Revealing the Salience of Hashtags on the @pulauplastik Account Through Ecolinguistics Lens

by Made Sani Damayanthi Muliawan

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Abstract. This study investigates the salience of hashtags used on the @pulauplastik Instagram account through the lens of ecolinguistics. Captions and photos were used to collect data from the @pulauplastik Instagram account. Data was analyzed using ecolinguistic theory of salience. Through an ecolinguistic perspective, this research reveals the importance of using hashtags in campaigning for environmental preservation via Instagram social media, especially the @pulsplastic account. The results of this research show that effective use of hashtags can increase the salience of environmental conservation issues, attract users' attention, and encourage active participation in conservation efforts. As such, this research provides a valuable contribution to environmental communications strategy, offering practical guidance for activists, policymakers, and communities in designing more effective campaigns in the digital era. Using salience or prominence in hashtags can show how language can play an important role in increasing awareness and participation of social media users on the issue of plastic pollution and environmental conservation.

Keywords Enviromental Hasthag, Salience, Ecolinguistic

1. INTRODUCTION

Climate change and environmental damage are global issues that are increasingly urgent to be addressed seriously. One of the most prominent environmental problems is plastic pollution, which has become a significant threat to marine and terrestrial ecosystems and human health. Plastic that is not managed properly can last for hundreds of years in the environment, causing damage to the ecosystem and potentially entering the food chain. Efforts to reduce the impact of plastic pollution and increase public awareness about the importance of environmental conservation require a strategic and effective approach.

The role of social media in environmental conservation has been well documented. Studies have shown that user-generated content (UGC) on social media platforms can effectively promote pro-environmental behaviors and create a sense of online community around environmental causes. However, the specific ways in which environmental messages are conveyed and perceived on such platforms warrant further investigation (Ayu Ekasari, 2020).

With the ability to reach a wide area, Social media can disseminate information quickly and become an important tool for campaigning for environmental conservation. One of the

most popular social media platforms, Instagram offers sharing channels that can be used to spread environmental messages through images, videos, and especially the use of hashtags in each upload. Hashtags allow users to group and also find relevant content very easily so that engagement and visibility can increase on a particular issue (Mihardja et al, 2021).

Among the various accounts on Instagram, the @pulauplastik account is an Instagram account that actively campaigns for the issue of plastic pollution and environmental conservation. Using various unique hashtags, the @pulauplastik account tries to increase the involvement of Instagram users regarding environmental conservation issues. The @pulauplastik account consistently distributes informative and inspiring content, starting with facts about the negative impact of plastic use on ecosystem sustainability to various inspirations that can be followed or done to reduce the use of single-use plastic.

The @pulauplastik account effectively uses relevant hashtags to expand the reach of messages and increase salience or engagement with environmental conservation issues among all its followers on Instagram. Using hashtags in a post allows Instagram users to discover and join in a wider discussion about environmental conservation, creating a community that cares and is committed to making positive changes through interactions in the comments column, re-sharing, and consistent use of hashtags.

Ecolinguistics provides a new perspective in analyzing how language and social media can play a role in spreading and shaping environmental awareness. Ecolinguistics examines the relationship between language and the environment and how environmental conservation stories can influence perceptions and actions towards environmental conservation. The ecolinguistic perspective states that language not only reflects reality but also shapes and directs human actions towards the environment. In the context of social media, appropriate and strategic use of language can be a powerful tool to influence people's behavior and build collective awareness of environmental issues (Stibbe, 2015).

Hashtag research on Instagram social media has become an interesting topic for several researchers. For example, (Urip, 2018) focused his attention on critical discourse analysis in the context of using #ShameOnYouSBY as a form of resistance on the social media platform Twitter. Meanwhile, (Nuswantara, 2019) studied the visualization of hashtags on Instagram social media using Nourman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis theory. on the other hand, (Qui, 2013) conducted research entitled "A Critical Study of English Eco-hotel Profiles – Based on Fairclough's Three-dimensional Model". Qiu conducted a critical study of eco-hotels to outline the ecological ideas contained in the profiles of several hotels. Based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model, Qiu's research is divided into three stages, namely description of

linguistic features related to transitivity; interpretation of ecological ideas, and explanation and social reasons.

Through an ecolinguistic perspective, this research aims to reveal the salience of the environmental conservation hashtag contained in the @pulsplastic account so that it can shape the understanding and actions of Instagram social media users in environmental conservation campaigns through hashtags. Thus, it is hoped that this research can provide in-depth insight into the role of language and social media in environmental campaigns so as to increase the participation of Instagram users to preserve the environment.

