

Smooth as butter: A discourse analysis of Adam Ragusea's seamless sponsorship segues as an art of marketing scriptwriting

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ABSTRACT

With the surge in social media creators and influencers, brands and companies have increasingly collaborated with them to extend their reach to mass audiences on social media platforms through sponsored segments. Transitioning from the main video content to the sponsorship showcases the language's role in retaining the audience's attention and interest. Examining Adam Ragusea's sponsorship segues, this article aims to dissect the idea flows and transition tools to seamlessly integrate sponsorship in content videos. This study conducted Fraser's Taxonomy-based discourse analysis of the sponsorship segment in 45 recipes and food science videos, selected using purposive sampling. The research found 10 types of idea flows that served as the segues into and out of the sponsorship segment, namely storytelling, cause-effect, comparison, problem-solution, repetition, need-solution, dissociation, analogy, contrast, and metaphor. It also found six transition tools unique to the specific idea flows, namely contrastive, elaborative, and inferential discourse markers, along with filler words, comparison, and visual-based transitions. Strategically utilizing different idea flows in the sponsorship segues can serve various creative narratives to maintain engagement, enhancing the effectiveness of the social media marketing for brands and content creators in terms of message relevance and reach.

Keywords: idea flow, social media marketing, sponsorship segues, transitional tools, video content

INTRODUCTION

"*Apapun makanannya, minumannya Teh Botol Sosro.*" This legendary tagline might be one of the most memorable examples of a smooth advertising segue in Indonesia. In commercials, the storytelling captures viewers' attention, and this tagline, "*whatever you eat, your drink got to be Teh Botol Sosro*", seamlessly shifts that attention to the promoted product. Effective advertisements integrate creative storytelling with seamless transitions to spark audience engagement and guide them toward the product while maintaining their retention as a form of marketing (Baker, 2021). Instead of simply listing a product's features in the ads, marketers must first capture attention and build up viewers' retention before introducing the product. Excellent scriptwriting for the ads encapsulates the storytelling and transitions into a comprehensive flow (Ailio, 2015), making it interesting and reaching a wide target audience. Aside from creating interesting ads and broadcasting them on their own platforms, brands these days can reach a broader target audience by collaborating with influencers or content creators through sponsorship.



In the era of content creation and influencers, sponsorship for influencer content has become a commonly used marketing strategy. Collaborating with influencers or content creators is perceived to enhance engagement, expand audience reach, and generate positive word of mouth for promoted products (Baker, 2021; Bakker, 2018; Boerman et al., 2017; Nurniati et al., 2023). Indeed, social media platforms are rich with product reviews, whether brand-sponsored or not, which can significantly boost product popularity and awareness as a word-of-mouth strategy (Akdim, 2021; Indrawati et al., 2023). Sun et al. (2023) share that advertisers or brands intentionally partner with content creators for sponsored content for product promotion. However, this marketing strategy brings forth mixed responses from the audience. As the audience of the creators/influencers and not necessarily the brands, they might perceive the ads as disrupting the viewing experience, causing negative perception and avoidance (Müller & Christandl, 2019; Sun et al., 2023), especially when creators do not disclose that their content is being sponsored. Sponsorship disclosure, the act of explicitly announcing sponsored content, is not only required by social media platforms but can also raise the creators' credibility (Giuffredi-Kähr et al., 2022; Jia et al., 2024), which fosters better ad acceptance. Therefore, it is up to creators' creativity to overcome this predicament by seamlessly disclosing sponsorship while still ensuring enjoyable content delivery for their viewers. To achieve this, creatively formulating seamless segue scriptwriting to smoothly introduce the sponsor is a plus point for creators to have.

Social media marketing

In today's digital age, social media feeds are filled with entertaining content that sometimes goes unnoticed as an ad until halfway through. In the era of social media platforms, sponsored content is a popular marketing strategy that brands use to promote products through influencers or content creators (Beckert et al., 2019; Mathur et al., 2018; Singh, 2021). As creators' popularity grows, the audience who enjoys their content and personas grows. This mass audience provides an opportunity for brands to increase their products' awareness. When creators do sponsored content, companies will have leverage on their visibility, reach, and engagement with a wider audience (Anjani & Irwansyah, 2020). It might seem similar to celebrity endorsement in traditional media, but in sponsored ads, creators can interact through their content (Masuda et al., 2022). This kind of marketing provides a reciprocal relationship between brands and creators, where creators include promotion in their content, whether implicitly or explicitly, in exchange for getting paid (Sun et al., 2023). This leads to creators playing a big role in modern marketing through their content and massive audience.

