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EXPLORING THE USE OF ENGLISH AS THE MARKETING LANGUAGE FOR PRODUCT PROMOTION: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: Language phenomena in marketing reflect the dynamic ways language evolves and it is used to influence consumer behavior and brand perception. English is considered as important language for the product promotion. This research used was to investigate the use of English as the marketing language for product promotion. It used qualitative research by using descriptive towards case study. Then, for the data collection, the researchers used interview questions and it is analyzed by using content analysis and social discourse of CDA. The research shows that there are some points of view of Micro Enterprises in West Sumatera for using English as the marketing language for product promotion such as broadening the market target, showing competitive advantage, enhancing professionalism and credibility, facilitating a cross-border trading, following the current trend, and becoming the tourism destination. This research was limited into Micro Enterprises of West Sumatera Barat. Then, by conducting the research customers can get comprehensive explanation about the use of English for the Indonesian products by the Micro Enterprises.

Keywords:

CDA, English, Marketing Language, Product Promotion

A. INTRODUCTION

The development of language in marketing has been advancing rapidly, driven by the evolving dynamics of consumer behavior, technological innovations, and globalization. Marketers are increasingly leveraging linguistic creativity to craft messages that resonate with diverse audiences across different platforms (King, 2018). From the rise of personalized advertising and conversational marketing, the ways language is utilized have become more dynamic and interactive than ever before. Social media has also played a significant role, encouraging the adoption of succinct, impactful language such as hash tags, memes, and trends that capture attention instantly. Additionally, the globalization of markets has necessitated the integration of multilingual strategies, combining localized cultural nuances with universally understood elements, often rooted in English. This rapid evolution highlights the pivotal role language plays in shaping consumer experiences and fostering brand loyalty in an ever-changing marketplace (Salfin et al., 2024).

Language phenomena in marketing reflect the dynamic ways language evolves and is used to influence consumer behavior and brand perception. In marketing, language is more than a medium of communication; it is a powerful tool for shaping identities, evoking emotions, and building connections. Several key phenomena highlight this intricate relationship, such as code-switching and hybridization, where brands blend languages like English and local dialects to appeal to both global and local audiences (Jaganathan et al., 2013). This approach conveys modernity while preserving cultural relevance. Similarly, marketing frequently borrows foreign terms, especially English words, to project sophistication and global appeal. Neologisms and catchphrases are also coined to create unique and memorable brand identities. Furthermore, emotive and persuasive language techniques, such as metaphors and evocative slogans, are employed to capture attention and build consumer trust (Kronrod, 2022).

Another significant phenomenon is localization, where marketers adapt language to align with the cultural norms and idiomatic expressions of their target regions, ensuring relatability and authenticity. In the digital age, trends like hash tags, and memes dominate marketing language, creating immediacy and fostering community engagement. Informal language and abbreviations further resonate with younger, tech-savvy audiences. Additionally, some brands establish their own linguistic identity by crafting distinctive phrases or styles, which enhance recognizability and foster customer loyalty. Together, these phenomena demonstrate how marketing language evolves alongside societal and technological changes, shaping consumer experiences and reinforcing its pivotal role in the marketplace (Pine & Turin, 2017).

English is considered to have a significant impact on helping Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) promote their products effectively. As a global language, English provides MSMEs with access to broader markets, enabling them to reach international customers and expand their business horizons. By using English in product descriptions, marketing materials, and social media content, MSMEs can communicate with a diverse audience and compete on a global scale. Additionally, English proficiency enhances the credibility of businesses by conveying professionalism and reliability, which are crucial for building trust with international clients (Skorupa & Dubovičienė, 2015). For many MSMEs, adopting English in their promotional strategies also opens doors to collaborations, partnerships, and participation in global trade fairs or online marketplaces. Consequently, mastering English can be a powerful tool for MSMEs to break geographical barriers and increase their visibility in the competitive global market (Gustiani et al., 2022).

