


Particularized Conversational Implicature in Mikayla Nogueira's TikTok Beauty Endorsements

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ABSTRACT

Influencer marketing has become a major form of promotion in the beauty industry, especially on short-video platforms such as TikTok. In these endorsements, influencers often communicate product evaluation indirectly rather than through explicit advertising language. However, studies that examine how pragmatic mechanisms, particularly conversational implicature, operate in influencer discourse remain limited. This gap is significant given that implicature plays a central role in how meaning is conveyed indirectly, making it especially relevant in digital endorsement contexts where promotional intent is often embedded in seemingly casual speech. This study aims to analyze the use of conversational implicature in TikTok beauty endorsement videos by Mikayla Nogueira. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, fifteen videos posted between 2021 and 2025 were selected through criterion-based sampling and transcribed for analysis based on Grice's theory of conversational implicature, encompassing both generalized and particularized types. The findings show that implicature appears through three main patterns: indirect evaluation through sensory and result-oriented expressions, personal experience as implicit product endorsement, and conversational framing that creates recommendations without direct claims. The results indicate that persuasion in beauty endorsements often relies on audience inference rather than explicit promotional statements, highlighting the role of shared knowledge within the beauty discourse community.

Keywords: *Conversational Implicature, Influencer Marketing, Tiktok Endorsements, Beauty Discourse, Pragmatics*

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INTRODUCTION

Social media influencers have emerged as one of the effective ways for influencing customer behaviour in the current digital era, particularly in the beauty sector. This is in line with Fahad Khan Afridi & Hidayat (2024), who highlight that influencer marketing has become a central strategy as consumers increasingly rely on social media personalities for product insights and purchase decisions. On platforms like TikTok, a phenomenon has emerged where beauty influencers have become the main source of information for millions of people looking for product recommendations. Unlike traditional celebrities who rise through institutional media, these influencers build their audience directly through social media platforms, contributing to their perception as more relatable and trustworthy individuals (Gräve, 2017). Central to this credibility is the influencer's perceived sincerity, a personality trait associated with being down-to-earth, genuine, and relatable which Lee & Eastin (2020), found to significantly shape consumers' attitudes toward influencers, as it reinforces the sense of personal closeness that makes followers feel they are receiving advice from a trusted friend rather than a commercial endorser. Through this dynamic, viewers do not simply watch the content but instead develop feelings of closeness and trust, as if they are experiencing a mutual friendship with the influencer.

However, from a linguistic perspective, the main strength of these influencers lies in their choice of words. They tend not to speak bluntly, but instead use subtle communication techniques that maintain their authenticity. Burton, Mosteller, and Hale (2021) found that language perceived as overly promotional or excessively positive can actually undermine authenticity, suggesting that influencers who communicate in a more personal, conversational manner are more effective in building trust with their audience. By avoiding a hard-selling approach, their endorsements function not merely as marketing strategies, but as distinct forms of conversational communication. In this context, messages are often delivered indirectly, making it difficult for viewers to realize they are being exposed to a commercial message. To understand how these persuasive meanings are conveyed and interpreted

without being explicitly stated, it is necessary to examine this phenomenon through a pragmatic lens.

In pragmatic studies, such indirect communication is explained through the concept of implicature proposed by Grice (1989), which refers to meanings implied by speakers beyond what is explicitly stated, relying on context and shared assumptions between speakers and listeners. Central to Grice's framework is the Cooperative Principle, which holds that speakers are expected to make their contributions appropriate to the purpose of the conversation, governed by four maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. When these maxims are flouted or violated, implicature arises, that is, the listener infers a meaning beyond what is literally said. Grice further distinguishes conversational implicature into two subtypes: generalized conversational implicature, which arises without dependence on specific contextual features and can be inferred by any competent language user in ordinary situations, and particularized conversational implicature, which depends heavily on specific contextual knowledge shared between speaker and listener and therefore requires more interpretive effort. Among these, conversational implicature, particularly the particularized type is especially relevant to influencer endorsement content, as meanings are often deeply context-dependent, suggested through personal narratives, humor, or emotional tone rather than overtly stated. This form of communication is not only commercially significant but also linguistically rich, as it enables influencers to communicate persuasive intent indirectly, build trust, and sustain a sense of authenticity with their audiences.