By collaborating with relatable and relevant influencers/creators, brands create a collegial relationship with content creators and practice online marketing and spread the word about their products or services. Word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing is an influential strategy as it can affect purchase decisions (Pfeuffer & Huh, 2020; Savitri et al., 2022) because consumers trust reviews of other customers' experiences with the product (Erkan & Evans, 2016). In their content, creators can share information about the product along with their reviews, making influencer marketing to be considered as a form of WOM marketing (Bakker, 2018). As the content is created in a digital platform, WOM marketing shifted into electronic WOM (e-WOM) (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Akdim, 2021; Indrawati et al., 2023). Brands collaborate with creators because, in addition to already having huge followers, they hold the power of trust and relevance, since their viewers, as prospective customers, tend to believe in the reviews and recommendations from the people they follow (Nurniati et al., 2023; Handono et al., 2024). The e-WOM strategy via influencer collaborations is perceived to be effective (Jia et al., 2024; Savitri et al., 2022), though some studies also underscore its weak correlation with purchasing decisions (Nurniati et al., 2023). The weak impact on purchase decisions can be caused by negative perceptions of the sponsored content.

Sponsored content can be an effective e-WOM strategy, but previous literature revealed that disclosing sponsorship can create a sense of mistrust and negative perceptions toward creators, eventually decreasing the strategy's effectiveness (Boerman et al., 2017; Lee & Kim, 2020; Müller & Christandl, 2019; Pfeuffer & Huh, 2020; Sun et al., 2023). However, undisclosed ads can confuse viewers, which may reduce the creators' credibility (Hwang & Jeong, 2016). Through clear and justified sponsorship, creators constitute a strong bond based on trust with their followers, ultimately improving their careers (Jia et al., 2024). This brings forward the issue of sponsorship disclosure that influencers must handle. One way to disclose sponsorship while still keeping the content entertaining is by using smooth transitions, like segues.

Language role in marketing strategies

When discussing several topics, a segue is needed to move from one topic to the next. In content writing or even a script for video content, segues help link regular content to ads naturally and creatively. The term segue is not widely used in writing but rather in the musical field. It refers to smooth transitions that guide the audience from one point to another (Longo, 2023; <https://theeditingco.com>, accessed in January 2025). This applies to creators who want to introduce sponsorships in their content. When they move from the main topic of their video, they use segues to make the transition seamless, rather than just blatantly showing and talking about the sponsored products. A simple format of sponsorship disclosure can elicit negative perceptions from viewers, as it disrupts their viewing experience (Hwang & Jeong, 2016; Stubb et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2023). Therefore, creators need to strategically formulate the script when introducing the sponsor to ameliorate the user experience. Scriptwriting involves creativity that turns simple facts about the product into an engaging story (Dayo et al., 2023). In the storytelling phases of the product, the segue acts as the initial impetus (Baker, 2021) that hooks the viewer to the sponsorship segment. To create such a segue, creators need to organize ideas and use transitional devices.

Planning the flow of ideas and utilizing transitional words are requisite for a flawless transition. Especially in video format, creators can display lots of information in a brief moment (Baker, 2021), thus requiring them to be tactful with their idea arrangement and delivery. For example, the creator can pose a problem by introducing the product as the answer using a cause-effect pattern (Aini et al., 2022), or they can share their interests and include the product as an essential part of their interests in their storytelling (Kim & Kim, 2020). However, when they start their segue, they need to have a logical flow to guide viewers toward the product, as logical flow corroborates coherent idea progression and transition (Barroga & Matanguihan, 2021).

To ensure a coherent and cohesive logical flow of ideas, the creators can use discourse markers such as transitional words. The discourse markers could be utterances such as *well*, *anyways*, or *by the way*, or transition words such as *so*, *and*, or *because* (Choemue & Bram, 2021; Fraser, 1999). There are various transition words available to convey different ideas. Creators can emphasize, compare, conclude, or share results, among other things, using transition words for their script. Despite that, the use of transitions in writing is sometimes still a challenge (Choemue & Bram, 2021). Both logical flow and transitional devices work in tandem to ensure smooth message delivery. Without the use of transitions and poor logical flow, the script will be disjointed, hindering the audience from getting the main message (Barroga & Matanguihan, 2021). Hence, this research aims to look into how these tools work in sponsored content scriptwriting.

Most of the recent literature delved into influencer marketing, especially since the rise of social media, but the transition to the sponsorship segment has not been thoroughly explored. Sun et al. (2023) studied the impact of sponsorship disclosure on the Bilibili platform. They found that sponsored content had negative effects on the audience. However, they also found that well-crafted and seamless ads could keep their retention and even provoke emotions.

Nurniati et al. (2023) and Handono et al. (2024) share the use of influencer marketing as an effective advertisement that significantly influences purchasing decisions. Jia et al. (2024) in their study reveal how disclosing sponsored content raises trust and credibility of the creators. That finding is also supported by Liu et al. (2024), that disclosing the sponsorship increases sponsorship literacy and a positive attitude toward the brand and creators. Stubb et al. (2019), along with Hwang and Jeong (2016), share that more detailed and justifiable ads had a better reception by the viewers. To achieve that, Baker (2021) tries to bridge the linguistic aspect with marketing through storytelling, which can be used to divert viewers' attention from the main content topic to the advertisement while ensuring retention and an enjoyable viewing experience. Nevertheless, existing studies have yet to explore the practical use of that storytelling technique in the segue to introduce sponsors in video content. Therefore, this study intends to fill the gap by examining the segues in sponsored videos, specifically focusing on the use of idea flow and transitions.

