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ЛІНГВОПРАГМАТИЧНИЙ АНАЛІЗ ВІДПОВІДЕЙ БРЕНДУ НА КУПІВЕЛЬНИЙ НАМІР В АНГЛОМОВНОМУ РИТЕЙЛОВОМУ ДИСКУРСІ FACEBOOK

У статті представлено лінгвопрагматичний аналіз відповідей бренду на купівельні наміри клієнтів у коментарях користувачів на офіційній сторінці Macy's, однієї з найбільших американських мереж універмагів, що пропонує одяг, взуття, косметику та товари для дому. Дослідження зосереджене на специфіці англомовного цифрового ритейлового дискурсу, де перетинаються транзакційна та реляційна функції комунікації. Виокремлено одинадцять типів відповідей бренду, кожен із яких визначається ключовими прагматичними функціями і характерними вербальними та невербальними засобами (персоналізація, оцінна лексика, модальні конструкції, експресивна пунктуація, емодзі). Отримані результати демонструють, що відповіді бренду виконують не лише стимулюючу, а й інтегративну функцію, що сприяє встановленню емоційного зв'язку, розвитку довіри та підвищенню лояльності клієнтів. Дослідження окреслює перспективи порівняльних і мультимодальних досліджень на різних платформах соціальних мереж та в різних культурних контекстах.

Ключові слова: лінгвопрагматичний аналіз, відповіді бренду, купівельний намір, англомовний цифровий ритейловий дискурс, соціальні мережі, Facebook, комунікація, прагматична функція, вербальні та невербальні засоби.

LINGUOPRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF BRAND REPLIES TO PURCHASE INTENT IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE FACEBOOK RETAIL DISCOURSE

The article presents a linguopragmatic analysis of brand replies to customers' purchase intent within comment threads on the official Facebook page of Macy's, one of the largest American department store chains offering clothing, footwear, cosmetics, and home goods. The study focuses on the specificity of English-language digital retail discourse, where transactional and relational functions of communication intersect. Eleven types of brand replies are identified, each defined by core pragmatic functions and distinctive verbal and nonverbal means (personalization, evaluative lexis, modal constructions, expressive punctuation, emojis). The findings demonstrate that brand replies serve not only a stimulating function but also an integrative one, fostering emotional connection, building trust, and reinforcing customer loyalty. The study outlines prospects for comparative and multimodal research across various social media platforms and cultural contexts.

Keywords: linguopragmatic analysis, brand replies, purchase intent, English-language digital retail discourse, social media, Facebook, communication, pragmatic function, verbal and nonverbal means.

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Problem Statement and Its Relevance. In the digital era, retail communication has moved beyond traditional advertising and service channels into interactive online platforms where customers and brands engage in real-time dialogue (Parveen et al., 2024; Pauwels & Fagbola 2025; Roy et al., 2023). These environments allow consumers to publicly express needs, desires, and intentions, creating new discursive practices that directly influence purchasing behavior (Antczak 2024; Jia et al., 2024; Nasti et al., 2024). Among such practices, purchase-intent expressions (Morwitz 2014) hold particular significance, as they signal readiness for a transaction while simultaneously constructing affective alignment with the brand.

Despite extensive research on consumer complaints, service recovery strategies, and politeness in online service interactions (Creelman 2022; Downing 1996; Gannon et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2021), far less attention has been given to how brands respond to expressions of purchase intent through their language and interactional choices. This presents a research gap, as the mechanisms through which corporate replies acknowledge consumer intent, reinforce loyalty, and strategically guide interaction toward a purchase remain insufficiently explored.

The relevance of this problem is twofold. Theoretically, it advances pragmatics and discourse analysis by situating purchase intent within the broader system of speech acts in digital retail interactions. Practically, it provides insights into communication strategies that can enhance customer experience, foster brand engagement, and contribute to effective marketing practices in competitive online marketplaces.