2. METHODS

The descriptive qualitative method was used in this research. The method used for data collection is the documentation method (Creswell, 2014). The documentation method is a data collection method that has the aim of tracing historical data stored in facts and social data formed from data documentation (Bungin, 2003). Captions and photos were used to collect data from the @pulauplastik Instagram account with link https://www.instagram.com/pulauplastik/ wich has 24.200 followers and 1.223 post. The hashtag in question is a hashtag in indonesian with the theme of environmental preservation in Bali from 2019 to 2020. Therefore, hashtags that do not specialize in environmental conservation issues in Bali are not part of the data for this research. After being collected, the data were analyzed using the theory of salience by Stibbe (2015). The final step in this research is the conclusions and suggestions taken based on the results and discussion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUCCION

According to Arran Stibbe's "Story We Live By" ecolinguistic theory, the concept of salience refers to the level of importance or visibility of an issue or concept in the linguistic environment. Salience describes how salient or relevant a concept is in communication interactions and human perception of their environment. Therefore, salience is often seen as an important indicator of how effectively a message or narrative in a story influences a person's thoughts and actions regarding environmental issues (Stibbe, 2015). This concept shows that by making environmental issues more prominent or visible in everyday conversations, especially in digital spaces, it can increase public awareness and encourage more sustainable actions.

Data 1

Figure 1. Posts About Local Solution

(Source: instagram .com/@pulauplastik)

The hashtag *#solusilokal* reflects the community's awareness of the importance of local solutions in responding to the problems faced in their environment. This highlights a renewed focus on local resources and community-centered policies. Local solutions often prioritize sustainability in the use of natural resources as raw materials for products used in daily life and reducing plastic waste or environmental pollution caused by plastic waste from the use of plastic raw materials in these products. This upload highlights a local solution, namely coconut. In fact, before the existence of equipment made from plastic materials, in Bali itself, the concept of environmental preservation, apart from being in the form of ceremonies, was also found in the use of everyday household equipment.

This can be seen from the use of natural and environmentally friendly materials such as the use of cutlery, for example *kele*, which is a glass made from bamboo reeds, *sidu*, which is a tablespoon which is usually used for soupy food and made from coconut leaves or palm leaves, *cobek* is a plate made of clay, *jembung kau* is a bowl made of coconut shells, *caratan* is a water container for drinking made of clay. Apart from eating utensils, local wisdom in Bali uses natural and environmentally friendly materials, namely - kitchen utensils such as *cedok kau*, which is a ladle made from coconut shells and a wooden stem that is used to collect water, *sok nasi*, which is a place to store rice, bogem in the form of a serving cover. which is made from woven bamboo, *tenong* is a food container which is usually used to go to the rice fields, blego is a bucket nowadays but *blego* is made from bitter gourd fruit, tempeh is a tray made of woven bamboo. There are also ropes made from natural and environmentally friendly materials such as *duk* rope, which is a rope made from palm fiber, peel rope, which is a rope made from

dried banana fronds, *guntung* rope, which is a rope made from coconut leaf stems or palm fronds.

Data 2

Figure 2. Posts About Waste Management
(Source: instagram .com/@pulauplastik)

In data 2, one hashtag was found *#SolusiTerbaik2019*. Hasthag *#SolusiTerbaik2019* highlighting public awareness of the importance of finding effective solutions to certain problems. "*Solusi terbaik*" translates to "best solution" in Indonesian, and "2019" likely refers to a target year. This suggests the hashtag is future-oriented and focused on finding solutions. The salience of this hashtag also highlights the importance of innovation and change in finding solutions that can have a positive impact. The public is directed to think creatively and proactively in finding the best solutions to the problems faced in 2019. The salience of this hashtag also reflects a reflection on the events that occurred in 2019 and efforts to find the best solutions in response to the challenges and problems that occurred. appeared during that year.

The illustrations used also highlight how used drinking water containers can be processed or reused into various items such as book holders, piggy banks, lamp hangings, stationery holders, and plant pots. so this hashtag highlights how by developing creativity plastic bottle waste can be used to make more useful items.

Data 3

Figure 3. Posts About Avoid Plastic Bag

(Source: instagram .com/@pulauplastik)

In data 3, **#TolakTasKrèsèk** hashtag was found. The hashtag **#TolakTasKrèsèk** highlights the relative severity or importance of the rejection of the use of *krèsèk* bags in the conversation or campaign that uses the hashtag. The salience of this hashtag reflects the increasing awareness in society of the negative impact of using plastic bags on the environment. People are increasingly realizing the importance of reducing the use of single-use plastic and looking for more environmentally friendly alternatives.

The illustrations used also highlight the use of cloth bags that can be reused to store items when traveling or when shopping. The appearance of three young people in the illustration also highlights that the nation's young generation has begun to care about environmental preservation, especially in handling plastic waste.