Despite its importance, the use of segues in sponsored content, especially on YouTube, is still underexplored. To address this gap, this research aims to examine the transition script to the sponsorship segment in Adam Ragusea's YouTube videos, providing insights into effective scriptwriting techniques and underscoring the indispensable impact of seamless transitions in enhancing audience retention and brand perception. Adam Ragusea is a YouTube content creator whose first video went viral with his New York-Style Pizza video in 2018. After that, he regularly posts food-related videos about recipes and food science, and sometimes talks about bodybuilding and aquaponics. His content is often sponsored, and he often gets comments on how smooth his ad transitions are, as in Figure 1.

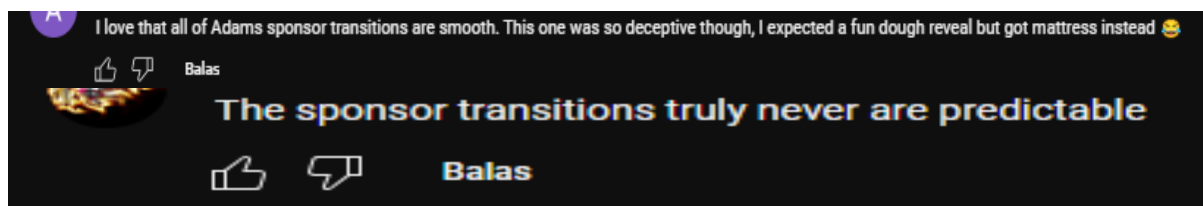


Figure 1. Subscribers' comments on Adam Ragusea's seamless transition to sponsorship

This study then addresses these questions: "How is the idea flow organized in sponsorship segues to ensure smooth transitions between content and advertisements?" and "What transitional signals are employed to signal transitions between content and sponsorship?" The implications of this study are to elucidate influencers/marketers to evaluate and refine their content scriptwriting and offer language learners real-life examples of logical idea ordering and transitional markers.

METHOD

To understand how sponsorship transitions are seamlessly integrated into influencer content, this study employed qualitative research to examine the structure and flow of segues. Qualitative research enables in-depth exploration of language use (Creswell, 2012). This study used a discourse analysis design that allowed the researcher to discover the use of language in the context (Gee, 2014), especially for the idea transition into sponsorship. By focusing on scriptwriting in segues, this study delved into how influencers introduce sponsored content while maintaining engagement with their audience.

The data were taken from Adam Ragusea's YouTube videos as the objects of this research. This research used 45 sponsored recipes and food science videos published in 2024 that were specifically not podcasts or infomercial videos reviewing the brands. They were coded into V1-V45. The videos were purposively sampled using predetermined criteria (Creswell, 2012), namely publication years and the video types. The researcher gathered the

data by focusing on the sponsorship disclosure part of the videos and then analyzing them using discourse analysis. The researcher first compiled the videos based on the predetermined criteria. Then, the researcher watched the videos, skipped to the section near the sponsorship disclosure, transitioned into the sponsorship section, and transcribed the script. The transcriptions were the data for the analysis.

To analyze the data, discourse analysis (Gee, 2014) was used to examine the logical flow of ideas within the sponsorship segue and to identify how different parts of the video are connected using transitional markers, by considering convergence, agreement, coverage, and linguistic details. For the idea flow, the researcher analyzed the kind of connection made in the segues between the initial and subsequent topics. For the transitional signal, this study used Fraser's Taxonomy, including contrastive, elaborative, inferential, and temporal and discourse markers (Fraser, 2009). This analysis allowed the researcher to determine how the influencer builds up to the sponsorship and the overall effectiveness of these segues. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, the coding and categorization results were repeatedly reviewed and cross-checked against the original video data to ensure consistency and accuracy in interpretation. After transcribing, the researcher marked the scripts leading to sponsorship disclosure, categorized the logical flow and transitional signal occurrences, and categorized the data before discussing them descriptively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As videos generated by influencers or content creators have gradually been targeted by brands and companies, this research aims to investigate the segue formulation in retaining viewers' engagement while introducing sponsorship. The data gathered from Adam Ragusea's YouTube videos in 2024 were used to analyze the idea flow in the segues and the transitional signals used to ensure smooth transitions. Regarding the idea flow, the results showed that the segues connected the ideas from the main content with the sponsored content by relating specific aspects in various manners or smoothly shifting the ideas using repetitions. To assist that idea flow, the segues applied diverse language cues corresponding to the idea flow they supported.

