



LANGUAGE IN THE DIGITAL AGE: GENRE ANALYSIS OF LINKEDIN PROFILE SUMMARY DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify linguistic features in each move and strategy used in LinkedIn profile summaries. The methodology employed is descriptive qualitative research, with data sourced from English-language profile summaries written by Indonesians. The findings reveal a diverse range of linguistic features, all aimed at achieving the communication goals of the profile summary, which include self-promotion, personal branding, and creating a positive image for the reader. These findings are expected to assist LinkedIn users in crafting more attractive and effective profile summaries. The novelty of this research lies in its analysis of contemporary discourse genres that evolve with the times.

Keywords: *genre analysis, move and strategy, linguistic feature*

1. INTRODUCTION

Social networking platforms have recently increased and become very popular. Along with the increasing popularity of social networking platforms comes the trend of more diverse and specialized social networks (Constantinov et al., 2019). LinkedIn is one of the most widely used, specialized social networking platforms for professional purposes. LinkedIn is used by employers, companies, employees, and job seekers to connect together. According to (Andina et al., 2022) LinkedIn is able to capture a wide professional network in the form of business connections. The existence of LinkedIn in Indonesia based on Web Data Indonesia is currently very popular, it can be seen that at the end of 2021 LinkedIn users reached 20.46 million users and in July 2022 it increased to 22.07 million users, so there was an increase in the number of users by 4.75% (Widi, 2022). In addition, active LinkedIn users are a generation that is in the scope of work and job seekers or jobseekers,

namely 63.4% of 25-34 years old, 28.1% of 18-24 years old, and 8.2% of 35-54 years old.

These days, LinkedIn is a tool for more efficient hiring decisions. Traditional resumes and CVs, which take longer to analyze and waste paper when printed, have been successfully supplanted by LinkedIn profiles. As such, it is considered more ethical to begin the initial hiring process with a professionally constructed profile. Because of this, people are starting to make eye-catching LinkedIn accounts in the hopes of receiving suitable job offers from relevant contacts.

A LinkedIn profile consists of several sections and one of the most important is the profile summary. The profile summary function is considered appropriate for presenting oneself in a positive way (Tobback, 2019), as well as providing a brief overview of who the profile owner is, what they do and what they offer (Nadeem, 2023). Reilly (2022) adds that a profile summary can reinforce a user's first impression in a

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way that no other part of the profile can. The position of the profile summary itself is at the top of the profile precisely below the profile photo and is marked with the title 'About'.

A LinkedIn profile is a discourse with a specific goal and structure. Swales (1990) refers to this type of conversation as a discourse genre. A LinkedIn profile and a CV (Curriculum Vitae) are comparable when considering the goals and structure of the discourse (for the sake of simplicity, in this study, CV, curriculum vitae, and resume shall all be referred to as CV). Additionally, a LinkedIn profile is available for download as a resume.

This research focuses on profile summaries as the object of study. Previously, Tobback (2019) also used profile summaries as the object of his study, which discussed the self-praise strategy used in LinkedIn profile summaries. Meanwhile, there have been many studies that discuss the LinkedIn platform (Andina et al., 2022; Constantinov et al., 2019; Marin & Nilă, 2021; Okyiosa & Irwansyah, 2022; van de Ven et al., 2017; Wibowo, 2019). Some of them discuss the construction of LinkedIn user identity (Andina et al., 2022), the use of LinkedIn as personal branding (Okyiosa & Irwansyah, 2022), and communication identity seen from a cultural perspective on the LinkedIn site (Wibowo, 2019). In contrast to previous studies, this research discusses profile summaries with a genre analysis perspective. In this perspective, the data viewed is the discourse structure forming the profile summary.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on the discourse of profile summaries on LinkedIn sites is still quite rare. Recent research conducted by Nursani and Hardjanto (2024) analyzed rhetorical moves in LinkedIn profile summaries. However, her research still leaves a gap that must be resolved. Another research in different topic

in profile summaries on LinkedIn sites was also conducted (Tobback, 2019; Wibowo, 2019). These studies discuss the identity imaged on LinkedIn accounts as personal branding with Indonesian culture (Wibowo, 2019), as well as the form of self-praise found in LinkedIn account profile summaries (Tobback, 2019). No research has been found that discusses profile summary discourse with a genre analysis approach. Meanwhile, the genre that has similarities with LinkedIn profiles, namely CVs, also has limited relevant research, found at least three studies that discuss CVs in the perspective of genre analysis (Basthomi, 2012; Furka, 2008; Wijayanti & Sulistyarningsih, 2019).