Data 4
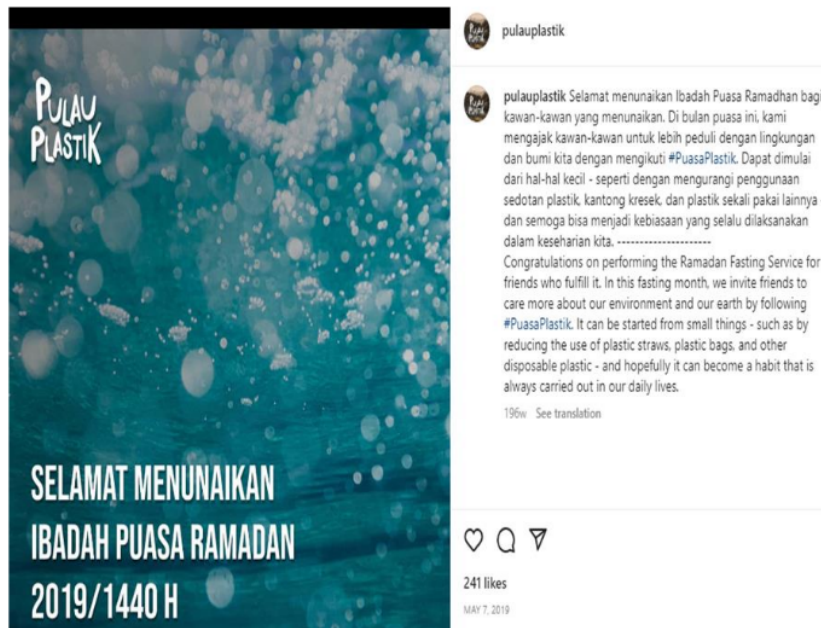
Figure 4. Posts About Ramadan
(Source: instagram .com/@pulauplastik)

In data 4, hasthag *#PuasaPlastik* was found. The hashtag *#PuasaPlastik* highlights the increasing awareness in society of the problem of plastic pollution and its impact on the environment. More and more people are realizing the importance of reducing plastic use as a step to protect our planet. The salience of this hashtag also reflects social and cultural influences in a society that is increasingly adopting environmentally friendly practices. This hashtag reinforces social norms that value reducing plastic use, and encourages more people to follow suit.

The illustration depicting clear sea water with the words "*SELAMAT MENUNAIKAN IBADAH PUASA RAHMADAN 2019/1440 H*" highlights efforts to reduce the use of plastic during the fasting month, which can contribute to the preservation of the sea which is no longer polluted by plastic waste.

Data 5.

Figure 5. Posts About *Nyepi*

(Source: instagram .com/@pulauplastik)

In data 5, the hashtag *#Nyepibebaspastik* highlights the social and cultural influence in Balinese society by eliminating the use of plastic during *Nyepi*. This hashtag reflects the increasing awareness in society of the importance of maintaining beauty and cleanliness during cultural celebrations such as *Nyepi*. In the context of Hinduism, *Nyepi* has deep spiritual meaning, and reducing the use of single-use plastic during this celebration is considered important for maintaining traditional values. The salience of this hashtag reflects the community's active participation in promoting a plastic-free Nyepi celebration. The more people involved in this campaign, the greater public awareness and support for this effort.

The use of the hashtag *#Nyepibebaspastik* as an effort to control plastic waste in this upload is also supported by the use of the hashtags **#Balinotisulaplastic**, **#PulauPlastik**, and **#Tolaksepakai** which highlight the level of severity or relative importance of the issue of plastic pollution, especially on the island of Bali, as well as efforts to reduce the use of plastic single use in a conversation or campaign that uses that hashtag. Through the hashtag #Balinotplasticisland, we highlight the drive to change people's perception of Bali as a tourism destination filled with plastic waste.

Data 6.

Figure 5. Posts About *Galungan and Kuningan Plastic Free*
(Source: instagram .com/@pulauplastik)

The hashtags *#Galunganbebasplastik* and *#Kuninganbebasplastik* highlight the issue of plastic use in the context of local culture and traditions. Galungan and Kuningan are important Hindu celebrations in Bali, therefore this hashtag includes cultural and religious aspects in the environmental conservation narrative. By including this hashtag in their posts, social media users show that environmental conservation is not only a global issue, but is also relevant in the context of everyday life in Bali.

The hashtags *#Galunganbebasplastik* and *#Kuninganbebasplastik* help raise awareness of the impact of plastic use on the environment, especially during Galungan and Kuningan celebrations. By making the issue more prominent and consistent in online conversations, these hashtags influence people's perceptions and actions toward the issue. Thus, the salience of this hashtag helps strengthen the narrative about the importance of reducing plastic use and promoting a more sustainable lifestyle, especially during the Galungan and Kuningan celebrations in Bali.

4. CONCLUSION

Through an ecolinguistic perspective, this research reveals the importance of using hashtags in campaigning for environmental preservation via Instagram social media, especially the @pulsplastic account. Using salience or prominence in hashtags can show how language can play an important role in increasing awareness and participation of social media users on the issue of plastic pollution and environmental conservation.

The results of this research show that effective use of hashtags can increase the salience of environmental conservation issues, attract users' attention, and encourage active participation in conservation efforts. As such, this research provides a valuable contribution to environmental communications strategy, offering practical guidance for activists, policymakers, and communities in designing more effective campaigns in the digital era.

5. LIMITATION

This reserach has limitation, Arran Stibbe's "Stories We Live By" theory not only includes aspects of salience, but also other important elements such as ideology, metaphor, evaluation and appraisal, framing, identity, conviction, and erasure. Salience as the most relevant and significant aspect in the context of hashtags on Instagram. Hashtags, by their concise nature, rely heavily on keyword selection (salience) so that it can create effective communication in disseminating information through hashtags

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