CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses six components as the introduction to this research. The components are background of research, statement of the problems, research purpose, research significance, and organization of writing.

1.1 Background of the Problem

In the rapidly evolving digital era, information and communication technology have brought significant changes to social interaction patterns within society. The internet not only functions as a source of information but also provides a new space for individuals to shape their identity, build relationships, and express themselves. One concrete manifestation of this function is social media, which allows people to interact and socialize online without spatial or temporal limitations (Radjaki 2024). Social media enables individuals to construct social networks virtually, so communication is no longer constrained by geographic location (Hutabarat, Anggita, and Damanik 2025).

Digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter (now called X), and YouTube have become primary spaces for individuals to connect virtually, both with other users and admired public figures. A tangible impact of this development is the increasing use of social media in daily life (Sholihatin 2023) emphasizing that the advancement of information technology also creates new communication spaces that allow for the expression of social and personal identity. Instagram, as one of the most widely used social media platforms, allows users to share moments visually and narratively through photos, videos, and accompanying captions. Since its launch by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in 2010 (Qibtiyah 2024), Instagram has developed into a medium for self-expression and social interaction, reaching hundreds of millions of users within a few years. This platform provides a unique space for users to share experiences and opinions creatively, making it a rich medium for examining language use in digital communication.

One of the main features of Instagram is the caption, a short text accompanying posts to provide context, convey messages, or express emotions. Captions not only describe visual content but also reflect users' social and personal identities (Qibtiyah 2024). Several studies show that women tend to write longer and more expressive captions, reflecting communication styles aligned with social expectations of femininity, while men tend to use shorter and more assertive language, emphasizing clarity and directness (Nur Aulia Irsyad 2023). Differences in language use between men and women on social media are often related to social constructions of gender. These linguistic choices demonstrate gender-based communication patterns shaped by personal identity and social influence (Gurning 2024).

The analysis of linguistic features is essential because language reflects how individuals construct meaning, identity, and social relationships. Through word choice, the use of intensifiers, hedges, and emotional expressions, Instagram users indirectly reveal their thinking and how they position themselves in front of their audience. Therefore, analyzing linguistic features is necessary to understand how gender differences affect communication styles in digital contexts, particularly in Instagram captions, which are personal and interactive. Language also functions as a tool for constructing social identity, so linguistic analysis helps to understand gender dynamics on digital platforms (Tussa'diah 2022).

In this study, the subjects were 20 young singers, consisting of 10 male singers and 10 female singers. The participants were selected based on the number of their Instagram followers, with those having the highest follower counts being chosen as the research subjects. This criterion was used to ensure that the study analyzed captions posted by singers with a wide audience reach and active interaction with their followers. The Instagram captions posted by these singers served as the data source for this study. Through Instagram captions, singers share information, express emotions, promote their work, and interact with their audiences. Therefore, Instagram captions provide a valuable source of authentic language use for examining linguistic features and gender differences in communication. According

to (Munjin 2008), differences in language between men and women reflect socio-cultural constructions that influence both personal and professional communication.

Linguistic studies on gender and language have established fundamental theories about how men and women use language differently. Lakoff (1975) emphasized that men's language tends to be assertive, direct, and confident, while women's language is marked by politeness, caution, and the use of hedges and intensifiers. Such language use is considered a strategy for women in constructing their linguistic identity (Dr.Hj. Huriyah Saleh 2017).

In social media contexts, gender-based language differences are also evident digitally, especially in Instagram captions that combine personal narratives with visual expression. (Agata 2022) found that in makeup-themed captions, women tend to use longer, more expressive, and emotional language, while men are more concise and direct. However, this study was limited to the makeup theme and does not represent general gender variation in Instagram captions. Furthermore, (Fajriah 2025) examined comments on the social media platform X and found gender differences in language use, where women were more expressive and interactional, while men were more direct and informative. However, this study was limited to a single platform and did not specifically examine Instagram captions. A similar study by (Qibtiyah 2024) highlighted how men and women use linguistic features such as word choice, punctuation, and expressive style in Instagram captions. The findings showed that women used more emojis, intensifiers, and softer language, while men were more straightforward. However, this research did not focus on captions from singers in the young adult age group, who may exhibit different language use patterns from ordinary users. Social, cultural, and identity contexts greatly influence linguistic choices in digital communication (Dinata 2025).