Critical Review of Previous Research. Research on digital retail communication increasingly highlights the critical significance of language in shaping consumer–brand interactions. Drawing on speech act theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1969), scholars have shown that linguistic features perform both transactional and social functions in e-commerce. For example, studies of JD WeChat reveal that micro-level features (self-referencing, contextual embedding, detailing, flattering), macro-level features (argument structuring), and meta-level features (linguistic style and content matching) significantly influence consumer responsiveness and purchase likelihood (Wang et al., 2023).

Evidence from livestreaming commerce and influencer marketing further illustrates the centrality of speech acts in digital retail interactions. Commissive acts, such as promises and guarantees, positively affect purchase behavior, whereas overly descriptive or affective statements may reduce effectiveness (Ma et al., 2024). Directive, assertive, and declarative acts enhance consumer interest, word-of-mouth, and purchase intent, with engagement and desire mediating these effects (Chen et al., 2023). Moreover, the influence of speech acts depends on influencer type, as authenticity and credibility moderate audience engagement (Fang et al., 2025). These findings underscore the need to tailor linguistic strategies to both context and audience.

Beyond speech acts, platform-specific content is instrumental in fostering consumer engagement. Online brand communities and digital content marketing initiatives indicate that self-brand connections drive cognitive, affective, behavioral, and social participation, although platform affordances shape how engagement unfolds (Bowden & Mirzaei 2020). Conceptual models emphasize functional, hedonic, and

authenticity-driven motives as crucial for cultivating trust, brand equity, and sustained engagement (Hollebeek & Macky 2019). Empirical research confirms that digital marketing stimuli can increase product sales, but their effectiveness is moderated by consumer attention and firm-level characteristics (Ma & Chen 2025).

Recent work has also explored novel formats and ethical considerations in digital retail communication. Virtual influencers' perceived authenticity and transparency influence consumer trust and engagement, while cultural and regulatory factors shape audience responses (Khalfallah & Keller 2025). Branded podcasts show that social presence, media richness, and personalization enhance engagement and purchase behavior (Tsai et al., 2025). Together, these studies demonstrate how discourse strategies adapt to evolving digital media, integrating language, content, and multi-modal experiences to engage consumers effectively.

Overall, the literature suggests that language in digital retail functions as an active, performative tool, shaping consumer behavior, engagement, and transactional outcomes. While prior research addresses consumer strategies, influencer speech acts, and content marketing effectiveness, corporate responses to public purchase-intent expressions remain underexplored. Investigating these responses can reveal how brands acknowledge intent, reinforce rapport, and guide interactions toward purchase, bridging the gap between consumer expression and transactional outcomes in online retail environments.

Purpose and Objectives. The purpose of this research is to conduct a linguopragmatic analysis of how Macy's official Facebook account responds to customer expressions of purchase intent. The study aims to identify and classify brand reply approaches and examine their role in fostering engagement, strengthening rapport, and guiding interactions toward potential purchase outcomes within English-language retail discourse.

To achieve this purpose, the study sets the following objectives:

- To detect and extract instances of purchase intent in customer comments on Macy's Facebook posts, along with the corresponding brand replies.
- To categorize the brand's replies according to their primary pragmatic function.
- To identify the linguistic and interactional features that realize each reply type.
- To interpret the communicative and persuasive potential of these replies within the framework of digital service discourse.

Object, Subject, and Empirical Material of the Study. The object of the study is customer-brand interaction in the public comment threads of Macy's Facebook posts. Macy's is one of the largest American department store chains offering clothing, footwear, cosmetics, and home goods (Macy's, n.d.). The subject of the study is the set of pragmatic functions performed by brand replies to customer purchase intent, as well as the verbal and nonverbal means through which these functions are realized in English-language Facebook retail discourse.

The empirical base consists of naturally occurring interactions collected from the verified Macy's Facebook page between January 2022 and September 2025. The dataset includes only customer comments that express purchase intent, either explicitly

or implicitly, and received a direct reply from the brand account. Comments unrelated to purchase or not addressed by the brand were excluded.