Idea Flow in Videos' Sponsorship Segues

Rather than abruptly shifting to an ad, Adam Ragusea's videos presented a specified period in the script as a segue to bridge the main discussion of the video with the sponsorship segment. The segues employed different types of idea flow, including storytelling, cause-effect, comparison, problem-solution, repetition, need-solution, dissociation, analogy, contrast, and metaphor. Those segues were mostly used at the beginning of the ad as an introduction, connecting the main discussion to the ad segment. However, in some occurrences, the segues also happened at the end of the sponsored content as an outro to bridge that section back to the main discussion. The occurrence frequency is presented in Figure 2.

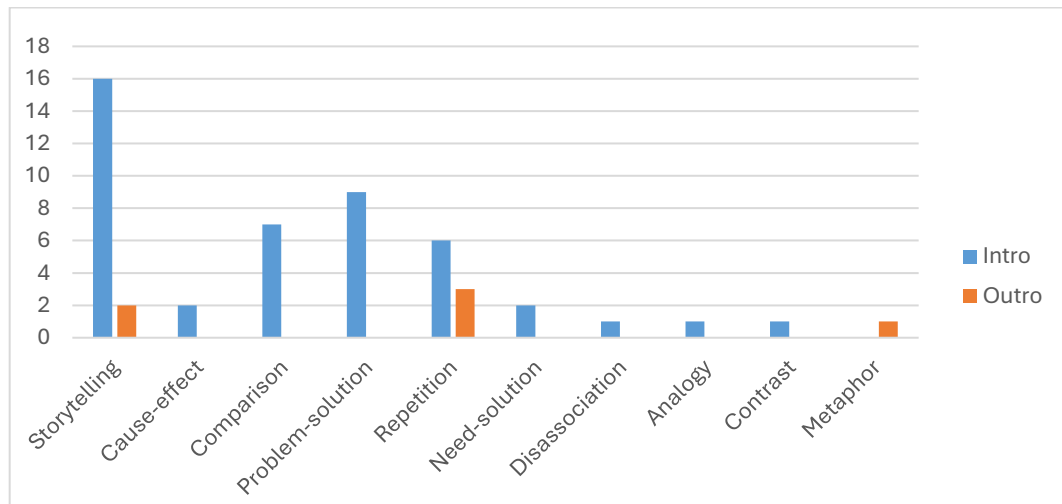


Figure 2. Idea flow in sponsorship segues

Figure 2 represents different idea flow types found in the 45 observed videos. This study found that the segues at the beginning of the ad parts were used to shift the attention from the main topic of the video to the incentivized content. The storytelling pattern was used the most (36%), followed by problem-solution (20%), comparison (16%), and repetition (14%). Cause-effect and need-solution patterns were both used twice each (4%), while the least used patterns were dissociation, analogy, and contrast; used once respectively (2%). Interestingly, despite mostly being used to introduce the ad segment, six videos used segues to guide the viewers back to the main topic of the video. The most used idea flow was repetition (50%), storytelling (33%), and lastly, metaphor (17%), which was only found once in the whole observed videos.

Storytelling

The observed videos used storytelling the most in the segues to move from the main discussion to the ad segment. Examples [1] and [2] show the use of this idea flow.

- [1] ...That's okay, I do not mind being a meme. Look at all of the material bounty that video among others has provided me with. I sleep just fine at night on my mattress from Helix Sleep, sponsor of this video. (V12)
- [2] ...and if you want to see what this pan can do, keep watching. Give that chicken a stir... (V17)

In the segues, the ideas were shifted by using storytelling to create a seamless flow. In Example [1], the beginning of the script talked about Adam's story being a meme and how it might have negatively impacted his life, yet he was doing fine. Then, the script used that story to shift to the sponsor by connecting the idea of sleeping well to the mattress brand he used for sleeping. In Example [2], the ad featured a pan from the Made In brand, in which the script highlighted the pan's great features. Then, it segued back into the content by connecting the pan's great features to how it was used in the actual cooking process, which became the video's main content, continuing the story about how the chicken was cooked. The use of storytelling can help retain viewers' attention, interest, and positive impressions (Hughes et al., 2016) as they think the video is still talking about the main content, but they are unconsciously directed to the sponsored segment. This is in line with Baker (2021), Maharani and Setiawati (2023), and Hughes et al. (2016), who emphasize that storytelling intrigues the attention and builds up anticipation and engagement, and using it as a segue keeps the retention because viewers are still wondering where the story leads.

Problem-solution

The second most-used flow is problem-solution. This type only occurred as the intro toward the sponsorship. Examples [3] and [4] show the use of problem-solution to introduce the endorsement.

