

STORYTELLING IN INSTAGRAM INFLUENCERS: HOW PERSONAL NARRATIVES SHAPE AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT IN @JXSMNETEA'S VIDEO

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ABSTRAK. Penelitian ini mengkaji praktik storytelling yang digunakan oleh influencer Instagram dengan menganalisis bagaimana narasi personal membentuk keterlibatan audiens dalam sebuah video yang diunggah oleh @jxsmnetea. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi struktur naratif dalam storytelling Jazmine, menganalisis makna sikap melalui affect, judgment, dan appreciation berdasarkan Appraisal Theory, serta mengeksplorasi kontribusi elemen multimodal terhadap efektivitas storytelling. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif dengan data berupa satu video Instagram yang dibuat oleh Jazmine dan dianalisis menggunakan Analisis Struktur Naratif oleh Labov dan Waletzky, Appraisal Theory oleh Martin dan White, serta Analisis Wacana Multimodal oleh Kress dan van Leeuwen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Jazmine membangun struktur naratif yang koheren dan mampu membangun keterhubungan emosional dengan audiens melalui bahasa evaluatif serta elemen multimodal seperti ekspresi wajah, gestur, dan isyarat visual. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya integrasi struktur naratif, bahasa evaluatif, dan sumber daya multimodal dalam membentuk storytelling yang efektif di Instagram.

Kata kunci: Analisis Wacana; Analisis Wacana Multimodal; Teori Penilaian, Keterlibatan Audiens

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ABSTRACT. This study examines storytelling practices employed by Instagram influencers by analyzing how personal narratives shape audience engagement in a video posted by @jxsmnetea. It aims to identify the narrative structure of Jazmine's storytelling, analyze attitudinal meanings expressed through affect, judgment, and appreciation based on Appraisal Theory, and explore the contribution of multimodal elements to storytelling effectiveness. This research adopts a qualitative case study approach using data from a single Instagram video created by Jazmine and is analyzed through Narrative Structure Analysis by Labov and Waletzky, Appraisal Theory by Martin and White, and Multimodal Discourse Analysis by Kress and van Leeuwen. The findings indicate that Jazmine constructs a coherent narrative structure that facilitates emotional connection with the audience. Evaluative language supports audience engagement through affect, judgment, and appreciation, while multimodal elements such as facial expressions, gestures, and visual cues strengthen narrative meaning and emotional expression. This study highlights the importance of integrating narrative structure, evaluative language, and multimodal resources in shaping effective storytelling on Instagram.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis; Multimodal Discourse Analysis; Appraisal Theory; Audience Engagement

INTRODUCTION

In the era of digital communication, social media platforms have become influential spaces for constructing identity, shaping values, and negotiating personal experiences. Among these platforms, Instagram plays a significant role in facilitating self-presentation through visual and narrative-based content, particularly via influencers who actively

share personal stories with their audiences. Influencers often use storytelling strategies to communicate lived experiences, emotions, and perspectives, allowing followers to relate to, interpret, and engage with these narratives. As boyd (2014) argues, social media environments function as dynamic spaces where self-perception and social meaning are continuously shaped through interaction and discourse. Through captions, videos, and visual cues, influencers construct

narratives that not only represent their personal lives but also reflect broader cultural and social values. These narrative practices demonstrate how language and multimodal elements operate together to create meaning, emotional connection, and audience engagement within digital communities.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to analyze storytelling practices on Instagram within their natural digital context. The object of the study is a storytelling video posted by Instagram influencer Jazmine (@jxsmneta), selected through purposive sampling due to its complete narrative structure and rich linguistic and multimodal features. The data consist of verbal elements, including spoken narration and captions, as well as non-verbal elements such as facial expressions, gestures, and visual objects, which were collected using documentation techniques through video transcription and screenshots of key scenes. Data analysis followed the qualitative model proposed by Miles et al., involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Three analytical frameworks were applied, namely Narrative Structure Analysis to examine how the story is organized, Appraisal Theory to identify attitudes expressed through affect, judgment, and appreciation, and Multimodal Discourse Analysis to analyze the interaction between linguistic and visual modes. This integrated analytical approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how narrative and multimodal strategies contribute to audience engagement in digital storytelling.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study based on the three research objectives, namely analyzing narrative structure, attitudinal meaning, and multimodal elements in Jazmine's Instagram storytelling video. The results demonstrate how these linguistic and multimodal resources work together to construct emotional meaning and foster audience engagement in digital storytelling.