In the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language), several research (Basthomi, 2012; Choi & Jeon, 2011; Furka, 2008) address resumes as a genre. These resumes were prepared in English by non-native speakers, such as those who spoke Indonesian and Hungarian (Furka, 2008). (Basthomi, 2012). Different CV structures were discovered in both experiments. Basthomi (2012) identified four steps that he referred to as common aspects on CVs: academic information, work information, personal information connected to family, and personal information related to age and origin of family.

In another study, Choi and Jeon (2011) compared English CVs written by Teak speakers and Korean speakers. From the comparison of the two groups of CVs, nine steps were found, namely, experience, education, interests, skills, referees, personal details, personal profile, position and responsibilities, and achievements.

Furka (2008) identified four components in the CVs she examined: abilities, education and training history, employment history, and personal information. Another study, which did not just seek to identify the structure, concentrated on the 'experience' section of

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the CV in order to identify the grammatical vocabulary and structure (Choi & Jeon, 2011). With the discovery of 15 stages, Wijayanti and Sulistyarningsih (2019) discovered a more intricate and thorough structure for the CV.

Looking at the studies described above, there is a time gap in the research that discusses the genre of CVs and job application letters. This research intends to bring back the discussion on similar genres by following technological developments. The LinkedIn platform is a form of CV digitization. This study continues research on rhetorical structure previously conducted by Nursani and Harjanto (2024). Finding linguistic features in each move is the main goal of this research. Thus, the results of this research can facilitate LinkedIn users in making profile summaries using the linguistic features that have been found.

3. METHODS

This study, which is qualitative in nature, examines how language is used in LinkedIn profile summaries. Since text is the primary data format in this study, the descriptive approach is also employed (Creswell, 2014). The research's data source is summaries of LinkedIn profiles. An essential component that offers a succinct overview of the professional self is the profile summary. A curriculum vitae often contains a profile summary (CV). Typically, the CV's "about me" column contains the profile summary section. Nonetheless, the LinkedIn profile summary was utilized as the data source for this investigation. These days, LinkedIn profiles serve the same purpose as resumes.

The profile summaries selected as data sources are English profile summaries written by Indonesians. To determine whether a user is Indonesian or not, it can be seen from the location displayed on the profile. The data collected was given a name and a sequential number. x100 profile summaries were chosen as this number was

deemed representative enough. Finally, a corpus of 9,407 LinkedIn profile summaries was created. The data collected was given a name and a sequential number. The code given is LPS which stands for 'LinkedIn Profile Summary' then followed by the sequence number afterwards, for example LPS-01 for the first sequence data and so on.

This research uses the rhetorical move framework in the LinkedIn profile summary conducted by Nursani and Hardjanto (2024). From each move and step found by her, this research is elaborated to find out the linguistic features that mark the territory of each move. Here are the moves and strategies in the LinkedIn profile summary.

Table 1. Rhetorical Move in LinkedIn Profile Summary (Nursani & Hardjanto, 2024)

Move and strategy	Code	Description
Move 1	M1	Opening stage
Strategy 1	S1.1	Greeting the readers
Strategy 2	S1.2	Presenting Name
Move 2	M2	Establishing Credentials
Strategy 1	S2.1	Presenting Skills
Strategy 2	S2.2	Presenting Educational Background
Strategy 3	S2.3	Presenting Experience
Strategy 4	S2.4	Presenting current position
Strategy 5	S2.5	Presenting Specialization/interest
Strategy 6	S2.6	Presenting Achievement
Strategy 7	S2.7	Presenting goal
Move 3	M3	Closing Stage
Strategy 1	S3.1	Call to action
Strategy 2	S3.2	Thanking