Mistakes in the use of English in promotional language can significantly impact a brand's credibility, consumer engagement, and overall effectiveness in delivering its message. Common mistakes include grammatical errors and typos, such as incorrect verb usage or sentence fragments, which can make content appear unprofessional and confuse customers. Literal translations from other languages often result in awkward or nonsensical phrasing, failing to capture intended meaning or cultural nuance. Overuse of jargon or complex language can alienate customers, making it harder for them to understand the message. Cultural missteps, like using humor or idioms that don't translate well, can lead to misunderstandings or offense. Keyword stuffing, which prioritizes SEO over readability, can make content sound robotic and turn off readers. Inconsistent tone or style can confuse the audience and dilute the brand's voice, while misuse of idioms or slang can make the language feel forced or unnatural. Ignoring regional variations in English can make the content feel disconnected from the target audience. To avoid these issues, businesses should prioritize professional editing, cultural sensitivity, and audience-focused strategies when crafting promotional language in English (Banatao & Malenab-Temporal, 2018).

However, Indonesian MSMEs often face a choice between using the Indonesian language or English in their product information and marketing strategies. While the local language allows them to connect deeply with domestic customers, many MSMEs prefer to use English due to its broader appeal and global reach. English enables these enterprises to target international markets, attract a diverse audience, and position their products on global e-commerce platforms. Additionally, using English often enhances the perception of professionalism and modernity, which can boost consumer trust and brand credibility. For many MSMEs, English is also a practical tool for engaging with international partners, participating in trade fairs, and optimizing online content for global search engines. While the

Indonesian language remains essential for local engagement, English provides MSMEs with the competitive edge needed to expand beyond national boundaries and thrive in the international marketplace (Silaban & Marpaung, 2020).

There have been some researchers conducted the research about the use of English in product promotion. First is Gustiani et al.,(2022) conducting research on the impacts of English on products branding from customers point of view. They used qualitative method with individual and focus group interviews for data collecting techniques. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis to unveil customers' perception in the terms of popularity, purchasing interest, sales and revenue, business competition, curiosity, vocabulary, a symbol of modernity, and prestige toward products with English branding. The research shows that the use of English on product branding highly impacted popularity, business competition, buyers' curiosity, vocabulary, and the symbol of modernity of the users of the object products. The English branding impacted the prestige of the customers only for garment products. Second is Gerritsen et al., (2010) conducting a research examining the response to advertisements in English compared to the response to the same advertisement in the local language in Western Europe. The research was conducted using quantitative research towards a test. The research shows that the use of English in a product ad does not appear to have any impact on image and price of the product, but it does affect text comprehension: the meaning of almost 40% of the English phrases was not understood. These results were the same for all countries involved in the study, irrespective of whether the respondents' (self-) reported proficiency in English is high or low. Third is Odunlami & Akinruwa, (2014) conducting a research on examining the influence of promotion on product awareness in the brewery subsector of the manufacturing industry in Nigeria. The research used survey research design where the primary data collected by using questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The research shows that promotion is a critical and vital factor that enhances product awareness in the market. Hence, promotion attracts attention particularly when consumers are not very familiar with the products.

From the above information, there are some research gaps that can be derived from previous researches. First, this research used qualitative research using case study design. By using the case study, it could highlight the language phenomenon faced by the MSMEs to promote their products. Second is that this research using interview as the research method, data were collected by using the interview questions given to the Micro Enterprises. Third is this research used content analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough for the data analysis.

Generally, this research was to investigate the use of English used by the Micro Enterprises as marketing language to promote their products. There are some

research significances towards this research. First is this research could highlight the Micro Enterprises point of views about the use of English in their product promotion. Second, this research could also contribute for other researchers where the interview question could also be used to collect the research data and content analysis could be used by the researchers to analyze the research data. At last, by conducting the research customers can get comprehensive explanation about the use of English for the Indonesian products by the Micro Enterprises. Finally, this research question was that how the use of English as the marketing language for product promotion by Micro Enterprises of West Sumatera is.