1. Narrative Structure in Jazmine's Storytelling

The analysis reveals that Jazmine's storytelling follows a complete narrative structure as proposed by Labov and Waletzky, consisting of abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda. The abstract presents the core issue of the story by contrasting an idealized interaction in a romantic

relationship with the reality that commonly occurs. This contrast immediately frames the narrative as emotionally reflective and relatable, allowing viewers to anticipate the central conflict.

The orientation introduces the implied characters and situational context through a recurring interpersonal interaction between a woman expressing discomfort and a male partner responding defensively. Although the physical setting is not explicitly shown, the narrative is situated within a contemporary digital context where Instagram interactions become a source of relational tension. This orientation establishes a familiar emotional background that invites audience identification.

The complication emerges as the male character reacts with sarcasm, emotional invalidation, and blame-shifting when confronted with the woman's concern. The interaction escalates from a simple question into an emotionally charged conflict, reflecting common patterns in romantic communication where boundaries are interpreted as accusations. The evaluation stage intensifies this tension through exaggerated responses, rhetorical questions, repetition, and sarcastic suggestions, emphasizing emotional exhaustion rather than problem resolution.

The resolution does not offer genuine reconciliation but instead presents performative gestures such as deleting applications or exaggerating sacrifice, which function as symbolic closures rather than solutions. Finally, the coda returns the narrative to the present moment through reflective commentary, transforming the personal story into a broader social observation. This cyclical ending highlights unresolved emotional patterns in relationships and reinforces the universality of the narrative experience.

2. Attitude in Jazmine's Narrative Storytelling

The second finding concerns the expression of attitude based on Appraisal Theory, particularly affect, judgment, and appreciation. The analysis shows that Jazmine's narrative is rich in evaluative language that positions emotional experiences and moral perspectives within the story. Affect is realized through expressions of frustration, sarcasm, and emotional exhaustion, both explicitly and implicitly conveyed through tone and word choice.

Judgment is important directed toward interpersonal behaviour, especially through utterances that label emotional responses as insecurity or irrationality. These judgments reflect underlying power dynamics within the relationship and expose how emotional expression is delegitimized in

everyday interactions. Appreciation appears more subtly, functioning through contrast and irony, particularly when idealized expectations are alongside with lived reality.

Approximately, the study identifies both inscribed and invoked attitudes throughout the narrative. While some emotions and evaluations are explicitly stated, others are implied through repetition, exaggeration, and rhetorical framing. This layered use of appraisal resources enhances emotional resonance and allows audiences to infer meaning based on shared social experiences, thereby strengthening audience alignment and engagement.

Table 4.3 Linguistic Realizations of Attitude in Jazmine's Narrative Data

No.	Narrative Segment	Excerpt	Attitude Type	Category	Inscribed / Invoked
1.	Segment 1	Datum 35. "Can you unfollow her?"	Judgment	Negative (Social Sanction - Propriety)	Invoked
2.	Segment 1	Datum 36. "Sure babe, anything for you."	Judgment	Positive (Social Esteem - Tenacity)	Inscribed
3.	Segment 1	Datum 37. "Yay!"	Affect	Positive (Happiness - happy/joy)	Inscribed
4.	Segment 2	Datum 38. "Why are you so insecure?"	Judgment	Negative (Social Esteem - Capacity)	Inscribed
5.	Segment 2	Datum 39. "Oh my God, why are you crying?"	Judgment	Negative (Social Esteem - Capacity)	Invoked
6.	Segment 2	Datum 40. "She's just an old friend."	Judgment	Positive (Social Sanction - Propriety)	Invoked

7.	Segment 2	Datum 41. "I just happen to like everything on my feed."	Appreciation	Negative (Valuation)	Invoked
8.	Segment 2	Datum 42. "I cannot have friends who are girls, is it?"	Judgment	Negative (Social Sanction - Propriety)	Invoked
9.	Segment 2	Datum 43. "Today her, tomorrow who?"	Judgment	Negative (Social Sanction - Propriety)	Invoked
10.	Segment 2	Datum 44. "I should just unfollow every other girl."	Judgment	Negative (Social Sanction - Propriety)	Invoked
11.	Segment 2	Datum 45. "Maybe I should just delete my Instagram account and never ever use Instagram again."	Affect	Negative (dissatisfaction - frustration and sarcasm)	Invoked
12.	Segment 2	Datum 46. "Here, let me delete the app."	Affect	Negative (dissatisfaction - frustration and sarcasm)	Invoked
13.	Segment 2	Datum 47. "Do you	Judgment	Negative (Social	Invoked

		want me to just throw my phone into the ocean?"		Sanction - Propriety)	
14	Segment 3	Datum 48. "It goes back to this."	Appreciation	Negative (Valuation)	Invoke d
15	Segment 3	Datum 49. "Why do y'all like to make it so hard on yourself?"	Judgment	Negative (Social Esteem Capacity)	Invoke d

