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SPECIALIZED REGISTER AND INTERTEXTUALITY IN TWITTER'S MOVIE ENTHUSIAST COMMUNITY: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This research explores the intertextuality found in the specialized registers used by movie enthusiast communities on Twitter. With the rapid growth of digital communication and community-based discourse on platforms like Twitter, this study investigates how specific language and references, such as tweets and movie-related terminology are shaped by intertextuality and paratext elements. The research aims to identify types of intertextuality within these registers and analyze how they are formed and function in fostering shared meaning among community members. Using a qualitative exploratory approach, this study employs discourse analysis with intertextuality theory by Julia Kristeva (1980) and paratext theory by Jonathan Gray (2010) as its theoretical foundation. The data consists of 21 tweets and posts collected from the "Movie Twitter" community, which were selected based on their relevance to cinematic discourse and use of English-language specialized registers. The analysis reveals that most registers exhibit conventional and indirect intertextuality, supported by paratext elements such as trailers, reviews, and fan theories that guide or shape audience interpretation. These linguistic practices help reinforce cultural continuity within the community, enabling users to participate in a collective interpretive space. The findings suggest that intertextual registers not only enhance discourse cohesion but also contribute to audience engagement and meaning-making processes. The study recommends further research on intertextuality in other online subcultures and highlights the importance of digital literacy in understanding cultural communication.

Keywords— Intertextuality, Specialized Register, Movie Enthusiast Twitter Community

Introduction

Twitter is one of the social media in which there is the most massive activity compared to other social media (Díaz-Faes et al., 2019). Twitter is one of the SNS (Social Networking Services) that is widely downloaded by internet users, with a total of more than 300 million users who are active users of Twitter social media (Wang et al., 2022). The large number of Twitter users, of course, has an impact on the massive activity that occurs on Twitter. The massive activity on Twitter's social media platform can be based on the many features that Twitter users can use, such as tweets, direct messages, and other features. One of the new features launched by Twitter in 2021 is the community feature.

The community feature is a feature that allows a Twitter user to create a community and other users can join the community. In the community, someone can interact and also discuss something together with other community members (Kim et al., 2022). Generally, communities that exist on Twitter social media are created based on certain goals such as talking about



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hobbies, channelling emotions, to discussing work. One type of community that is widely created on Twitter is a community of movie enthusiast.

In discussions that occur on Twitter, especially in communities, many variations of registers are found (Breeze, 2020; Mekki et al., 2021). Specialized register is a variation of language that is often used by a particular community, and the more frequent communication or interaction within the community, the more diverse the language variations found (Dewi et al., 2021). In the context of movie fan communities on Twitter, this register includes not only specific terms related to the world of movies, but also elements of intertextuality. Intertextuality, or the relationship that one text has with other texts, plays a crucial role in a discussion within a community. In these discussions, users generally relate movie-related references, tweets, and memes to other broader forms of discourse.

What is discussed and also analyzed in this text are the types of intertextuality that appear in the specialized registers used in the movie enthusiast community on Twitter. This research also explores the process of forming intertextuality in the registers that appear in the community of movie enthusiast on Twitter and its role in shaping community discussion. This can be analyzed using several theories. The first theory is a theory that comes from the Discourse Analysis branch of science and is a poststructuralist concept, namely intertextuality from Julia Kristeva (1980). The theory's sound is that every text has a communicative interconnection with other texts. Intertextuality states that a text cannot stand alone as an independent entity (Kristeva, 1980).

As a supporting theory of Julia Kristeva's (1980) intertextuality theory, the second theory that can be used in this research is Jonathan Gray's (2010) paratext theory. This theory explains that paratexts in the form of trailers, advertisements, reviews, memes, and discussions that occur in online media can shape the text that becomes the main media (in this context, movies) can be understood by the audience. the use of these theories analyzes how the main text (movie) is influenced by paratexts such as trailers, memes, and online discussions. In the Twitter movie fan community, paratext elements can shape the audience's understanding of the movie, so analysis related to intertextual and paratext can provide insight into the communication system using registers and meaning in the community.