B. METHODOLOGY

For this research, the qualitative approach was used to explore the significance of English as a marketing tool for MSMEs. This method enables an in-depth understanding of the experiences, challenges, and strategies employed by MSMEs in using English to promote their products. Through interviews, case studies, and thematic analysis, the researchers aim to capture the nuanced impact of English on visibility, credibility, and customer engagement in global markets. The qualitative approach is particularly suitable as it allows for rich, contextual data to uncover how language usage shapes marketing effectiveness and international reach in different cultural and business contexts (Mitchell & Clark, 2018).

Nassaji, (2015) informed that a descriptive approach was adopted by using a case study design. This methodology allowed the researchers to examine specific instances of MSMEs utilizing English as a marketing language to promote their products. By focusing on detailed observations and contextual analysis, the case study design provided insights into the strategies, challenges, and outcomes associated with the use of English in different business settings. This descriptive approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of how English contributes to market reach, customer engagement, and the branding of MSMEs, particularly in global and multilingual markets.

Morgan et al., (2017) described that this research used a case study methodology, with data collected through interviews guided by structured interview questions. The interview method allowed the researchers to gather detailed and nuanced responses directly from MSME stakeholders, providing insights into their experiences and perspectives regarding the use of English in marketing. The structured interview questions were designed to explore key areas such as the challenges of using English, its impact on market reach and customer engagement, and its role in branding and communication strategies. This approach enabled the collection of rich, qualitative data essential for understanding the specific contexts and dynamics of English usage in MSME marketing efforts.

This research employed a case study methodology with data collected through interviews, guided by structured interview questions, and the participants were selected using purposive sampling. This sampling method ensured that only individuals or MSMEs with relevant experiences and expertise in using English for marketing purposes were included. By targeting participants who could provide valuable insights into the challenges, strategies, and outcomes associated with English usage in their promotional efforts, the researchers were able to gather rich and focused qualitative data (Kemal & Omar, 2024). This approach was crucial for understanding the role of English in enhancing market reach, branding, and customer engagement within the MSME sector. For this research, the researchers selected five Micro Enterprises of West Sumatera Province in the type of food and drink type of business. The interview questions itself had been validated by two experts, especially expert in language and marketing. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring they had relevant experiences with using English in marketing. For this research, there were 5 selected Micro Enterprises on doing the interview questions. The interview itself had been conducted in semi-structured interview. It was used because the researchers could improve and add related questions to ask about the information of using English in product promotion.

The researchers implemented content analysis and the social discourse approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to thoroughly examine the data. Content analysis was used to systematically categorize and interpret textual data collected from interviews, focusing on recurring themes, patterns, and insights related to the use of English in marketing (Elo et al., 2014). In parallel, Fairclough's framework for CDA, especially social discourse, was implemented to explore the broader social and cultural contexts within which language operates, examining how English usage in MSME marketing reflects and influences power dynamics, social identities, and communicative practices (Breeze, 2011). By combining these methods, the study not only identified practical trends and challenges but also critically analyzed the sociocultural implications of language in shaping marketing strategies and global connectivity.

C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Conducting the research on the use of English as marketing language for product promotion has already shown some findings. Here are the following Micro Enterprises points of view about English as language promotion.

Broadening the Market Target

One of the primary reasons Micro Enterprises use English in their product promotion is to broaden their market target. English, as a global lingua franca, allows these businesses to transcend local language barriers and connect with a diverse and international customer base. By presenting their products in English, Micro Enterprises can attract potential buyers from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, significantly increasing their visibility in the global market. This approach is particularly effective in digital spaces, where e-commerce platforms, social media, and online advertisements are often dominated by English. Through this strategy, Micro Enterprises not only expand their audience reach but also position themselves competitively in a globalized economy, enhancing their opportunities for growth and success.