- [3] We can just chill the spinach ring overnight until solid. Alright, I need to get this smell out of my nose. Let's go ahead and make some coffee; Trade Coffee is the sponsor of this video. (V13)
- [4] You can hear the beef start to crackle and fry in its own fat. And here, now, you can brown it some more. But, if the pan is proportionally too small, you get too much of that crackling and browning, and too much exposed surface area in the pan overheating and burning. So, should you get a 12-inch or a 10-inch frying pan? Hey, why not both? Get them from Made In, sponsor of this video. (V20)

Aside from storytelling, sometimes the segues were presented through a problem-solution pattern. This style progressed from the main discussion of the video, but then posed a problem, whether to himself or a common one that people might face in their daily lives. Then, the product is introduced as the solution to the aforementioned problem. Example [3] presents the problem based on the main discussion, that the cold spinach ring mixture had an overwhelming smell for Adam. To counter that smell (the problem), he introduced the product, some coffee whose aroma was so good it could deal with the smell. Similarly, Example [4] shows the problem with the pan surface area, that people might feel conflicted about the right size. Then, the product was introduced to solve that dilemma. The problem-solution pattern is one of the commonly found patterns across languages (Lam et al., 2022). Posing a relatable problem is a beneficial marketing strategy to attract viewers' sympathy and attention, as they will feel seen and understood for having the said problem, and they will keep their attention in the hope that the influencers or creators will provide the solutions. The problem-solution pattern is a commonly applied narrative in content writing to introduce the product as a superior solution to the problem, which raises the product's competitiveness. Therefore, this strategy aligns with Sudirjo (2023), which promotes product competitiveness through showing the solution to their problems.

Comparison

The next idea flow that was commonly found in the samples was comparison. Similar to the problem-solution pattern, this idea flow was also only used as the intro segue to introduce the product and not to introduce the main topic back after the ad segment. Examples [5] and [6] show the use of comparison in the samples.

- [5] These things are going to be almost as easy to assemble as my Helix Mattress from Helix Sleep, sponsor of this video. (V2)
- [6] You know what's just as simple and user-friendly as those two dishes? Squarespace, sponsor of this video. (V38)

The comparison pattern was used to highlight the best appeal of the products. In Example [5], the script initially talks about simple recipes for cooking beginners, and the segue compares the simplicity of the recipes with the effortlessness of the sponsored product assembly. Example [6] also has two recipes at the beginning, followed by a segue that highlights how the sponsored product was also user-friendly. The comparison pattern is used to show similarities between two things (Laia & Zagoto, 2024). The way the segues employed comparison helped seamless transitions to the product promotion, as they still progressed from the main discussion,

without abrupt disclosure of the ads. As mentioned by Kigure and Melberga (2024), sometimes creative wordplay makes the ads more interesting; the observed segues often play with words and create comparable connections. It mentioned the appeal of the thing being discussed in the main content to naturally shift to the sponsored part while accentuating the best quality of the product (Peng et al., 2024). This flow underlines the positive connection between the ad and the main content, which is the audience's main interest; thus, reducing their contempt for the ads. This is in line with Bhargava (2021), Kigure and Melberga (2024), and Sudirjo (2023), who state that providing a relatable sponsor that matches viewers' interests can increase their favor.

Repetition

Another rather common idea flow in the samples was repetition. This style focused more on the phrases instead of the topics. This pattern was used as an intro segue along with the outro, introducing the main discussion back after the ad segment. Examples [7] and [8] show the implementation of the repetition pattern.

- [7] Thank you, Squarespace, and thank you, cake. I love both of these kinds of cakes... (V36)
- [8] She thinks that she gets slightly crispier bottoms on these (bacon-wrapped sausages) if they get back in the oven again in the clean, dry, fresh pan. That'll get those piggies warm and toasty. And when you need to wrap up your little piggies: Bombas! That's right, Bombas is the sponsor of this video. (V42)

Example [7] is a repetition strategy used in the outro to reintroduce the main content, while Example [8] is from the intro segue to introduce the ad segment. The repetition strategy was employed when the segue topic did not necessarily build upon the initial discussion topic. To bridge the sequence even more, the script repeated the main phrase from the initial topic in the subsequent segue. It could be the phrases with the same meaning, as in Example [7], or with a different meaning, as in Example [8]. The word piggies at the beginning refers to sausages that were being cooked, while the repeated piggies word refers to toes that could be wrapped with socks from Bombas. The repeated phrases remained the main focus of the initial topic; in Example [7], the repeated phrase expresses gratitude for the product, followed by gratitude for cakes, the main discussion of the video, while in Example [8], the repeated word "piggies" is the main ingredient of the recipe.

Similar to the comparison pattern, the repetition strategy was used to establish a connection between the main content and the sponsored products. The repetition type that occurred in the samples was polyptoton, as the repeated phrases had similar word roots (Andini, 2018). The repetition emphasizes the main points and creates a sense of connection between the main content and the segue, creating a seamless transition. However, this finding is in contrast with Karunarathne and Thilini (2022), that the use of repetition should be limited, as it can lead to viewers' irritation and weaken the value of the ads. However, there was a distinct use of repetition in this context, as the repetition here was only for a hook to introduce the next idea and was not redundantly overused.