Methods of Analysis. The study employed a qualitative pragmatic-functional analysis within the frameworks of speech act theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1969) and computer-mediated discourse analysis (Herring 2004). The analysis was conducted in three steps:

1. Identification and coding of purchase-intent expressions in customer comments and the corresponding brand replies. This step ensured that both explicit and implicit indicators of purchase intent were captured for subsequent analysis.

2. Classification of brand replies into functional categories based on their primary communicative purpose, including confirmation and gratitude, encouragement to purchase, provision of information, rapport building, and redirection to private channels. This categorization allowed for systematic comparison of the brand's interactional strategies.

3. Analysis of affective verbal and nonverbal markers, alongside lexical choice, syntactic patterns, and politeness strategies, within each category of brand replies. Examples of affective markers include emojis, exclamation marks, and other multimodal cues, highlighting how emotional and relational content is conveyed in the online retail discourse.

Scientific Novelty, Theoretical and Practical Significance. This study is the first to provide a targeted, pragmatic-functional analysis of brand replies to customer purchase intent in English-language Facebook retail discourse. No systematic classification of brand reply strategies specifically addressing purchase intent has been proposed to date. The research introduces a typology of reply functions, based on naturally occurring interactions in a prominent retailer's social media environment, which includes confirmation and gratitude, encouragement to purchase, information provision, rapport building, and redirection to private channels. Grounded in speech act theory and computer-mediated discourse analysis, this typology offers a replicable framework for future studies.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings contribute to the fields of digital pragmatics, discourse analysis, and service communication by addressing an underexplored but commercially significant communicative moment: the brand's response to expressed customer purchase intent. The study demonstrates how brand replies in public digital spaces simultaneously fulfill transactional, relational, and image-management functions, highlighting the hybrid nature of Facebook retail discourse, where marketing, customer service, and interpersonal interaction intersect. These insights expand understanding of how pragmatic and interactional mechanisms operate in digital service environments.

From a practical perspective, the research provides valuable guidance for retail brands and social media managers seeking to enhance customer engagement and conversion rates. By identifying effective linguistic approaches for responding to purchase intent, the study offers a reference for designing brand communication guidelines and training materials, emphasizing affective alignment, personalized address, and strategic information delivery. Beyond retail, these insights may be

adapted for other sectors where social media serves as a key point of customer interaction, such as hospitality, travel, and e-commerce.

Presentation and Justification of Research Findings. Analysis of Macy's Facebook interactions reveals that brand replies to customer expressions of purchase intent perform a range of pragmatic functions and employ diverse verbal and nonverbal means of realization. These replies simultaneously balance transactional guidance with relational engagement. The study identifies recurrent patterns of response that reflect both the illocutionary force of speech acts and the conventions of computer-mediated discourse. To illustrate these patterns, the following categories summarize the main types of brand replies, including their pragmatic functions, modes of expression, and representative examples.

1. Affirming Purchase Intent

This category comprises brand responses that acknowledge customer purchase intent while offering support, reassurance, and empathy.

Pragmatic function: Acknowledge and validate customers' needs or desires, strengthen the relationship, and signal that their purchase is likely to be satisfying.

Verbal and nonverbal means: Colloquial affirmatives such as *We've got you!* or *We've got you covered*, often personalized with the customer's name, demonstrate attentiveness and empathy. Positive emojis (e.g., ❤️, 🌟, ✨) and expressive punctuation (e.g., exclamation marks) reinforce alignment with the customer's emotions. Outcome assurance is conveyed through future-tense constructions with affective verbs (e.g., *love*, *like*, *enjoy*) or positive evaluative adjectives (e.g., *awesome*, *chic*, *stylish*) with intensifiers (e.g., *most*, *absolutely*, *super*), highlighting product appeal and suggesting a favorable outcome. These brief, friendly expressions create a sense of personal engagement, reinforce reassurance, and signal positive expectations.