Based on previous studies, although research on gender-based language differences has been widely conducted, gaps remain in the context of Instagram captions, particularly among young adult singers. Their language use represents a

combination of artistic identity, fandom interaction, and personal branding. The focus on young adults is important because this age group is highly active in expressing social and personal identity through captions. (Reifman et al. 2007) refers to emerging adulthood as a transitional period between adolescence and early adulthood, during which individuals actively explore their identity, including through digital media. Moreover, social interactions through digital media become an important arena for identity formation during young adulthood (Yuliani 2020).

Based on these research gaps, this study aims to analyze gender-based variation in linguistic features in Instagram captions written by young adult singers. By referring to (Lakoff 1975), (Coates 2013), and (Reifman et al. 2007) concept of emerging adulthood, this research explores how men and women construct identity through word choice, sentence structure, and expressive style. This study is expected to contribute to digital sociolinguistics and enhance understanding of how gender norms emerge, are maintained, or change in social media spaces such as Instagram.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the research background described above, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What are the linguistic features differences in Instagram captions between young male and female singers?
2. How do these linguistic differences reflect the communicative purposes of male and female singers?

1.3 Research Objectives

In relation to the statement of problem above, this study aims to describe and explain the following:

1. To analyze the linguistic features differences in Instagram Captions between young male and female singers.
2. To analyze how these linguistic differences reflect the communicative purposes of the young male and female singers.

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1.4 Research Significance

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of sociolinguistic research, particularly in the field of language and gender in digital communication. This research expands the understanding of how linguistic features manifest differently in the language use of male and female singers in social media contexts, particularly on Instagram, a topic that has not been extensively explored. In addition, this study addresses gaps in previous research by providing a more specific analysis of gender-based linguistic variation in Instagram captions produced by young adult singers. Furthermore, this study enriches the discussion of digital sociolinguistics by highlighting the role of language in conveying information, expressing emotions, and maintaining social interaction in online environments.

Practically, this research is expected to be beneficial for various parties. For future researchers, the findings can serve as a reference or foundation for further studies on language and gender in other social media platforms or contexts. For students and language practitioners, this study can help them understand how linguistic choices are used to convey different communicative purposes in digital spaces. In addition, for social media users and content creators, this research provides insights into language strategies that reflect communication goals, emotional expression, and interactional styles, which may differ between male and female singers. Furthermore, this study is expected to raise awareness of the importance of using language effectively and appropriately in digital communication.

Finally, this research is expected to provide a meaningful contribution to the field of English Language and Literature studies, particularly in sociolinguistics and digital discourse analysis, by offering a deeper understanding of how gender-related linguistic variation and communicative purposes are reflected through language use in contemporary social media environments.

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

This research paper focuses on several frequently occurring terms identified by the researcher. In this section, the researcher clarifies the definition of Key terms to ensure the readers comprehend the research and prevent any misinterpretation. Some terms are defined as follow:

1. Linguistic features

   Linguistic features refer to elements of language such as word choice, sentence structure, punctuation, and expressive style used by individuals in communication, particularly in social media contexts.

2. Gender

   Gender in this study refers to the social and cultural differences between males and females that influence language use and communication styles in digital interaction.

3. Instagram Captions

   Instagram captions are written texts that accompany posts on the Instagram platform, used to provide context, convey messages, and express thoughts and feelings to the audience.

4. Singers

   Singers are individuals whose profession or primary activity is performing and producing music. In this study, singers refer to young male and female singers who actively use Instagram and publish captions as part of their communication with audiences on social media.

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