Cause-effect

Other idea flow patterns were used significantly less than the aforementioned patterns. Cause-effect and need-solution patterns were used twice, respectively, in the sample videos. Example [9] shows the use of the cause-effect pattern.

- [9] We eat more breakfast at home instead of going out so often. And I have no problems with that because this Trade Coffee is legit far better than any regular cup I've ever had from any brunch place. (V8)

Cause-effect and need-solution patterns were used less prevalently in the segues. Cause-effect flow presented the effect first in the segues, then posed the sponsored product as the cause. In Example [9], the effect is eating breakfast at home more, while the cause is the accessibility of good coffee provided by the sponsor. Cause-effect flow correlates the cause and consequence variables (Aini et al., 2022; Widyasari et al., 2022), and the segue narrative at the beginning acts as the result that makes the audience wonder what the cause is, hence maintaining their engagement throughout the transition. This result is in contrast to Birjandi et al. (2004) that the cause-effect pattern is commonly used. Instead, this pattern was used less in the observed videos, possibly due to the persuasive and advertising nature of the segue, instead of a full essay

Need-solution

Similar to the cause-effect pattern, the need-solution pattern was only used twice in the observed videos. Example [10] expresses the need-solution pattern.

- [10] If anyone ever going to name a street after me, then I need to manage my public image a bit better, and I need a new website where I get to present myself and my work the way that I want to, and it's never been easier to build a Squarespace site. (V22)

The researcher differentiated this pattern from the problem-solution pattern, as it presented the narrative less about a problem but just a need. Example [10] showed the need for a website builder and connected to the sponsored product as the solution. The need-solution pattern is commonly used as a marketing strategy (von Hippel & Kaulartz, 2021), rendering it a plausible pattern for a segue to introduce an ad. This finding aligns with Khan et al. (2022) and Sudirjo (2023) as companies create products to answer people's needs; therefore, presenting the needs in the segue helps spark interest from the audience with relatable needs, and it keeps them engaged as they wait for the solution.

Contrast, dissociation, and analogy

The researcher also found three patterns that were only used once each. Examples [11] to [13] show the use of contrast, dissociation, and analogy patterns in the videos.

- [11] It can sometimes feel as though everything that we humans have created in this world is coming back to try to kill us. And maybe that's for the best. Maybe we deserve it. But at least there are a few human creations out there that are trying to help us live longer, healthier, happier lives. And one of those is Gruns, the sponsor of this video. (V41)
- [12] Just because I'm going to be mounting a partial defence of Big Dairy, does not necessarily mean that I am in the pocket of Big Dairy. This video is not sponsored by Big Dairy. This video is sponsored by Neoplants. (V23)
- [13] And especially within the context of, like, Abrahamic religions where we associate heavenly things with up high and hellish things with down low, well, that seems like another reason to associate a dense cake with the devil and a light cake with the opposite of the devil. Of course, in my belief system, there's nothing remotely sinful or devilish about chocolate cake. In fact, I

would consider devil's food to be mana from heaven, much like Squarespace, sponsor of this video. (V36)

In addition to the more commonly used patterns, the researcher identified three unique idea flow patterns that appeared only once in the analyzed videos: contrast, dissociation, and analogy. Example [11] shows how the segue presents a contrast between the initial narrative, saying creations somehow go back and find a way to harm people, and the promoted product, which is beneficial for people instead. The contrast pattern is used to show the different qualities or nature of things (Laia & Zagoto, 2024). In Example [12], the script presents the dissociation from Big Dairy as a segue to the actual sponsor of the video. It diminished the possible allegation of being associated with Big Dairy and instead introduced the sponsor. This dissociative nature separates components that are often merged or assumed to be together (Cuervo, 2007). This result is in line with Rees (2009), stating that dissociation is often present in arguments and can be used to enhance persuasiveness and effectiveness. Another uncommon pattern is the use of analogy to introduce the sponsorship, as in Example [13]. The script at the beginning explains the origin of the devil and angel terms for cake, then connects that with an analogy for the sponsored product. Though it was not used a lot, the beneficial use of analogies in promotions is in line with Az Zahra (2024) and Goode et al. (2010) regarding the persuasiveness of analogies and the positive impacts on consumers, since analogies can be used to share information and influence perceptions. These patterns, although uncommon, could be applicable as a variation in content writing to introduce sponsorship.

Metaphor (outro only)

Unlike other flows, the idea flow using metaphor was only found in the outro segue, used to bridge the sponsored part back to the main content. Example [14] shows the use of a metaphor in the outro segue.

[14] ...and thank you to Squarespace. You are the gluten that holds this program together. (V5)

Despite the fact that the segue at the beginning of the sponsorship segment is more common, the results showed a devoid of metaphor use for the intro segue, yet it was used at the end to segue the main topic after the ad segment. Example [14] strategically used the metaphor of gluten, as the main topic of the video was about gluten. That metaphor functioned as a bridge that smoothly segued the sponsorship to the main content. This finding is in line with Az Zahra (2024), Kwon (2024), and Lambert et al. (2024), that the use of metaphors in advertising can be beneficial and create a more appealing narrative.