Examples:

Customer (Chris): *We need some summer fragrance picks.* 😊😊

Macy's: *We've got you covered, Chris!* 🌟🌟 - Jojo at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, June 18);

Customer (Jolyn): *I need some smell goods for my husband!* 😊

Macy's: *We've got you! He'll love these!* - Jordan at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, June 9);

Customer (Alejandra): *Loving this!* 🌟🌟 *Can't wait to see the Christian Siriano collection!* 🌟🌟

Macy's: *Christian's got you covered with the most chic and boldest fits, Alejandra!* - Rey at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, September 8).

2. Clarifying Customer Preferences

This category includes brand responses that actively invite the customer to provide additional information, enabling the brand to offer tailored guidance and support potential purchase decisions.

Pragmatic function: Obtain details about the customer's needs and preferences, encourage interactive engagement, and maintain a friendly, personalized exchange.

Verbal and nonverbal means: Open-ended questions and conversational phrasing encourage dialogue. Personalization using the customer's name strengthens relational closeness, while positive emojis (e.g., ❤️, 🌟, 😊) soften inquiries and maintain a warm, approachable tone. Polite acknowledgments, such as *You're welcome*, respond to

customer gratitude, reinforce relational warmth, and act as a softening preface to subsequent questions, making the brand's inquiry feel attentive and non-intrusive. Together, these elements signal attentiveness, support engagement, and position the brand as responsive and helpful.

Examples:

Customer (Antoinette): *I'm shopping for myself*

Macy's: *What's at the top of your list?* ❤️ - Dakota at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, June 9);

Customer (Lori): *I really need one of those Dutch oven pots! Macy's really knows how to keep a girl shopping* 😊

Macy's: *Anything catch your eye, Lori?* 🥰 - Luke at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, July 31);

Customer (Teodoro): *Time to upgrade! Love the Breville and Le Creuset deals! Perfect excuse to get some new kitchen essentials. Thanks for the heads up, shopping before August 13th*

Macy's: *You're welcome, Teodoro! What are you most excited to upgrade in the kitchen?* 😊 - Rey at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, July 31).

3. Aligning with Customer Choice

This category includes brand responses that validate with the customer's opinion or purchase intent, signaling alignment, approval, and shared enthusiasm.

Pragmatic function: Reinforce the customer's intention or choice, strengthen relational rapport, and foster positive engagement.

Verbal and nonverbal means: Affirmation is realized through two main strategies. First, direct agreement employs colloquial affirmatives and alignment markers, such as *Exactly!*, *Ditto!*, *Agreed*, or *We couldn't agree more*, explicitly acknowledging the customer's statement or decision. Second, emotionally resonant alignment mirrors or amplifies the customer's excitement, using expressions like *We love that pick too!*, *We're just as excited!*, or *That's what we like to hear!*, conveying shared enthusiasm and relational closeness. Responses are personalized through direct customer address. In addition, exclamatory punctuation, emphatic intensifiers (e.g., *completely*, *totally*, *so*), inclusive first-person pronouns (e.g., *we*, *us*), and positive emojis further amplify warmth, engagement, and alignment. These verbal and nonverbal cues establish a friendly, affirming tone that shows the brand shares the customer's enthusiasm, strengthens their connection, and encourages ongoing interaction and potential purchase.

Examples:

Customer (Chelsea): *I need all of them*

Macy's: *Ditto!* - Rey at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, June 17);

Customer (Wendy): *It's definitely time for a trip to Macy's* ❤️

Macy's: *We couldn't agree more, Wendy—Back-to-school shopping just got a lot more fun!* ❤️ - Carlos at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, July 16);

Customer (Hicran): *I'm obsessed with these Father's Day gift ideas!* ❤️

Macy's: *We're in love with these too!* ❤️ - Jordan at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, June 9).