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As can be seen in Table 1, the LinkedIn profile summary consists of three moves, each of which has its own strategy (Nursani, 2024). Move 1 (M1) is the *opening stage* which consists of *greeting* (S1.1) and

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presenting name (S1.2). Move 2 (M2) is the most important part of the LinkedIn profile summary, which is *establishing credentials*. M2 consists of seven strategies, including *presenting skills* (S2.1), *presenting educational background* (S2.2), *presenting experience* (S2.3), *presenting current position* (S2.4), *presenting specialization* (S2.5), *presenting achievement* (S2.6), and *presenting hopes* (S2.6). The last is move 3 (M3) which is *closing stage*, it only contains two strategies, namely *call to action* (S3.1), and *thanking* (S3.2). Of all the moves and strategies that have been mentioned, each has linguistic features to mark its territory.

Move 1 (M1)

Move 1 is the opening section to start the profile summary. The presence of this move is optional, meaning that the profile summary does not have to start with this move. The presence of M1 in the profile summary can make the profile owner seem more dexterous with the reader. This move has two strategies, namely *greeting the readers* and *presenting the name*.

Greetings (S1.1)

There are two variations of interjections used by LinkedIn users in greeting readers. The interjections are *hi* and *hello*. 'Hi' and 'hello' are two English words used to address interlocutors. According to Merriam Webster's online dictionary (n.d. -a), 'hi' has the definition '-used especially as a greeting; -used as an informal way of saying hello'. While 'hello' has the definition of '-used as a greeting; the act of saying the word hello to someone as a greeting; -used when you are answering the telephone' (Merriam Webster, n.d. -b). From the definition, it can be seen that there are similarities between 'hi' and 'hello' in that both words are used as greetings. The difference lies in the level of formality, 'hi' is more informal than 'hello'.

- (1) **Hi** everyone! Im Ayu Andhini (LPS-33)
- (2) **Hello** my name is Andy Hermawan, I am a data science lecturer at Purwadhika Digital School! (LPS-21)

The examples above show the difference between the use of 'hi' and 'hello' in opening a LinkedIn profile summary. A noticeable difference is seen in the use of the auxiliary verb 'am'. Profile summaries that begin with the word 'hi' tend to shorten the auxiliary verb with the subject 'I' in front of it to I'm. Meanwhile, 'hello' is followed by a sentence that does not shorten the verb. The shortening of the auxiliary verb indicates that the context of the sentence is informal (Harmer, 2007). Thus, it can be concluded that in profile summaries 'hi' is used to create informal situations, while 'hello' is used to create formal situations.

Presenting name (S1.2)

The linguistic feature in S1.2 is of course the name of the profile owner. A proper name refers to a word that identifies a person (Tarawneh & Hajjaj, 2021). In a LinkedIn profile summary, the name included can be either a nickname or a full name.

- (3) Hi, I'm Shinta! (LPS-57)
- (4) Febrina Sugianto is a Medical Doctor (LPS-65)

The presence of S1.1 is mostly followed by S1.2. Of the eleven data that include S1.1, nine are followed by the presence of S1.2, as shown in example (3). The presence of S1.2 that is not preceded by S1.1 indicates that the profile summary uses the third person pronomina 'she' or 'he'. This is shown in example (4).

Move 2 (M2)

One may argue that the M2 is the main one in the LinkedIn profile summary. This move was seen in 100% of the corpus' profile summaries. As such, this action is required and needs to be mentioned in the LinkedIn profile summary. The branding of the user profile is also displayed in this move. Every M2 approach offers details about the profile owner that have the potential to influence the reader.

Presenting Skills (S2.1)

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In identifying the linguistic markers in S2.1, the researcher was faced with two types. These stages are presenting hard skills, and presenting soft skills. There are several linguistic feature that mark this strategy: *adjective + noun/noun phrase(NP) (skill) + professional* (see example 5), *skilled + prepositional phrase(PP)* (see example 6), and *I have/having + noun + PP* (see example 7). Additionally, this technique is written with the 'and' connection at each instance. Henry and Roseberry's (2001) claim that "and" connectors can offer more promotional chances is supported by this phenomenon.