This condition had been approved by some of the West Sumatera Micro Enterprises where one of them stated that *“English is important for us because beside selling the product for domestics customers, we also can get international customers”*. Another participant also commented that *“we do not sell this product for local people only, but we have already prepared to promote it in English to get more customers”*. The next participant also commented that *by using English, we can get more customers or buyers for our product*. From the information above, it can be seen that the Micro Enterprises seriously use English for their product promotion to broaden their market target both domestics and international buyers.

Showing Competitive Advantage

The use of English by Micro Enterprises serves as a key strategy to showcase their competitive advantage in a dynamic and globalized market. By adopting English in their marketing and communication efforts, these businesses project a professional and modern image that appeals to a wider audience. English, often associated with international standards and innovation, helps Micro Enterprises stand out from competitors who may rely solely on local languages. This linguistic choice not only enhances the perceived value of their products but also signals readiness to engage with global markets. As a result, using English becomes a distinguishing factor that sets them apart, attracting customers and partners who prioritize accessibility and professionalism in business interactions.

The above information is also supported by the information from the participants. One of them said that *“right now the competition is so high to sell our product, so by using English, it is one of the ways to show our competition*. Another participant also informed that *English is needed right now because we must compete to get various customers*. Some informants also agree that *English is not something foreign anymore for product promotion, we must use it in order to get many more sales*. It can be concluded that English is very important for the MSME to use English

beside that Indonesian language in their products. It could make them survive to sell their products.

Enhancing Professionalism and Credibility

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) often use English in their business communications to enhance their professionalism and credibility. English, as a global language, is widely associated with modernity, expertise, and adherence to international standards. By incorporating English in promotional materials, product descriptions, and customer interactions, MSMEs can project a polished and professional image that resonates with both local and international audiences. This linguistic choice signals a readiness to operate on a global scale, fostering trust and confidence among customers, investors, and partners. Furthermore, well-crafted English content demonstrates attention to detail and quality, helping MSMEs build a strong brand identity and gain a competitive edge in the marketplace.

The information was also supported by the participants of the research. One of them stated that *“by using English, we can show our professionalism in promoting our product for customers.* Another Micro Enterprise also commented that *“We use English in our product information because people have been familiar with it. If we use English, people will not now about the information.* Other participant also informed that *“by informing to the customers by using Indo and English, our credibility and professionalism will increase.* From the information above, it can be concluded that Micro Enterprises think and feel that their professionalism and credibility can improve when they use English for their product promotion.

Facilitating A Cross-Border Trading

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) often prefer using English as a means of communication to facilitate cross-border trading. As a globally recognized lingua franca, English enables businesses from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to interact more effectively, streamlining negotiations, agreements, and transactions. This preference is particularly pronounced in international trade, where clarity and mutual understanding are critical for building trust and ensuring smooth operations. Moreover, English proficiency allows MSMEs to access wider markets, connect with global suppliers, and participate in multinational platforms, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in the global economy. By adopting English, these enterprises can overcome language barriers that might otherwise hinder opportunities for growth and collaboration in international markets.

Some participants also confirmed that *“It is true that we always want to trade not only in domestics but it is also in international trading, therefore, we use English for the product promotion.* The next information from participant is that *“English*

must be used if we want to broad our market. It is also added by the other participant that *“we cannot broad or marketing for our product, if we do not use English.* From the above opinion, it can be seen that the participants seriously use English to broad their product promotion marketing by using English.

Following the Current Trend

One of the reasons micro-enterprises are increasingly using English is the growing trend of presenting product information in a globalized context. In today's interconnected world, English often serves as the lingua franca, enabling businesses to reach a broader audience, including international customers. By adopting English in product descriptions, packaging, and marketing materials, these enterprises align themselves with contemporary consumer expectations, especially in markets where English is associated with professionalism and modernity. This practice does not only enhance the perceived credibility of their products but also positions them competitively in industries where staying relevant and appealing to diverse demographics are essentials. Consequently, the use of English becomes a strategic tool for micro-enterprises striving to expand their reach and adapt to evolving market dynamics.