3. Multimodal Elements in Enhancing Storytelling Engagement

The third finding highlights the role of multimodal elements in strengthening narrative delivery. Jazmine’s storytelling does not rely solely on verbal language but integrates facial expressions, gestures, vocal intonation, and timing to convey emotional meaning. These multimodal resources amplify the evaluative force of the narrative, reinforcing sarcasm, frustration, and reflection beyond what is expressed linguistically.

Gestures and facial expressions function as visual cues that support emotional interpretation, while shifts in tone and pacing emphasize key moments of conflict and reflection. The interaction between linguistic and visual modes allows the narrative to feel authentic and emotionally grounded, enabling viewers to engage not only cognitively but also affectively. This multimodal construction of meaning demonstrates how digital storytelling operates as a holistic communicative practice rather than a purely textual one.

Overall, Jazmine’s storytelling is constructed through the coordinated use of multimodal resources that visually reinforce emotional meaning across the narrative segments. These elements work together to guide audience interpretation and intensify emotional engagement.

a. Image

Images and facial expressions play a central role in visualizing emotional states. In the ideal scenario, relaxed expressions, smiles, and calm gestures construct an atmosphere of harmony while subtly introducing irony. In contrast, later segments employ exaggerated expressions to signal frustration and emotional tension, creating a clear visual progression from composure to escalation.

b. Caption

Captions function as explicit evaluative cues that anchor audience interpretation. Phrases such as “so many excuses” frame the partner’s behavior critically and reduce interpretive ambiguity. By appearing simultaneously with Jazmine’s facial reactions, captions guide viewers toward a preferred reading of disbelief and frustration, even for audiences engaging without sound.

c. Gesture

Gestures intensify the emotional delivery of the narrative. Exaggerated hand movements, pointing, and chaotic drawing actions visually enact confusion, resistance, and emotional overload. These physical performances transform internal emotions into observable actions, strengthening representational and interactive meaning.

d. Object

Objects such as the whiteboard, marker, and phone function as symbolic resources. The disorganized scribbles on the whiteboard represent emotional breakdown and miscommunication, while the phone symbolizes heightened emotional stakes in digital relationships. These objects externalize abstract feelings and support the narrative’s emotional climax. Collectively, images, captions, gestures, and objects operate across representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), demonstrating how multimodal elements enhance emotional clarity, intensify narrative progression, and strengthen audience engagement in Jazmine’s storytelling.

This discussion highlights how narrative structure, evaluative language, and multimodal elements collectively construct meaning in Jazmine’s digital storytelling. Drawing on Labov and Waletzky’s (1967) narrative model, the findings show that Jazmine’s story follows a complete narrative cycle that moves from emotional tension to reflective closure, emphasizing the repetitive and unresolved nature of relational conflict in the digital context. Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) reveals that Attitude is predominantly realized through negative Affect, such as frustration, insecurity, and emotional fatigue, which functions to build emotional alignment

with the audience, while Judgment and Appreciation appear strategically to evaluate behaviour and rationalize experience. In addition, multimodal resources including facial expressions, gestures, captions, gaze, and objects reinforce and intensify the emotional and evaluative meanings expressed verbally. These elements work interdependently to guide audience interpretation and enhance narrative engagement. Overall, Jazmine's storytelling demonstrates that meaning in digital narratives is produced through the integration of linguistic and multimodal strategies, resulting in an emotionally resonant and socially reflective form of storytelling.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Jazmine's Instagram storytelling operates as an integrated form of digital narrative shaped by narrative structure, evaluative language, and multimodal resources. Using Narrative Structure Analysis (Labov & Waletzky, 1967), the findings show that Jazmine's story follows a complete narrative cycle consisting of abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda, which reflects recurring and unresolved relational conflicts in digital contexts. Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) reveals that Attitude is predominantly realized through negative Affect, supported by Judgment and Appreciation, allowing Jazmine to position herself emotionally and align audiences with her perspective. Furthermore, Multimodal Discourse Analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) demonstrates that facial expressions, gestures, captions, and symbolic objects visually reinforce verbal meanings and intensify emotional resonance. Overall, the integration of these linguistic and multimodal strategies enables Jazmine to construct an emotionally engaging and socially reflective form of digital storytelling that goes beyond self-expression and functions as affective performance.

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