In summary, the sponsorship segues used various types of idea flow, such as storytelling, cause-effect, comparison, problem-solution, repetition, need-solution, dissociation, analogy, contrast, and metaphor. These patterns mostly appeared at the start of the ad segment to smoothly connect the main content to the promotion. Storytelling idea flow appeared the most in the observed videos (36%), followed by problem-solution, comparison, and repetition, while dissociation, analogy, and contrast were used once among the videos. In some cases, segues were also placed at the end of the sponsored section as the outro (N=6) to link the discussion back to the main topic. The outro used repetition the most (50%), followed by storytelling and metaphor, which only appeared once in the outro.

Transition signals used in connecting and shifting topics

To ensure a flawless idea flow in the segues, discourse markers and transition tools are needed in the transition between the main content and the sponsorship. In most cases, specific idea flows had their own unique discourse markers that indicate those flows. The segues

applied contrastive, elaborative, and inferential to assist the idea flow. In addition, the findings showed filler, comparison, and visual-based transitions that acted as transition signals to support the coherence and cohesion of the flow.

Contrastive discourse markers

Contrastive discourse markers were used to indicate a contrast between the first and subsequent ideas. Examples [15] to [17] show the use of the contrastive type of discourse marker.

- [15] Just because I'm going to be mounting a partial defense of big dairy, **does not necessarily mean** that I am in the pocket of Big Dairy. (V23)
- [16] I should eat nutritious, high-fiber food like this everyday, **but** like you, I live in the real world... (V4)
- [17] Maybe we deserve it. **But** at least there are a few human creations out there... (V41)

Contrastive discourse markers can be transitions that show contrasting relationships between ideas. Some examples of this type are *but*, *however*, or *yet*, but it can also be various phrases that reflect the contrast in the presented ideas (Choemue & Bram, 2021). Among the observed videos, the contrastive discourse markers were very often used in segues with dissociation, contrast, and problem-solution idea flows. Examples [16] and [17] show the use of the word *but* to give a contrast between the first clause and the following one. Specifically in problem-solution flow, usually the script first showed the problem, and the contrast was how Adam did not have that problem because the sponsored product solved that. As in Example [15], the contrast is shown by the use of *does not necessarily mean*, where Adam separated himself from the common stereotype or assumption. By contrasting the possible assumption that emerged from the first clause, the script created a dissociation that led up to the ad. The segues mostly used *but* to indicate contrast, and it is in line with Choemue and Bram (2021) that *but* is very prevalently used to indicate contrast. Those contrasts were used not only to debunk assumptions or separate the speaker's position, but also to create relatability with the audience or assurance. Those may attract the viewers' attention, beneficial for introducing the ad for promotion as an effective persuasion (Rees, 2009).

Elaborative discourse markers

After giving a certain idea or topic, the script used elaborative discourse markers to add further explanation. The use of this type of discourse marker is presented in Examples [18] and [19].

- [18] I live in the real world, **that is** one of many reasons I take DS-01, Daily Synbiotic from Seed, sponsor of this video. (V4)
- [19] ...there's nothing remotely sinful or devilish about chocolate cake. **In fact**, I would consider devil's food to be mana from heaven... (V36)

In using elaborative discourse markers, the segues firstly gave Adam's stances on the topic. To further elaborate on his take, the script used elaborative discourse markers. In Example [18], at first, the script shows the position Adam was in. Rather than stopping there and jumping to another message, the script employed an elaborative marker to show the relation of the subsequent sentence to the initial one. For example [19], the segue uses an elaborative marker *in fact* to further explain why devil's food is not devilish. Phrases such as 'that is' and 'in fact' are categorized as elaborative discourse markers as they indicate sentences that explain or support an idea or argument (Casio et al., 2022; Choemue & Bram, 2021). Elaborative

discourse markers were often used across different idea flows because of their elaborative nature. The use of this type of discourse marker is beneficial as the script starts with interesting or relatable takes by influencers or creators to elicit curiosity, then uses the discourse markers to seamlessly explain those takes and lead up to further explanation of the product.

Inferential discourse markers

The use of inferential discourse markers functions as a way to show the consequence or result of an action or cause. Examples [20] and [21] share the use of this type of discourse marker.

[20] I have no problems with that **because** this Trade Coffee is legit far better than any regular cup I've ever had from any brunch place (V8)

[21] If anyone ever going to name a street after me, **then** I need to manage my public image a bit better (V22)

Inferential discourse markers are used to show the impact, result, or summary indicated in the prior statement (Casio et al., 2022; Choemue & Bram, 2021; Fraser, 1999). They share the conclusion that can be inferred or assumed from the statement shared beforehand. In Example [20], the use of 'because' emphasizes the result of the initial statement. As for Example [21], the script uses 'then' to signify the expected outcome from the previous statement. This type of discourse marker was commonly used in idea flows that utilized inferred outcome, namely cause-effect, need-solution, and problem-solution flows. Those flows benefit from inferential discourse markers as they direct viewers' perception to the highlighted benefits of the products (Casio et al., 2022; Goode et al., 2010; Rabab'ah et al., 2022). All of the preceding messages in the segues led to the sponsorship products as the conclusion of the aforementioned statements.

