THE PHENOMENON OF AMELIORATION USAGE AS FOOD BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

Human life's needs and patterns evolve over time. The culinary field is one of the primary needs that have emerged due to the "trend." Companies can use trends to develop marketing strategies. According to data from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (2021), culinary is the most significant contributor to GDP from the creative economy, accounting for approximately 43 percent of total creative economy GDP on an annual basis. The Covid-19 pandemic, on the other hand, which has been ravaging Indonesia since March 2020, has significantly reduced the income of food industry players. It requires a strategy for promoting the products they have, one of which is viral marketing. This study aims to project the phenomenon of amelioration that triggers virality in the community, identify the impact of viral marketing on the development of the food business, and describe the splendor of the viral word usage that undergoes amelioration so that it can be used as a marketing strategy. This study uses descriptive qualitative methods with data collection techniques through literature reviews, observation instruments, and interviews with related parties. It is hoped that this research will serve as a resource for food industry professionals in developing product marketing strategies.

Key words: amelioration, word, phrase, food business, strategy

INTRODUCTION

The pattern of human life is constantly changing with time. One of them is the primary requirements in the culinary industry. Food and beverages are necessities that continue to evolve and adapt to changing trends. Trends have become an unwritten rule for entrepreneurs to encourage the success of their business ventures. Companies must also develop marketing strategies to keep their businesses growing in the light of massive business competition.

One kind of industry that has been influenced by technological advancements is the culinary industry. Ordering food online has become popular especially among the youngsters because it allows people to get the food they want even more efficiently. As a result, the food industry is said to be a promising subject. According to the Minister of Finance, Sri Mulyani, in her Instagram account (@smindawari), culinary is the most significant contributor to GDP from the creative economy sector. It is based on the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economics data, accounting for approximately 43 percent of total creative economy GDP annually. However, the Covid-19 pandemic, which has been ravaging Indonesia since March 2020, has successfully reduced the food industry's turnover and profits. Hence, food entrepreneurs must go above and beyond to promote their products, one of which is using a viral marketing strategy.

For example, Mang Oleh's odading business went viral on social media after someone uploaded an amateur video promoting it. The phrase "anjing banget" is in the spotlight in the video. It is because the phrase used can be classified as coarse language, but it can represent

the savory flavor of odading. Mang Oleh, the owner of odading, stated that his company's revenue had quadrupled after the video went viral. According to Kompas.com (17/09/2020), the profit margin per day was IDR 700,000 before it went viral. It rose to around Rp. 2.8 million afterward.

On the other hand, the word "anjay," an alteration of "anjing," was in the spotlight. The viral term is adopted by entrepreneurs to enhance the profits of their food businesses, such as Rizky Billar's "Bonjay" chili product. Furthermore, the use of words in product marketing strategies frequently employs a shift in meaning or amelioration. For instance, social media influencers' reviews and endorsements of food products use the phrase "enaknya mau menenggoy" and the phrase "rasanya gak ngotak". The phenomenon of using amelioration has become a sector for business actors to develop their businesses in.

Di sisi lain, kata "anjay" yang merupakan pergeseran dari kata "anjing" sempat menjadi sorotan. Viralnya kata tersebut dimanfaatkan para pebisnis untuk meningkatkan keuntungan bisnis makanan mereka, salah satunya Rizky Billar dengan bisnis sambal "Bonjay". Selain itu, penggunaan kata dalam strategi pemasaran produk makanan seringkali mengandung pergeseran makna atau ameliorasi, seperti praktik *review* dan *endorse* produk makanan oleh para *influencer* di media sosial yang menggunakan frasa "enaknya mau menenggoy" dan lainnya.

Based on the explanation provided above, this research was carried out by the authors to project the phenomenon of a shift in meaning or improvement that causes virality in the community. Besides, it also aims to identify the impact of viral marketing on the development of the food industry and describe the splendor of viral word usage that undergoes amelioration so that it can be used as a marketing strategy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Amelioration

Shifts, developments, and deviations from the initial meaning are examples of meaning changes in Indonesian. According to Chaer (1990), transitions, shifts, and the development of meaning are caused by various factors, including the advancement of science and technology, socio-cultural differences, distinction in the use of associations, sensory exchange, and differences in responses. Improving is one example of a changing meaning in Indonesian. Amelioration is the process of changing meaning so that the new definition is more valuable than the previous one (Keraf, 1984).

Amelioration is derived from the Latin *melior*, which means to improve, raise, or make more graceful (Tarigan, 1986). Amelioration occurs when a word's meaning enhances in value and connotation over its previous meaning. Nakip (2017) conducted a research on amelioration entitled "Ameliorasi dan Peyorasi dalam Bahasa Madura di Kabupaten Kubu Raya". According to the study, amelioration and pejoration in Madurese take two forms: a total change and a change caused by the context of the conversation.