The importance of this topic lies in how language works as a subtle but powerful way to persuade people in the digital marketing. Previous studies have looked at implicature in a variety of situations. Yulianti et al., (2022), focus on identifying and classifying generalized and particularized conversational implicatures within scripted or semi-scripted interactions on entertainment programs like Saturday Night Live. Similarly, research on political discourse has analyzed conversational implicature in presidential debates to reveal how implied meanings function as tools for persuasion, power, and image-building in formal political communication (Hastuti & Romadi, 2024). Adding to this, Bariyyah, (2025) highlights that in the 2024 U.S. Presidential Debate, candidates frequently violated Gricean maxims to create implicature as a tactic to hide or imply their true meanings, particularly when discussing sensitive topics like war. In the realm of commercial discourse, Marlina & Saifullah, (2022) have examined implicature in beauty brand advertisements on Instagram, demonstrating how indirect language is used to represent product qualities in brand-controlled content. While these studies offer valuable insights into the function of implicature in entertainment, politics, and branded advertising, they have not addressed how it operates in influencer-generated content, particularly in the beauty sector on platforms like TikTok. It is also worth noting that the broader body of influencer marketing research has predominantly focused on variables such as credibility, audience engagement, consumer trust, and behavioral outcomes (Lou & Yuan, 2019), while the specific pragmatic and linguistic mechanisms through which persuasion is constructed in influencer discourse remain largely underexplored. This gap is significant, as understanding how language itself functions persuasively offers a more nuanced account of why influencer communication is effective. In this regard, it is important to note that influencer sponsorships on TikTok can be understood as a contemporary form of celebrity endorsement, defined by Erdogan, (2010), drawing on McCracken (1989), as the use of a publicly recognized individual who leverages their public recognition on behalf of a consumer product. Unlike traditional endorsements delivered through formal advertising, however, TikTok sponsored videos are embedded in conversational interactions, making the linguistic dimension of such endorsements especially significant and underexplored.

To bridge this gap, this study focuses on the case of Mikayla Nogueira, a prominent American beauty influencer who was ranked #33 on the *Forbes Top Creators 2025 list*, with more than 20 million followers across social media platforms (Bertoni, S. on Forbes, 2025). Mikayla is uniquely suited for this analysis due to her signature style of combining product reviews with high-energy personal narratives, which relies heavily on implied meaning rather than direct advertising language. This study is significant because it bridges the gap between linguistic theory and real-world digital communication, demonstrating how Grice's concepts of implicature can be applied to the practical strategies of online endorsements. This research aims to examine how Mikayla Nogueira employs conversational implicature to construct persuasion and authenticity in her TikTok videos.

Ideally, persuasive strategies in influencer content should be critically examined through a linguistic framework to reveal how meaning, persuasion, and authenticity are constructed

through language. The gap with previous studies indicates the need for a focused study that applies pragmatic theory to influencer marketing language use, particularly in the context of beauty endorsements on TikTok. Therefore, this study will be restricted to examining Mikayla Nogueira's TikTok videos that were posted within a certain time period from 2021 to 2025 in order to preserve focus and clarity. It will mainly look at spoken language and captions, excluding non-verbal components such as music, face expressions, or visual effects.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative research focuses on understanding meaning through naturalistic and interpretative approaches to social phenomena (Taherdoost, 2022). In line with this, the qualitative approach allows the researcher to collect primary textual data and analyze it using interpretive techniques. Furthermore, descriptive research aims to accurately describe and document existing phenomena as they occur (Atmowardoyo, 2018), making this method suitable for examining conversational implicature in influencer endorsement content.