After the massive use of social media such as Twitter in communicating and transacting, many registers are found to appear in the communication that occurs in online media, especially in the context of hobby discussions and buying and selling (Dewi et al., 2021; Haryani & Putry, 2021; Magsood & Labony, 2023; Nuri, 2023). Meanwhile, research that has been done on intertextuality shows that intertextuality shows that language is used creatively (Gervasio et al., 2021) and the presence of intertextuality in writing can help understand a discourse (Abahussain et al., 2022; Gong et al., 2023; Nguyen, 2021). A person's or a community's understanding can also be shaped through the use of intertextuality in a writing (Amicucci, 2020; Díaz-Faes et al., 2019; Nguyen, 2021). The intertextuality that manifests in registers in social media such as Twitter platforms requires further investigation. One of the functions of specialized registers is to facilitate the communication process that occurs between members in a community. This happens because the register contains a deep meaning related to a concept which this meaning can be understood together by all members of the community (Breeze, 2020). Research on intertextuality in this context aims to determine the role of intertextuality in the formation of meaning and also shared understanding in the movie enthusiast community (Gervasio et al., 2021). Another aim of this research is to study this phenomenon further, especially on the Twitter. The focus of this research is the use of specific terms in the movie enthusiast community on Twitter. It investigates how members of a community communicate using terms they understand in the same context by combining language analysis and social media phenomena. Additionally, this research investigates how language helps strengthen relationships among movie enthusiast on Twitter (Amicucci, 2020).

The gap of this study is that Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality, which is commonly used to analyze discourse or texts in print media, is now being used to analyze discourse or texts originating from online media. The online media in question is a Twitter community of film enthusiasts called "Movie Twitter.". This study also combines Jonathan

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Gray's (2010) paratext theory with Julia Kristeva's (1980) intertextuality theory to answer the research questions in this study, which makes it unique.

This research was conducted based on the assumption that the registers that appear in the movie enthusiast community on Twitter cannot be separated from other texts. This assumption is in line with Kristeva's statement regarding the definition of intertextuality (Kristeva, 1980). An additional assumption underlying this research is that intertextuality in register can come from various sources, such as dialogue in the film itself (Gray, 2010). The next assumption is that the intertextuality in the register that appears in the movie lover community on Twitter helps a community form their understanding as movie enthusiast (Amicucci, 2020).

The purpose of this research is to find out what types generally appear in discussions that occur in the movie enthusiast community on Twitter. This research is also conducted to find out how the intertextuality process of specialized register is formed in conversations or discussions in a community of movie enthusiast. With these objectives, the research is expected to provide insight into how specialized language is used in online community interactions, as well as how pop culture and movie references become part of the communication between members of the movie enthusiast community on Twitter.

The background above has encouraged researcher to conduct further research, so the researcher asked the following research questions: (a) What are the types of intertextuality of the specialized register that occur in the conversation of the movie enthusiast communities on Twitter? (b) How is the process of intertextuality of specialized register formed in the conversation of the movie enthusiast communities on Twitter?

Literature Review

This research is in the field of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis studies how language can be used to meet real communication needs, such as social, cognitive, or emotional. In this research, discourse analysis functions to analyze how the process of one text refers to other texts through Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality. Discourse analysis provides a methodology for how relationships between texts can be realized from a linguistic and social perspective, while intertextuality provides a theoretical framework for understanding relationships between texts in a digital discourse that exists in the Twitter community of movie enthusiast (Aronoff et al., 2017).

Intertextuality refers to the interconnectedness of texts, where no text exists in isolation but is always linked to other texts. Julia Kristeva (1980), who introduced the concept, argues that every text is a mosaic of quotations, absorbing and transforming previous texts. A text is shaped through two fundamental relational axes: the horizontal axis and the vertical axis. The horizontal axis refers to the interaction between the author and the reader, or in the context of social media, among users who engage in real-time conversations. The vertical axis involves the relationship between the current text being discussed and its original source texts, such as films, trailers, actor interviews, or broader cultural references.

The supporting theory in this research is the paratext theory by Jonathan Gray (2010). Paratext is the elements around the main text. Examples of paratext include a movie trailer, poster, or it can be a review which can influence the way the audience understands and interacts with the text. Paratext has an important role in bridging the relationship between text, audience, and the media industry.