2. Labeling

The process of symbolizing a concept in order to refer to a referent outside the language is known as labeling (Vinantya, 2015). Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia

(KBBI) defines labeling as a process, method, or act of giving a name. According to Kridalaksana (1993), labeling is the process of looking for language symbols to describe objects, concepts, processes, etc., by utilizing existing treasury, such as changes in meaning or word creation. Chaer (1990) categorizes naming into three groups: (1) imitation of sound, (2) inventor and maker, and (3) place of origin.

3. Food Business

Food is a basic human need that must be fulfilled. The food industry is one of the most popular sectors in the business world. Aside from meeting basic needs, the food sector has the potential to generate high income and proliferate even during times of crisis. Businesspeople frequently experience competition in this area. According to Puspasari (2019), business actors must be able to survive in market competition and devise strategies to keep their businesses running.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted online and offline at the Balai Bahasa Provinsi Jawa Timur from June to August 2021, following strict health protocols. Besides, this study employs a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. It includes a literature review, observation, and interviews with related parties, such as linguists at the Balai Bahasa Provinsi Jawa Timur, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Education and Culture's Language Establishment and Development Agency. Observations were made to the community using observation instruments, as well as to related business actors, due to the researchers' inability to obtain primary data through interviews.

The five amelioration words or phrases obtained are:

- a. the word “anjing” becomes “anjay”
- b. the word “meninggal” becomes “meninggoy”
- c. the word “edan” becomes “edun”
- d. the word “tampar” becomes “tempong”
- e. the phrase “tidak ada otak” becomes “gak ngotak”.

The independent variable and the dependent variable are the two variables in this study. The independent variable is a variable that influences or causes the dependent variable to adjust or emerge. Meanwhile, the dependent variable is a variable controlled by or results from an independent variable. In this paper, the use of the amelioration of words and phrases acts as the independent variable. In contrast, the impact of using the amelioration on the food business development serves as the dependent variable.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

1. Amelioration From the Linguist's Point of View

Five words or phrases that have experienced improvement have been identified as a result of observations and data research. It is essential to provide information from the perspective of linguists about the data that has been discovered. Hence, observations and interviews were carried out with linguists at the East Java Language Center. The results are presented as follows:

- a. The KBBI defines amelioration as a change in the value of meaning from the original word, which is coarse, to a better one. According to this understanding,

amelioration goes through word refinement as known as a euphemism. Linguists believe that by creating new words or phrases, the pronunciation of words with a rough meaning will become smoother and less burdensome when the speaker pronounces them.

- b. From time to time, the development of amelioration has altered. During the New Order era, the use of amelioration was more manipulative, to the point where it seemed to be a lie. Furthermore, amelioration could be used to create new words in the past. Whereas nowadays, amelioration is adopted to improve the sound using euphonic. During the New Order era, for instance, the government applied the word “dirumahkan” for employees who were laid off when the correct term was “dipecat”. Meanwhile, currently, the word “anjing” sounds more coarse as a curse to others, so it is twisted or altered to become 'anjay' and 'anjir.'
- c. The phenomenon of a word or phrase in the marketing field will continuously pursue something creative and novel. These days, many young people are involved in the sector of marketing, where they use creativity to promote their products. These viral qualities of words or phrases are usually temporary in existence and do not last long in use.
- d. Linguists believe that the psychology of young people is constantly evolving in order to foster new creativity. One of them is the current trend of using amelioration as a food business development strategy.

2. Amelioration of words or phrases as Viral Marketing

Turban (2004: 193) defines Viral Marketing as "word-of-mouth marketing" in which customers promote a product or service by telling others about it. Viral Marketing is commonly used as a strategy in the marketing of a product. One aspect that is frequently applied in Viral Marketing strategies is phrases or words describing the product. It is based on phrases or words that are frequently chosen to promote a variety of items. Phrases like "anjay, meninggoy, edun, tempong, gak ngotak" are currently trending on social media and society. These expressions can be categorized as amelioration, which are words or phrases that have undergone a meaning shift.

Euphonic, the adjustment of sounds that appeal to the public's ears, is one of the causes of a phrase's virality. By changing 'ing' to 'ay,' 'anjing' becomes 'Anjay.' This change endears to the community, which is also resulting in virality. Easier to be pronounced and more expressive is also apparently admitted to being a factor in a word or phrase's virality. Nevertheless, according to the findings of interviews with linguists at the Balai Bahasa Jawa Timur, viral phrases are "prokem" or temporary. Because slang evolves over time, the duration of the viral course is known to be limited.

In this case, the application of the amelioration of words or phrases as viral marketing can be used as an option in promoting a product, particularly food, while considering the duration and consistency of the promotion.