Some informants agree that *“we use English for our product promotion because many sellers also do the same things.* Other informant also confirmed that *“Now, if we do not use English, we will be left behind for selling our product.* Next information from the participant that *“we use English for our product promotion because right now, English has been familiar for people and we often people interact with it.* From the information above, it can be derived some that Micro Enterprises use English because they want to follow the trend in product promotion and marketing.

Becoming the Tourism Destination

The reason for using English in many tourism destinations is primarily due to its global recognition as a universal language. English serves as a bridge for communication between people from different countries, making it easier for tourists to navigate and engage with local services. In popular tourist spots, the widespread use of English helps businesses, hotels, and attractions cater to an international audience, ensuring that visitors can fully enjoy their experiences without facing language barriers. Additionally, English is often the preferred language for travel-related information, signage, and digital resources, making it an essential tool for promoting tourism and fostering a welcoming environment for people from all over the world.

This information is also informed by the informants where one of them stated that *“West Sumatera has been determined as the Halal Tourism, so that we believe there will be many foreigners coming to West Sumatera.* Other informant said

that we have many tourism destinations here, it attracts many people coming to West Sumatera. Another informant also described *that there are many foreigners coming to West Sumatera for having pleasures or other businesses*. From the information above, it can be seen one of the reasons for using English by Micro Enterprises is because many foreigners coming to West Sumatera for its tourism destinations.

D. DISCUSSIONS

MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) often use English as a marketing language for promoting their products because of its wide global reach and ability to connect with a diverse audience. In an increasingly interconnected world, English has become the primary language of international business and commerce, allowing MSMEs to expand their market beyond local borders. By adopting English in their promotional materials, websites, and advertisements, these enterprises can attract foreign customers, partners, and investors. English also helps MSMEs position their products as modern, innovative, and globally competitive, which can enhance their brand image and credibility. Additionally, using English allows MSMEs to tap into digital marketing platforms, where the majority of content is published in English, enabling them to engage more effectively with global audiences and capitalize on online sales opportunities.

From the research, it is shown that there are some points highlighted by Micro Enterprises about using English for product promotion, such as broadening the market target, showing competitive advantage, enhancing professionalism and credibility, facilitating a cross-border trading, following the current trend, and becoming the tourism destination. There are some researches supporting findings of the research. Thoma (2013) in his research shows that the use of English on product branding highly impacted popularity, business competition, buyers' curiosity, vocabulary, and the symbol of modernity of the users of the object products. Interestingly, electronics products were not affected by the use of English branding on purchasing interest, sales and revenue, and prestige. The next researchers also commented that consumer behavior and product design demonstrate the ways in which consumers contribute to product design, enhance product utility, and determine brand identity. With increased connectedness and advances in technology, consumers and marketers are more closely connected than ever before (Hervey et al., 2017). Then, Harian, (2016) also confirmed that the use of foreign languages is dominated by English on the advertisement. Foreign language form of intervention is in the form of code-mixing, code switching, and use a foreign language pure.

E. CONCLUSION

MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) often choose language strategically for their marketing efforts to ensure effective product promotion. While micro enterprises may typically use the Indonesian language in their day-to-day operations, many still prefer using English when promoting their products. This shift toward English is driven by the desire to appeal to a broader audience, including international customers, and to enhance their brand's global appeal. English, being widely recognized as the international business language, offers micro enterprises an opportunity to expand beyond local markets and connect with potential customers online, especially in digital platforms where English content dominates. By using English in product descriptions, advertisements, and social media, these businesses aim to project a more modern and professional image, helping them stand out in a competitive marketplace. Even though Indonesian is more commonly used for local communication, English enables MSMEs, particularly micro enterprises, to tap into a larger customer base and increase the effectiveness of their promotional campaigns.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT INTEREST

The authors have no conflict interest on writing this article.

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