- (5) Strong healthcare services professional (LPS-67)
- (6) Skilled in Time-efficient, Community Management, Communication, Group Work, and Multitasking. (LPS-69)
- (7) I have deep knowledge and experience in client-side servicing in web development (LPS-01)

Presenting Educational Background (S2.2)

In relation to the strategy of presenting educational background, LinkedIn users use several syntactic structures, namely *I graduated (NP) + PP (institution)* (see example 8), and *a bachelor/master/doctor (NP) + PP + focused + (PP)* (see example 9).

- (8) I graduated from the Auckland University of Technology New Zealand (LPS-17)
- (9) a Doctor of Medicine - MD focused in Doctor Professional Education (LPS-67)

Presenting experience (S2.3)

S2.3 is crucial for using while analyzing the promotional genre since experience helps to establish the author's credibility in along with promoting their qualifications (Choi & Jeon, 2011). In this strategy, of course, the most common keyword is 'experience'. Several syntactic structures were found to create this strategy, namely *having experience (verb phrase/VP) + PP* (see example 10), *experienced + PP*

(see example 11), and *experienced + NP + with demonstrated history + PP* (see example 12).

- (10) I have experience in full-stack development, (LPS-58)
- (11) Experienced in the financial industry. (LPS-76)
- (12) Experienced Project management and App Support roles with a demonstrated history of working in the retail industry. (LPS-78)

Presenting current position (S2.4)

LinkedIn user can express their present status in three different ways. These are stating only position, discussing the role, and describing role with the position. A profile summary mentioning S2.4 can help the owner's personal branding. S2.4 can be considered a strength in the personal branding component since it has the potential to offer value for someone. Furthermore, S2.4 is taken into account while integrating building profiles (Marin & Nilă, 2021).

It is found two kinds of linguistics feature to realize this strategy, including the lexeme *currently* and *as*. Lexeme *currently* mostly found in the structure *currently, I work + PP* (see example 13), *currently work + PP* (see example 14). While, the lexeme *as* was found in the syntactical structure *as + NP, I + VP* (see example 15).

- (13) Currently, I work at Gojek as as an Associate Software Engineer. (LPS-09)
- (14) I currently work as a lecture (LPS-25)
- (15) As a lecturer, I teach various subjects (LPS-24)

Presenting specialization/interest (S2.5)

The presence of S2.5 may make the owner's profile more visible since searches can locate a profile more readily if it contains certain keywords related to their area of expertise. There are keywords that mark S2.5, namely *interest* and *specialize*. The lexeme *interest* is found more than the lexeme *specialize*. The syntactic structures found are,

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VP + interest + PP (see example 16), *VP + interested + PP* (see example 17), and *I + specialize + PP* (see example 18).

- (16) I have an interest in digital marketing, learn Digital Branding for Instagram and Facebook optimization for business (LPS-02)
- (17) He is interested in corporate, energy, land acquisition, government contracts, and private law. (LPS-16)
- (18) I specialize in labor migration, forced labor, and human trafficking. (LPS-27)

Presenting achievement (S2.6)

S2.6 is quite substantive, thus it will significantly boost the owner's credibility if this strategy is included in the profile summary. According to Mohamed et al. (2017), discourse that demonstrates the coherence and logical demonstration of concepts regarding experience and skills appears to constitute a greater communicative act than other discourse. S2.6 is characterized by the presence of the lexeme *successfully*. The following are syntactic structures that are often found: *Successfully + VP* (see example 19).

- (19) *successfully* conducted more than 30 internal audits of palm oil sustainability certification (RSPO, ISPO, and ISCC) in 5 regions of KLK subsidiaries. (LPS-49)

Presenting goals (S2.7)

S2.7 is present in only few corpora. It is, nevertheless, a crucial strategy. Readers may infer from its presence that the profile owner has a purpose for his work. According to the concept of personal branding, having goals gives one guidance for where, how, and what to accomplish in order to achieve those goals (Parengkuan & Tumewu, 2014).