According to Cresswell (2007), qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants (p. 45). In line with this view, the researcher in this study functions as the main instrument responsible for observing the data, transcribing the utterances, and interpreting the implied meanings found in Mikayla Nogueira's TikTok endorsement videos.

In applying this role, the researcher focused on the linguistic strategies employed in Mikayla Nogueira's TikTok endorsements, particularly her use of conversational implicature as the central phenomenon under investigation. This study purposively selected 15 videos from Mikayla Nogueira's TikTok account, consisting of three videos per year from 2021 to 2025. The number 15 was determined to ensure sufficient data breadth across the five-year period while maintaining analytical depth within each year. The period begins in 2021, marking the start of her professional career as a beauty influencer, and concludes in 2025 to provide the most recent data prior to this research being conducted in 2026. All 15 videos selected are explicitly sponsored content, identifiable through on-screen disclosures such as "#ad" or "paid partnership" labels. This focus on sponsored content is deliberate, as it ensures a consistent analytical scope centered on how conversational implicature operates within commercial persuasion, contexts in which the influencer must simultaneously promote a product and maintain her authentic persona.

The data were analyzed using Grice's (1989) theory of conversational implicature. The identification of conversational implicature was guided strictly by Grice's (1989) maxim-based criteria, providing a consistent and theoretically grounded basis for analysis. To ensure a systematic analysis, this study followed the interactive model of data analysis proposed by Miles, Huberman, Saldaña (2014), which involves:

Data Condensation: The researcher conducted a verbatim transcription of the 15 selected TikTok videos. Each video was watched multiple times to ensure transcription accuracy. It should be noted that this study focuses exclusively on the verbal dimension of the videos specifically spoken language and on-screen captions. Multimodal elements such as facial expressions, hand gestures, background music, and visual effects were deliberately excluded from analysis, as the scope of this study is limited to linguistic mechanisms of conversational implicature rather than multimodal discourse. To manage the volume of verbal data across 15 videos, an AI-assisted transcription tool was used to generate an initial segmentation of utterances. The researcher then manually reviewed, verified, and corrected each segment for accuracy. Following transcription, a two-stage coding procedure was applied: in the first stage, utterances were coded for potential implicature by flagging instances where the surface meaning appeared insufficient to account for the communicative intent; in the second stage, each flagged utterance was re-examined against Grice's (1989) maxim-based criteria to confirm and classify the type of implicature present.

Data Classification: The identified utterances were then rigorously cross-checked against Gricean principles. Any utterance that appeared to violate or flout the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, or Manner was isolated as a conversational implicature. These findings were then tabulated to show the frequency and distribution of implicatures across the 2021–2025 period.

Data Display and Interpretation: The final dataset was categorized into three sub-sections: (a) indirect sensory evaluation, (b) personal narrative as endorsement, and (c) conversational framing. These three categories were derived inductively from recurring

patterns in the data, rather than imposed from a pre-existing typology. This approach is consistent with qualitative data analysis, in which categories emerge from systematic engagement with the data itself. From each of these categories, representative samples were analyzed in-depth by connecting the linguistic evidence to the context of influencer-audience interaction. The interpretation focused on how these conversational implicatures function as a pragmatic strategy to balance commercial interests with the influencer's persona of authenticity.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and discussion of the study, focusing on how conversational implicature is employed in Mikayla Nogueira's TikTok beauty endorsement videos. Rather than delivering explicit product claims, the endorsement discourse frequently relies on indirect language that allows meanings to be implied rather than directly stated. In pragmatic studies, implicature is understood as a strategy through which speakers convey meanings beyond the literal content of their utterances, often shaped by context, shared knowledge, and communicative goals.