4. *Sharing Purchase Anticipation*

This category includes brand responses that mirror and amplify the customer's expressed excitement or intent to shop, creating a sense of shared enthusiasm and positioning the purchase as a mutual, forward-looking event.

Pragmatic function: Reinforce the customer's excitement and foster relational closeness by transforming individual purchase intent into a shared, forward-looking experience.

Verbal and nonverbal means: Brand replies echo customer excitement or impatience through dynamic expressions with anticipatory verbs (e.g., *can't wait, looking forward*). Temporal markers such as *it's almost here, it's time for..., see you soon, and ready for shopping* signal immediacy and readiness for the upcoming purchase. Inclusive first-person plural pronouns (e.g., *we*) and prepositional phrases (e.g., *with you*) emphasize partnership and joint engagement. Personalization through the customer's name maintains direct engagement, while expressive punctuation (e.g., exclamation marks) and positive emojis (e.g., 😊, 🙌, ❤️) amplify enthusiasm. Collectively, these features transform individual purchase intent into a shared, engaging experience, gently prompting the customer to act while maintaining a friendly and warm tone.

Examples:

Customer (Gia): *Can't wait to shop Macy's for my room must-haves* 🙌❤️

Macy's: Can't wait to shop with you, Gia! 🙌❤️ - Carlos at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, August 12);

Customer (Rose): *I'm beyond excited for this sale, can't wait to score some amazing deals on Saturday morning!*

Macy's: We're looking forward, Rose! We hope you have a great Saturday! 😊 - Drew at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, July 24);

Customer (Melinda): *Let's go shopping*

Macy's: We're ready for you, Melinda! 🙌🙌 - Rey at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, September 2).

5. *Complimenting Customer Choice*

This category includes brand responses that praise the customer's selection, style, or expressed preference, signaling that their choice is appreciated and aligned with the brand's aesthetic.

Pragmatic function: Validate the customer's judgment, strengthen relational closeness, and subtly encourage purchase by affirming that their choice is desirable and stylish.

Verbal and nonverbal means: Positive evaluative adjectives (e.g., *great, incredible, fantastic, perfect*) express approval of the customer's preference. Nouns highlighting discernment (e.g., *taste, pick, style, choice*) affirm their judgment. Direct address using the customer's name personalizes the interaction, while exclamatory punctuation expresses enthusiasm and aligns with the customer's affective stance. Emphatic intensifiers (e.g., *so, absolutely*) combined with positive emojis (e.g., ❤️, 😊) enhance the emotional impact and relational warmth of the reply. Predicative and attributive phrases (e.g., *in fashion, on point*) link praise to specific product features.

Taken together, these expressive cues create a friendly, affirming tone that celebrates the customer, highlights their taste, and fosters personalized engagement.

Examples:

Customer (Ariel): *I'd buy one*

Macy's: *You have great taste, Ariel!* - Jordan at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, May 28);

Customer (Jasmin): *Rave about the full fashion looks particularly the bag and denim jacket, I'm obsessed with the oversized denim and cozy corduroy combo, perfect for fall!*

Macy's: *You have incredible taste in fashion, Jasmin!* ❤️👉 - Nick at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, September 7);

Customer (Shannon): *I want the bed!* ❤️

Macy's: *Fantastic pick, Shannon!* - Carlos at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, June 27).

6. Positioning Purchase Intent as Destiny

This category includes brand responses that acknowledge the customer's interest while framing the interaction as playful and fated, presenting the item as uniquely suited to the customer.

Pragmatic function: Position the customer's interest as a sign or destiny, encouraging purchase through playful, fate-oriented framing and personalized engagement.