The linguistic features found to mark this strategy are very diverse, namely the lexemes *aim*, *believe* and *goal*. The syntactic structure can be: *NP (as subject) + aim + PP* (see example 20), *NP (as subject) + believe*

+ *clause* (see example 21), *My goal + VP* (see example 22).

- (20) I aim to provide valuable insights (LPS-20)
- (21) I believed we can achieve a productive & high quality work. (LPS-07)
- (22) My goal is to create systems that streamline lending operations, reduce risks, and empower organizations to thrive in a competitive market. (LPS-57)

Move 3 (M3)

M3 is the closing move in the LinkedIn profile summary. This step is optional (Nursani & Hardjanto, 2024). Its presence is not necessary in the profile summary. However, including it will also add positive value. In this move, there are two strategies, including call to action and thanking.

Call to action (S3.1)

In the field of digital marketing, the term "call to action" (CTA) is widely used. The next action that marketers want their readers or audience to take is referred to as a call to action (CTA) in marketing (Kenton, 2022). Usually, a button or link that directs readers to a certain page is used to implement a call to action (CTA). Calls to action in a LinkedIn profile summary can take the shape of an invitation to connect, to get in touch via social media or email, or to click on a specific link. Many of the sentences in this strategy are conditional sentences, preceded by the lexeme *if*.

- (23) If you are interested in any of my projects or works, feel free to contact me via LinkedIn direct messages, and lets have a discussion! (LPS-72)
- (24) If you are interested in any of my projects or works, feel free to contact me via LinkedIn direct messages, and lets have a discussion! (LPS-47)

Thanking (S3.2)

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S3.2 is the least strategy found in the corpus. This could be because LinkedIn profiles are not interactional texts that expect replies from readers. It does not matter if LinkedIn users do not include S3.2 in their summaries. Its presence neither adds nor subtracts value.

However, there are still people who list S2.3. This could be due to the inherent Indonesian culture. Saying thank you to close a conversation is part of Indonesian politeness etiquette. The linguistic feature that marks this strategy is obviously the lexeme thank. Here is an example of S3.2 in the profile summary.

- (25) Thank you for visiting my profile, and I look forward to connecting with you! (LPS-57)
- (26) Thank you for considering me, and I'm looking forward to connecting with you soon. (LPS-58)

Every stage in the LinkedIn profile summary includes some linguistic characteristics, according to the results from the samples gathered for the corpus. These traits help the profile owners themselves be promoted, which is the communicative goal of the profile summary genre. There is a tendency for consistency in the usage of linguistic markers. The linguistic markers discovered take the shape of words, phrases, particles, and a collection of recurring language elements. Similar genres gain originality from this search for linguistic signals in the profile summary genre.

5. CONCLUSION

Furthermore, based on the findings from the samples collected in the corpus it is clear that each step in the LinkedIn profile summary has some linguistic characteristics. These characteristics support the communication purpose of the profile summary genre, namely to promote the profile owners themselves. The use of linguistic markers found tends to be consistent. The linguistic markers found are in the form of particles, words, phrases, as well as a set of consistent linguistic features. This search for linguistic markers in the

profile summary genre adds novelty to similar genres. Previously, research on linguistic markers had been conducted on the job application letter genre (Henry & Roseberry, 2001; Patanasorn & Thumnon, 2020), and the CV genre (Choi & Jeon, 2011). This research is a novelty in research on new discourse genres.

The author acknowledges that there are undoubtedly still issues with this research. The quantity of data sources is one of them. If there were additional data sources, generalizations about the structure, language markers, and patterns in profile summaries may be easier to see. These days, profile summaries are a rather convenient way to access data sources. Subsequent investigations may look into LinkedIn profile summaries that compare people in the same business or according to gender.

Lastly, the author hopes that this research does not stop here. It is hoped that this research will be an incentive for linguists to research new genres created as a result of technology. Apart from that, discussion of the profile summary genre can be considered for teaching in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes. Like CVs, resumes and job application letters, LinkedIn profile summaries can also be used as a medium for language learning applications.

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