The data in this study is specialized register. A specialized register is a variation of language that has a particular situation of use (including a particular communicative purpose). Specialized register refers to patterns in a language, such as grammar, discourse, or vocabulary that are identical or characteristic of a special field. An example of this specialized register is Medical English and Engineering English. With the existence of language variations or specialized registers in a scientific discipline, the learning targets of linguistics students must be adjusted to meet the specific needs of each field (Basturkmen, 2025).

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Research Method

This research employed employ an exploratory qualitative approach, as described by Paltridge and Phakiti (2015). Exploratory qualitative research was used to investigate phenomena in-depth, particularly when there was limited existing knowledge on the topic. This method was suitable for understanding how individuals or groups constructed meaning in a particular social context, emphasizing the complexity and subjectivity of linguistic phenomena.

The data used in this research were in the form of a specialized register, specifically in word or phrase form. The text included tweets that contained specialized registers about movies and were used by community members of the "Movie Twitter" movie enthusiast community. The researcher captured the data upon finding them in the "Movie Twitter" movie enthusiast community on Twitter. The data source in this research was the discussion that took place in a community of movie enthusiasts on Twitter, referred to specifically as "Movie Twitter." This community had approximately 201,000 members and used English in its daily discussions and activities. Within the community, members discussed films in terms of story, visualization, and cinematographic execution.

In the data collection process, the researcher conducted a brief observation on the Twitter platform, which led to the discovery of a community of film enthusiasts called "Movie Twitter." The researcher then sorted through the tweets of community members that focused on discussions of films and cinematography. After finding tweets that discussed films or cinematography, the researcher checked whether the tweets contained specialized register in the form of phrases or words that corresponded to the theory mentioned by Biber and Conrad (2019). The data collected consisted of tweets containing specialized registers related to films and posted between 2021 and 2025.

In this research, data analysis was conducted through several systematic stages to address both research questions. The first stage involves identifying and categorizing the collected data based on Kristeva's (1980) intertextuality theory through Shaw and Pecorari's (2013) framework to searching for types of intertextuality. Shaw and Pecorari's (2013) intertextuality classification were applied to determine the specific nature of intertextual borrowing, categorizing instances as indirect intertextuality, conventional intertextuality, unconventional intertextuality, or deceptive intertextuality.

After identifying the types of intertextuality, the second stage of this study is to analyze how the process of intertextuality emerges in the discourse of the Movie Twitter community. This process is explored through Julia Kristeva's (1980) axis of intertextuality theory, which divides the intertextual process into two dimensions. The two dimensions are the horizontal axis, which refers to interactions among community members (such as dialogue, comments, or responses), and the vertical axis, which refers to the relationship between current utterances or texts and pre-existing source texts (such as films, characters, or popular culture). Additionally, the analysis of the process also employs Jonathan Gray's (2010) paratext theory, which has two categories: entryway paratext and in medias res paratext. Entryway paratext refers to supporting elements such as trailers, posters, or casting announcements that appear before audiences access the main text (film), and serve to shape expectations or initial perspectives toward a text. Meanwhile, in medias res paratext is paratext that appears after the main text is released, such as reviews, discussions, or online comments that extend the life of the text in public discourse. Following this, the analysis results are reviewed until a conclusion is drawn regarding how the intertextuality process shapes specialized registers and meaning construction within the movie enthusiast community on Twitter.

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Results and Discussion

The number of data points collected and eligible for analysis was 21 that is summarized in table 1.

Table 1 Intertextuality Types and Processes in the Specialized Register

No	Data	Types of Intertextuality				Process of Intertextuality			
						Fundamental		Paratext	
		Indi- rect	Conven- tional	Uncon- ventional	Decep- tive	Horizon- tal	Vertical	Entryway paratext	In media res paratext
1.	Plot hole	√					V		√
2.	Cult classic		V				V		V
3.	Cinematic Universe		V				V	V	
4.	Spoiler alert						V	$\sqrt{}$	
5.	Blockbusters		√				V		V
6.	Overrated	V							$\sqrt{}$
7.	Directors cut		\checkmark				V		$\sqrt{}$
8.	Flop		$\sqrt{}$						$\sqrt{}$
9.	Character arc	V					V		$\sqrt{}$
10.	Oscar snub								$\sqrt{}$
11.	Sequel		$\sqrt{}$					$\sqrt{}$	
12.	Prequel		$\sqrt{}$					$\sqrt{}$	
13.	Easter egg		$\sqrt{}$						$\sqrt{}$
14.	Montage		$\sqrt{}$						$\sqrt{}$
15.	Cinephile					\checkmark			$\sqrt{}$
16.	Cliffhanger		$\sqrt{}$					$\sqrt{}$	
17.	Cameo								$\sqrt{}$
18.	Foreshadow- ing		V				V	V	
19.	Biopic		√				V	√	
20.	Overacting	V				$\sqrt{}$			$\sqrt{}$
21.	Marvel bomb	V					V		$\sqrt{}$