3. The effect of amelioration on the food business

a. Sambal Bonjay

Sambal Bonjay is a chili product that is sold online with "Pedasnya Anjayy" as its tagline. The word “bonjay” used is the result of amelioration of the word

"anjay", which is also the result of amelioration of the word "anjing". This chili product which was created by Rizky Billar (26) has two types of spiciness levels, precisely the Pedas Santuy level (regular spicy) and the Pedas Anjay level (Extra Spicy). The platforms utilized by Sambal Bonjay as a sales and marketing medium are Instagram (@bonjay.id) with ± 53.2 thousand followers, Shopee (Bonjay.id), and Tokopedia (Bonjay.ID). The Shopee Bonjay.id account has ± 2.3 thousand followers and has sold more than 2400 products, with a customer satisfaction rating of 4.8/5 from ± 1.1 thousand reviews. Besides, the Tokopedia Bonjay.ID account has 11 followers and has sold 53 products, with a customer satisfaction rating of 4.9/5 from 26 reviews.

b. Sambal and Nasi Tempong

Sambal and Nasi Tempong is a typical food of Banyuwangi, East Java. Nevertheless, food stalls selling sambal and tempong rice are scattered in the eastern regions of the East Java province and Bali island. As a logical consequence, it is possible to conclude that the distribution of enthusiasts (consumers) of this product is quite broad, and it has the potential for further development in various locations.

c. Kerupuk Edun

This cracker is one of West Java's culinary specialties. "Edun" is an improved version of the word "edan," which means crazy in Javanese and Indonesian. Kerupuk Edun can be interpreted as "kerupuk yang pedasnya edan" (very spicy). According to M. Cucu (70), the owner, said in a video interview on the Ayo Channel Indonesia YouTube account in 2018, the monthly revenue from the sale of these edun crackers can attain 400 million rupiahs.

4. Penggunaan Ameliorasi dalam Pengembangan Bisnis Makanan Menurut Masyarakat Surabaya, Sidoarjo, Gresik, dan Mojokerto.

One of the terms that has recently emerged as a method of promoting food products is "amelioration." Based on information obtained from the audience regarding amelioration as a food business strategy, the following conclusions can be drawn:

a. Amelioration stimulates virality

The data obtained regarding the opinions of the people of Surabaya, Sidoarjo, Gresik, and Mojokerto demonstrates that amelioration can end up causing viral spread because its pronunciation accurately represents the speaker's expression. The familiar sounds and readily accepted words or phrases of amelioration entice listeners. Because of the uniqueness and ease of application of the amelioration, its use has the potential to go viral among the general population.

b. The application of amelioration as a business marketing strategy

Based on the findings of the observation instruments, it is concluded that using the phrase amelioration as a marketing strategy for the food industry is feasible and has potential prospects. It is based on the Indonesian people's desire for something unique and viral. Something which goes viral, on the other hand,

usually only lasts a short time. As a result, using amelioration as a marketing strategy for the food market may result in the same outcome.

c. The impact of amelioration on consumer preference in food product selection

The use of amelioration in the promotion of corporate entities aims to pique the interest of consumers. According to the findings of this study, the combination of a brand and a food tagline has the potential to entice consumers to purchase the item itself. However, respondents also stated that the consumer's decision to buy a food product is also affected by other factors such as taste, visual appeal, and price. It is strongly recommended that the seller take action to elevate the other factors mentioned in order to keep customers coming back.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results above, it can be seen that amelioration is used while still paying attention to other things such as taste, packaging, presentation, the atmosphere in the dining area, and product price. The use of amelioration of words or phrases is considered necessary, especially in getting the initial attention of the general public. So, it can be analogous that consumers come or buy for the first time because of their curiosity. That's when first impressions about all aspects of a product determine whether the buyer will come back in the future or repurchase the goods.

In addition, as already mentioned, the trend of using amelioration and other viral phenomena is only temporary. It is necessary to have innovation in creating new marketing strategies. Our society, in general, prefers something unique, fresh, and controversial. Reading creativity in the linguistic practice of community is needed in determining the developing trends. Thus, marketing activities using linguistic phenomena can continue to be carried out.

On the other hand, the meaning of linguistic creativity from the results of this community linguistic practice needs to be understood by all parties, especially those working in the non-linguistic field. As was the case last year, the National Commission for Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia had asked for support from the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR) to make regulations that could criminalize speakers of the word "anjay" (cnnindonesia.com, 2020). However, the use of the word "anjay", which has the potential to be criminal, is the use of words intended to insult or demean someone. We can't measure someone's intentions and can wrongly justify someone in the first place. For this reason, understanding linguistic practices and open-mindedness is important to be understood by all levels of society. Thus, the use of language can have a more positive impact, especially when observed from a positive side as well.

CONCLUSION

Amelioration is the process of shifting meaning so that the new word has a better meaning than the old one. Amelioration can be used as a business strategy in the food industry to help it expand. It is believed that amelioration as a marketing strategy for the food industry is a manifestation of the younger generation's creativity, which is constantly evolving with the times. The amelioration of words or phrases can induce virality due to euphonic, which are easily accepted by Indonesians and also can represent the emotional

expressions of the speaker. As a result, people are encouraged to take and use it. Several food businesses that use the amelioration phrase, such as Sambal Bonjay, Kerupuk Edun, Sambal and Nasi Tempong, find positive results in the form of an exciting response from the community as well as an increase in the number of consumers.

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