Filler words

The script sometimes used filler words to seamlessly introduce the next topic. The use of filler words in the observed segues is presented in Examples [22] and [23].

[22] **Hey!** Did you notice the pan? This pan is from Made-in, sponsor of this video (V9)

[23] Then we reduce the heat and cover, and leave it for an hour. **Now that we have some downtime...** (V10)

In some cases, the segues might not try to show the connection between the initial part and the following one, but move away from the first part. To avoid the abrupt jump towards the new topic, the script often used filler words. In Example [22], the script initially talks about the cooking process. It then uses an interjection to indicate the end of the first topic and the start of the next topic. Similarly, in Example [23], the second sentence uses a filler to transition to the next topic, which was the sponsorship segment. Filler words can help speakers organize their idea flow and let the listeners process the information (Burrell et al., 2024). In the observed videos, the use of fillers is most prevalent in storytelling idea flow. This is perhaps because storytelling resembles everyday conversation, where filler words are less likely to be noticeable (Burrell et al., 2024). Though the videos employ filler words to construct seamless segues, the finding contradicts the findings of Burrell et al. (2024) that the use of filler words instead decreases trustworthiness, possibly posing negative effects in promotional segments.

Comparison

The segues with comparison idea flow had a unique signal to introduce the sponsor, namely the ‘as...as’ pattern. Example [5] above showcases the use of the ‘as...as’ pattern for comparison idea flow. Incidentally, that ‘as...as’ pattern only appeared on the comparison idea flow. Though comparison can be categorized as a contrastive type of discourse marker (Rapatruti et al., 2022), the results of this study highlight the use of the ‘as...as’ pattern as a tool to show comparison. This comparative nature swiftly introduced the ad in the script by connecting the qualities of the thing from the main content to the sponsored product. Therefore, although not directly connecting the topics themselves, the ‘as...as’ tool helped make a connection between the initial and subsequent topics, thereby avoiding an abrupt jump in the transition. That way, that pattern can assist the idea flow construction and make the segue coherent (Rapatruti et al., 2022).

Visual aids

In addition to the storytelling in the segues, the transition to the sponsorship segment was also often supported with visual aids in the video. In Figure 3, the segue employed the shot to highlight the pan being used to cook the food, which was the sponsor of the video. In this case, the transitions were not only guided by the seamless script but also by the visuals that strategically zoomed in on the sponsored product. The use of a visual-based transition was to support the segue script and provide the actual product samples in use. Additionally, seeing the sponsored product actually being used and doing the job well creates a good impression of the product. The use of visuals to aid segues is in line with (Ha, 2024), as visuals help attract viewers’ attention and make positive impressions, supporting the segues and product reception.



Figure 3. Visual aid in a sponsorship transition (V9)

In shifting ideas from the main content to the sponsorship segment, the segues used different kinds of transition signals. The transitions were in the form of discourse markers (namely contrastive, elaborative, and inferential discourse markers), filler words, and the comparison pattern ‘as...as’. In addition, the segues also utilized product shots to aid the transitions visually. Those transition aids were used to develop a smooth flow in the segue scriptwriting and prevent abrupt jumps from one idea to another.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the use of segues to introduce the sponsorships in Adam Ragusea’s videos. The analysis revealed that his segue scripts employ diverse logical flows, mainly storytelling, problem-solution, and comparison. In addition, it also used repetition, cause-effect, need-solution, dissociation, analogy, contrast, and metaphor to bridge content and advertisement naturally. These flows often appeared at the beginning of the sponsorship and occasionally at the end as an outro. To signal the transition, the segues integrated discourse

markers (contrastive, elaborative, and inferential), filler expressions, comparative pattern ("as...as"), and visual cues to maintain coherence in the idea flow.

The key findings of this study highlight the effective scripting techniques that can be instrumental for influencers and marketers to establish rapport with the audience and improve engagement through seamless advertising. Content creators can acquire the various idea flows and transition tools in their marketing repertoire to strategically deploy them in their script writing. The findings also offer practical examples for language learners about the real-world uses of transitional devices and idea organization. However, this study is limited by its focus on a single content creator and a finite number of videos, which may not fully represent the vast strategy range used to accommodate sponsorship transitions while maintaining viewers' retention. Additionally, the research does not cover the audience perceptions and the different cultural contexts, which may lead to a generalization towards other content creators from different cultural backgrounds. Future research is envisaged to expand the sample and explore audience perceptions of such transitions to better understand their impact on viewers' reception and retention.

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