A. The Types of Intertextuality of the Specialized Register

Based on table 1, there are only two types of intertextuality that are often found in specialized registers that appear in the communication that occurs in the community of movie enthusiast on Twitter, namely conventional intertextuality and indirect intertextuality. Conventional intertextuality is an intertextuality that includes openly recognized references and intentional allusions, which are adjusted and modified according to the norms of the community of practice where the expression is produced (Shaw & Pecorari, 2013).

The second type of intertextuality in specialized register that often appears in the communication that occurs in the Twitter movie enthusiast community is indirect intertextuality. Indirect intertextuality refers to the use of expressions or language elements that come from many previous texts without referring to one specific source, and are often used in general without any awareness of their exact origin (Shaw & Pecorari, 2013). The reason why these specialized registers are included in the category of indirect intertextuality is because these specialized registers do not refer to a specific text, but are one of the common discourses in popular culture. The meanings of these registers are formed from collective experiences and are also widely used in online discussions without reference to a specific source, but rather a response to recurring patterns or issues in the media.

Based on the table, there are two types of intertextuality that do not appear at all in the data, namely unconventional intertextuality and deceptive intertextuality. There are several

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reasons why they do not appear at all in the data found. First, unconventional intertextuality does not appear because this type of intertextuality refers to language from other sources without formal recognition, but it does not coincide with the intention to deceive. In the context of the movie enthusiast community on Twitter, it is rare to find anything like this because most tweets are more concise, informal and do not contain long quotes. Communication within a community more often takes the form of opinions or reflections rather than copying academic or journalistic texts (Zappavigna & Dreyfus, 2022). In addition, it can also be concluded that the character of a platform as well as the purpose of communication can determine why certain types of intertextuality do not appear in the specialized register found in the communication in the community of movie enthusiast on Twitter (Jebaselvi et al., 2023).

Other types of classification used to categorize intertextuality in specialized registers in movie enthusiast community on Twitter are vertical intertextuality and horizontal intertextuality. The reason vertical intertextuality appears more often than horizontal intertextuality is because discussions that occur in the movie enthusiast' community are more likely to occur based on intertextual relationships that come from the same narrative system. The examples of specialized registers that include vertical intertextuality are "sequel", "prequel", "cinematic universe" to "director's cut". The specialized registers mentioned are examples of clear references to previous films or texts within the same narrative corpus. This result aligns with the study by Karmeni & Tafreshi (2023), who emphasized the significance of vertical dimensions in meaning-making processes on Twitter, particularly in communities shaped by fandom and cultural industries.

B. The Process of Intertextuality of Specialized Register

The process of intertextuality in the specialized register of movie enthusiast does not happen instantly, but is formed through social interactions, online discussions, and ongoing collective participation in the community. The specialized registers used in this community are the result of viewing experiences combined with pre-existing popular culture references, as well as discursive practices that continue to evolve over time (Völcker, 2020).

The process of intertextuality formation in the conversation of movie enthusiast communities on Twitter is shaped through two main theoretical frameworks: Kristeva's intertextual axis and Jonathan Gray's paratext theory. According to Kristeva (1980), intertextual meaning is constructed along the vertical axis, which links current discourse with pre-existing texts (such as films, trailers, characters, or cultural references), and the horizontal axis, which captures the interaction among users exchanging opinions, interpretations, and responses in real time.