Verbal and nonverbal means: Idiomatic expressions such as *This is your sign*, *It's a sign*, *It is calling your name*, and *It's waiting for you* frame the purchase as aligned with the customer's preferences and convey a playful inevitability. Product personification imparts a sense of agency, while positive adjectives (e.g., exciting, new, useful) enhance product appeal. Direct address of the customer strengthens personalization. Nonverbal cues, including positive emojis (e.g., ❤️, 🥳) and exclamation marks signal enthusiasm and reinforce a friendly, playful tone. In combination, these elements encourage engagement and frame the purchase as appealing, relevant, and seemingly "meant to be" for the customer.

Examples:

Customer (Nastasha): *May pick up the YSL cologne for my other half*

Macy's: *This is your sign!* - Rey at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, June 9);

Customer (Cheanie): *I want it!* ❤️

Macy's: *It's waiting for you, Cheanie!* ❤️ - Jordan at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, June 27);

Customer (AnnMarie): *Excited! Haven't purchased in a long time brand changed!!*

Macy's: *These exciting and new designer looks are calling your name!* 🥳 - Rey at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, September 8).

10. Encouraging Purchase Action

This category comprises brand responses that motivate customers to act on expressed interest, desire, or purchase intent.

Pragmatic function: Encourage customers to act by highlighting product appeal and offering friendly, personalized guidance to support purchase decisions.

Verbal and nonverbal means: Encouragement is realized through direct customer address using the customer's name, signaling attentiveness and personal engagement. Action-oriented modals (e.g., *should*, *must*, *can't*) in phrases such as *We think you*

should!, *You can't go wrong with any of them*, and *This is a must-have* guide customers toward action. Positive evaluations through adjectives (e.g., *great*, *perfect*, *must-have*), nouns (e.g., *gem*, *favorite*, *bestseller*), and verbs of suitability (e.g., *love*, *enjoy*, *spoil yourself*) reinforce desirability. Excited tone is achieved with exclamation marks, intensifiers (e.g., *absolutely*, *really*), and emojis (e.g., ❤️, 😊), while inclusive pronouns (e.g., *we*, *our*) create shared experience and position the brand as a supportive guide. As a whole, these strategies motivate customers to act while maintaining an engaging, relationally warm tone.

Examples:

Customer (Mary): *I'm thinking about getting one for my dad!!*

Macy's: *We think you should! Loving these great finds for dad!* - Melissa at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, June 11);

Customer (Shelia): *So pretty, I need to get a pair!* ❤️

Macy's: *You can't go wrong with any of them, Shelia!* 😊 - Drew at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, June 30);

Customer (Shelly): *I have heard good things about that perfume. Would love to try it.*

Macy's: *This is a must-have fragrance, Shelly!* - Charlie at Macy's (Macy's, 2022, January 23).

11. Showing Customer Appreciation

This category comprises brand responses that explicitly express gratitude in reaction to customers' purchase intentions, engagement, or positive sentiment, aiming to strengthen relational bonds and reinforce brand loyalty.

Pragmatic function: Validate customers' expressed interest, strengthen emotional connection, and encourage continued engagement or future purchases.

Verbal and nonverbal means: Brand responses use direct expressions of appreciation, such as *We appreciate you*, *Thank you for your interest*, *Thanks for sharing the love*, or *We're happy to be your favorite*, to convey gratitude and relational alignment. Exclamatory punctuation and positive emojis (e.g., ❤️, 😊) enhance warmth and enthusiasm. Personalization through direct customer address ensures recognition of the individual, while inclusive pronouns (e.g., *we*, *us*) reinforce relational closeness. Hedges or softeners (e.g., *we're thrilled to hear...*, *so happy you love...*) contribute to a friendly, responsive tone. Altogether, these features acknowledge purchase intent, foster emotional connection, and encourage ongoing interaction.

