

Abstract

Authenticity and Intimacy in Influencer Discourse: A Linguistic Analysis of Alix Earle's Instagram Persona

In contemporary digital culture, influencers such as Alix Earle employ distinctive linguistic strategies on platforms like Instagram to create and sustain parasocial relationships. This study investigates how spoken language functions as a strategic tool for constructing intimacy and authenticity in influencer to audience interactions.

While parasocial relationships have been extensively studied, little research has focused on the linguistic mechanisms through which influencers shape these bonds, particularly in spoken, video-based communication. Our project addresses this gap by examining how Earle's verbal performance relies on recurring linguistic conventions to evoke closeness and credibility, treating influencer discourse as a structured and potentially conventionalized form of communication rather than an individualized style.

Using qualitative discourse analysis, we analyze the spoken language of 25 selected Instagram videos produced by Alix Earle between September 2023 and December 2025. The dataset encompasses informal "Get Ready With Me (GRWM)" and conversational clips that typify her everyday influencer persona. The analysis focuses on pragmatic and interactional linguistic features such as forms of address, self-disclosure, humor, conversational markers, powerless language and narrative framing. These elements are examined for how they linguistically construct authenticity, emotional proximity, and a shared sense of identity with followers.

Alix Earle was chosen as a case study because her prominence and perceived transparency exemplify the so-called "Earle effect," where linguistic performance creates an illusion of interpersonal connection and trust. Focusing on a single, highly visible influencer enables an in-depth exploration of how language mediates affective bonds within digital beauty culture.

By identifying linguistic patterns that shape perceived intimacy, this research demonstrates how influencers strategically employ everyday language to manage the boundary between authenticity and performance. The findings contribute to understanding how linguistic practices construct credibility, foster engagement, and ultimately sustain influence within online communities.

Sources

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