The vertical axis dominates much of the observed formation process, as many specialized registers such as plot hole, director's cut, sequel, biopic, montage, and Oscar snub are directly anchored in previously released films, genres, or media discourses. These registers rely on shared cultural knowledge and assume that users are already familiar with the referenced texts. For example, when users refer to a film as a cult classic or discuss a character's arc (see datum 9), they engage in reinterpretation based on prior narrative experiences and communal memory of the text. This reflects how specialized register draws its meaning from the relationship between current utterances and the larger media ecosystem (Gray, 2010).

Gray's (2010) paratextual categories further explain how intertextuality is triggered and extended. Entryway paratexts such as promotional tweets, trailers, and casting announcements shape audience expectations and frame how users anticipate a text. Registers like cinematic universe, prequel, and foreshadowing often appear before a film is viewed, helping to establish a speculative interpretive context. Conversely, in medias res paratexts appear after a film has been released and are crucial in fostering extended discussion and interpretation. Registers like flop, cameo, cliffhanger, and spoiler alert emerge in response to the text's reception and are circulated through user reactions, reviews, or memes. These paratexts allow the discourse to continue long after the primary text has been consumed, deepening intertextual engagement.

Taking into account the findings and analysis discussed, it can be concluded that the use of a specialized register in the movie enthusiast community on Twitter is not only part of the



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communication strategy, but also shows how language and meaning develop through social and dynamic intertextual processes. Both the forms and processes of intertextuality that emerge-both conventional and indirect represent the way the community forms a shared narrative and builds a collective understanding of the movie text. In this context, Twitter is not only a medium for sharing opinions, but also a space for meaning production that allows for rich and complex discursive practices. This shows that intertextuality is not only present in formal intertextual relationships, but is also reflected in everyday language practices that develop through online communities (Luzón, 2023).

The findings of this study align with Nguyen's (2021) study, which shows that intertextuality in digital communities is formed through the use of references to historical events to build collective identity and meaning. In the Asian-American activist community studied by Nguyen, the process of meaning-making is carried out through social dialogue that connects contemporary discourse with historical experiences. This is consistent with how the Movie Twitter community uses terms like Oscar snub or cult classic as a form of reinterpretation of viewing experiences, which are formed through interaction and shared knowledge. In other words, whether in political or popular cultural contexts, the process of intertextuality is triggered by collective memory and shaped through horizontal meaning exchange within communities. The study by Abahussain et al. (2022) also reinforces this finding, showing that intertextuality is a process involving critical thinking and recognition of the relationships between texts.

This research certainly has limitations. One of the weaknesses of this study is that it does not attempt to explore intertextuality in specialized registers found in other communities or platforms. The focus is limited to a single community, namely the Twitter movie enthusiast' community, also known as "Movie Twitter," and therefore may not fully represent the broader landscape of intertextuality in specialized registers across other platforms. In addition, the researcher did not directly ask the original tweet authors about the intended meaning behind their posts, so the interpretation of the data is entirely the result of the researcher's own analysis. This study also does not attempt to compare the applied theoretical framework with other intertextuality theories, such as those proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin.

Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the form and also the process of creating intertextuality in specialized registers found in the movie enthusiast community on Twitter. Based on the analysis, it is found that the types of intertextuality that mostly appear are conventional intertextuality and indirect intertextuality. It was also found that vertical intertextuality is more dominant than horizontal intertextuality. This shows that the community of movie enthusiast on Twitter tends to form meaning through reference to other works or using the same narrative system.

Intertextuality not only appears in the form of formal references to popular cultural texts (vertical), but also through everyday conversations among users (horizontal) that collectively shape meaning. Entryways and in medias res paratexts strengthen this engagement by framing expectations and extending discussions after the text has been consumed. Through this discursive practice, Twitter becomes a space for the production of meaning that reflects how language and shared understanding develop within online communities.

Future researchers are encouraged to focus on exploring the remaining two types of intertextuality, namely unconventional and deceptive intertextuality. The practical implication of this study is to encourage general Twitter users to better understand the various intertextual contexts that emerge within the movie enthusiast community on the platform. The second suggestion is a suggestion aimed at users of the Twitter platform. With this research, it is expected that Twitter users, both members of the film loving community or Twitter users in general, are expected to use specialized registers more often in communication carried out on Twitter. This aims to make specialized registers on the Twitter platform more developed.

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