Examples:

Customer (Janice): *No. I CAN'T. MISS. MY. MACY'S. SALE. I. SHOP. For. MACY'S. Yeárs. An. Year. Family. For. Me* ❤️. *Love. I. Like*

Macy's: *We appreciate you, Janice!* ❤️ - Nick at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, July 24);

Customer (Mitzi): *Macy's summer* 😊 *fashion is ready to go and I've been waiting for this moment all year, can't wait to see what amazing pieces you have in store for us!*

Macy's: *Thanks for sharing the love, Mitzi!* ❤️😊 - Luke at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, June 18);

Customer (Shrimpy): 😊❤️❤️❤️💙💚💛 *love my Macys...love those awesome sun glasses!!!! Adorable--thanks Macys for being my go to store*

Macy's: *We're happy to be your favorite! Thank you for the love!* ❤️ - Dakota at Macy's (Macy's, 2025, June 18).

Conclusions and prospects for further research. This study provides a framework for understanding how brands manage English-language online customer interactions, offering both theoretical insights and practical guidance for enhancing digital engagement. The analysis of Macy's Facebook interactions shows that brand replies to customer expressions of purchase intent are carefully crafted to balance transactional guidance with relational engagement. The brand employs a range of approaches – from affirming and aligning with customer preferences to prompting action and framing purchases as desirable or rewarding. These replies use personalization, evaluative language, emojis, and discourse markers to foster emotional connection, reinforce brand loyalty, and stimulate purchase behavior in public digital spaces.

For further research, comparative studies could examine brand replies across different social media platforms, industries, or cultural contexts to explore variations in communication strategies. Longitudinal analyses could investigate how these interaction patterns influence actual purchase behavior and customer retention over time. Additionally, research could expand to include multimodal elements such as images, GIFs, and videos, assessing their joint effect with textual replies on consumer engagement and decision-making.

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LINGUOPRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF BRAND REPLIES TO PURCHASE INTENT IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE FACEBOOK RETAIL DISCOURSE

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Abstract:

Background: Social media platforms have transformed brand–customer interactions, creating public digital spaces where communication serves both relational and transactional purposes. In retail discourse, brand replies to expressions of purchase intent play a key role in guiding interactions toward potential purchases. Analyzing the modes of interaction and the verbal and nonverbal means that brands use to achieve their goals provides insights into effective digital communication and customer relationship management.

Purpose: This study offers a linguopragmatic analysis of brand replies to purchase intent on Macy’s Facebook page, identifying recurrent reply types, their pragmatic functions, and typical verbal and nonverbal means of realization. The research aims to elucidate how the brand manages online interactions to foster engagement, strengthen rapport, and stimulate purchase behavior in English-language digital retail discourse.

Results: Using qualitative pragmatic-functional methods grounded in speech act theory and computer-mediated discourse analysis, brand replies were categorized by primary pragmatic function and analyzed for their verbal and nonverbal features. Eleven types of replies were identified: affirming purchase intent, clarifying customer preferences, aligning with customer choice, sharing purchase anticipation, complimenting customer choice, positioning purchase intent as destiny, framing purchases as rewards, providing product guidance, driving purchases through promotions, encouraging purchase action, and showing customer appreciation. Replies employ personalization, evaluative language, modals, emojis, exclamatory punctuation, and discourse markers to combine relational engagement with transactional guidance. The brand effectively integrates mirroring customer sentiment, reinforcing choice, and prompting action, demonstrating how pragmatic functions are realized through verbal and nonverbal means in English-language digital retail discourse.

Discussion: The study demonstrates that Macy’s replies are both linguistically nuanced and pragmatically deliberate, carefully balancing transactional guidance with relational engagement to create compelling online experiences that influence consumer behavior. Future research may include comparative analyses across social media platforms, industries, and cultural contexts; longitudinal studies linking interaction patterns with purchase behavior and loyalty; and examination of multimodal elements (images, GIFs, videos) alongside textual replies to assess their joint effect on engagement.

Keywords: linguopragmatic analysis, brand replies, purchase intent, English-language digital retail discourse, social media, Facebook, communication, pragmatic function, verbal and nonverbal means.

Vitae

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