittelee tutkimuksen materiaalin ja metodit. Kuten mainittu, tutkimuksen materiaali kerättiin vaikuttaja Grace Beverleyn Instagram sivulta. Materiaaliin valittiin 11 postausta, joihin sisältyi vähintään yksi kuva, jossa Beverley itse esiintyy yrityksensä TALA-vaatteissa. Lisäksi kuvassa tuli olla merkattuna eli “tägättyinä” hänen yrityksensä. Postaukset jaettiin kuvatekstien pituuden mukaan – lyhyimmissä oli kaksi tai alle kaksi riviä tekstiä, keskipituisissa kolme tai enemmän ja pitkät kuvatestit koostuivat useista kappaleista. Beverley valittiin tutkimukseen, koska hän oli vaikuttajana minulle ennestään tuttu ja lisäksi hän jakaa paljon seuraajilleen yrityksistään ja niiden pyörittämisestä. Lisäksi hän usein julkaisee postauksia, joissa hän mainostaa tuotteitaan. Materiaali kerättiin Instagramista kuvakaappauksilla, jotka ladattiin Tropyyn. Tropy on ilmainen sovellus, joka mahdollistaa kuvien selkeän organisoinnin. Postausten kuvakaappaukset lajiteltiin postausten julkaisupäivämäärien mukaan. Tropyssä materiaali jaettiin kuvatekstien pituuksien mukaan.

Vaikka tutkimus keskittyy pääosin kuvateksteihin, tutki se kuitenkin myös postauksen kuvia. Kuvat analysoitiin eri muuttujien ja niiden arvojen mukaan. Kuvien muuttujia oli paljaan ihon määrä, tuotteen esittely, ilme, kehon kuvaus, katseen suunta sekä tausta. Muuttujilla oli eri arvot, esimerkiksi tuotteen esittely määriteltiin joko selkeäksi tai epäselväksi. Analyysi tutki postauksia kuvatekstien pituuksien mukaan. Analyysi käsitteli ensin pitkät kuvatestit, sitten keskipituiset ja viimeisenä lyhyet kuvatestit. Näiden jälkeen analyysi käsitteli kuvia.

Kaikista kuvateksteistä löytyi vaikuttavan kielen keinoja. Pitkistä kuvateksteistä löytyi pääasiassa anekdootteja, sekä eri rekistereiden vaihtelevaa käyttöä. Lisäksi ekslusiivisia ja inklusiivisia pronomineja käytettiin vaihdellen. Myös tunteisiin vetoavaa kieltä, kuvannollista kieltä sekä faktojen ja mielipiteiden sekoittamista esiintyi. Keskipitkistä kuvateksteistä löytyi edellä mainittujen lisäksi adverbejä ja adjektiiveja, toistoa, liioittelua, metaforia ja alliteraatiota. Lyhyistä kuvateksteistä löytyi vielä keinoja, joita ei esiintynyt pitkissä tai keskipitkissä kuvateksteissä. Näitä olivat sarkasmi sekä vertauskuva. Lisäksi lyhyistä kuvateksteistä löytyi alliteraatiota, jota esiintyi myös pitkissä ja keskipitkissä kuvateksteissä.

Kuvien analyysi tutki aikaisemmin mainittuja muuttujia. Analyysissä löytyi lähes kaikkien muuttujien vaihtelevaa käyttöä. Kuvien analyysissä huomattiin, että tuotteita esiteltiin sekä selkeästi että epämääräisesti. Tämä toteutui juurikin muuttujien, kuten katseen ja kehon asentojen myötä. Kehoa esimerkiksi kuvattiin kokonaan, sekä myös keskittyen kehon yläosaan. Osassa kuvissa Beverley katsoi suoraan kameraan ja näin ollen loi yhteyttä katsojaan, välillä hän taas katsoi pois päin kamerasta tai oli peittänyt kasvonsa puhelimellaan.

Tutkimuksen viimeisenä osiona on pohdinta. Pohdintaosiossa palattiin tutkimuskysymyksiin. Osio kävi ensiksi läpi tutkimuksen tuloksia. Tulokset osoittivat, että vaikuttavaa kieltä voi käyttää hyödyksi vaikuttajamarkkinoinnissa. Lisäksi Instagram alustana tarjoaa useita mahdollisuuksia vaikuttavan kielen käytölle postauksissa, muun muassa tekstiä ja kuvaa yhdistelemällä. Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittivat lisäksi, että vakuuttavan kielen keinoja käytettiin enemmän silloin, kun kuvatekstit olivat pidempiä. Käytännössä siis mitä enemmän tekstiä, sitä enemmän vaikuttavan kielen keinoja. Toisaalta vaikuttavan kielen keinoja löytyi kuitenkin jokaisesta kuvatekstistä, myös niistä, jotka koostuivat pienemmästä määrästä tekstiä. On vaikea määrittää käyttikö Beverley keinoja tietoisesti ja laskelmoiden vai oliko keinojen käyttö satunnaista. Pohdintaosio käsitteli lisäksi kuvan ja tekstin suhdetta. Kuvatekstien viestiä täydennettiin kuvilla. Lisäksi tuotteiden esittely oli osassa kuvia selkeämpää ja osassa epämääräisempää.

Pohdintaosio pohti seuraavaksi tutkimuksen rajoitteita sekä jatkotutkimusten mahdollisuutta. Tutkimuksen rajoitteiksi mainittiin muun muassa tutkimuksen eettiset kysymykset, joita tosin käsiteltiin materiaalien ja metodien yhteydessä. Pääasiassa nämä liittyvät sosiaalisen median käyttöön tutkimusmateriaalina. Lisäksi mainittiin tutkimuksen laajuus. Koska kyseessä on yksittäinen tapaustutkimus, laajoja yleistyksiä ei ole mahdollista tehdä. Viimeisenä mainittiin se, miten Beverleyn postausten menestystä ei tarkasti voi mitata, sillä tietoa siitä, miten postaukset vaikuttavat hänen yrityksensä myynteihin ei ole saatavilla.

Jatkotutkimusmahdollisuuksia pohdittiin lopuksi. Koska sosiaalisen median kieli on suhteellisen uusi tutkimuskohde, tarjoaa se laajasti mahdollisuuksia erilaisille tutkimusaiheille. Sosiaalisen median kielen ollessa ainutlaatuinen, voisi sen eri piirteitä tutkia esimerkiksi kieliopin tai ortografian pohjalta. Lisäksi vaikuttajamarkkinoinnin eri osa-alueita on mahdollista tutkia. Esimerkiksi kahden vaikuttajan vertaileva tutkimus olisi mahdollinen.

Viimeisenä mainitaan eri tutkimusaineiston käyttö. Tämä tutkimus keskittyi tekstiin tai kuvaan, mutta tulevaisuudessa aineisto voisi koostua esimerkiksi videoista.