Within the context of influencer marketing, indirect endorsement strategies play an important role in maintaining authenticity and avoiding overtly promotional language, which may reduce audience trust. Research on endorsement effectiveness suggests that audiences respond more positively to endorsers who appear credible and authentic, particularly when promotional messages are delivered in a subtle and natural manner rather than through direct persuasion (Jun, Han, Zhou, and Eisingerich., 2023). As a result, influencers often rely on evaluative expressions, personal narratives, and conversational styles to communicate product recommendations implicitly.

Before presenting the distribution of conversational implicatures, it is necessary to outline how the data were approached at the utterance level. In this study, each sponsored TikTok video is first segmented into individual utterances, defined as units of speech bounded by changes in intonation, pauses, shifts in topic, or accompanying pragmatic cues such as facial expressions and gestures. This segmentation allows the analysis to move beyond the video as a whole and focus on how meaning is constructed incrementally through spoken interaction. The table below provides an overview of the total number of utterances identified in each video across the selected years.

Table 1. Distribution of Utterances and Implicature in Mikayla Nogueira's TikTok Beauty Endorsements Video

Year	Number of Videos	Total Utterances	Utterances Containing Conversational Implicature	Indirect Evaluation	Personal Experiences	Conversational Framing
2021	3	56	29	9	8	9
2022	3	57	25	6	8	9
2023	3	58	30	8	10	8
2024	3	66	36	10	10	13
2025	3	74	43	16	12	15

Table 1 shows a gradual increase in Mikayla Nogueira's use of conversational implicature over the 2021–2025 period, despite a slight decline in 2022. In her earlier career, her communication style leaned more toward direct product demonstrations. As her platform grew, however, the use of implied meanings increased significantly. Based on the analysis of the selected TikTok videos, three recurring patterns of conversational implicature were identified. These patterns include indirect evaluation through sensory and result-oriented expressions, the use of personal experience as implicit product endorsement, and conversational framing that creates recommendations without direct claims. Among the three categories, Personal Experience as Implicit Product Endorsement shows the most consistent growth, rising from 8 instances in 2021–2022 to 10 in 2023–2024, and reaching 12 in 2025. This steady increase suggests that personal experience becomes an increasingly important endorsement strategy, making promotions feel more like authentic recommendations than direct advertising.

The highest implicature counts appear in 2025, where all three categories reach their largest figures. This trend suggests that as Mikayla's influence expanded, she became more reliant on indirect persuasive strategies, conveying product evaluation through sensory descriptions, personal narratives, and conversational framing rather than explicit claims. This trend suggests that as Mikayla became a more established "Top Creator," her persuasive strategies

evolved to be more subtle and nuanced, likely to maintain her perceived authenticity amidst increasing commercial demands.

Based on the analysis of the selected TikTok videos, three recurring patterns of conversational implicature were identified. These patterns include indirect evaluation through sensory and result-oriented expressions, the use of personal experience as implicit product endorsement, and conversational framing that creates recommendations without direct claims. Each pattern is discussed in the following subsections to illustrate how implicature operates in beauty endorsement content on social media platforms.

Although each TikTok video contains a considerable number of utterances, not all utterances function as conversational implicatures. Many utterances serve procedural or descriptive purposes, such as explaining product application steps or identifying product features, and therefore do not involve implied meanings beyond what is explicitly stated. Conversational implicatures emerge selectively in specific communicative contexts, particularly when evaluation, personal experience, or recommendation is conveyed indirectly rather than through explicit claims. This view aligns with previous research that emphasizes conversational implicature is highly context-dependent and cannot be interpreted independently of the situational and communicative context in which it occurs. (Musa & Mohammed, 2022)

Based on the selection and identification process, it was found that the patterns of indirect language use employed by Mikayla Nogueira can be classified into recurring categories. To provide a comprehensive overview of how these implied meanings are produced, the findings of this study are divided into three main categories of conversational implicature:

Indirect Evaluation through Sensory and Result Oriented Expressions

The frequency of Indirect Evaluation shows a fluctuating but overall upward trend. It begins at 9 instances in 2021, decreases to 6 in 2022, then gradually increases to 8 in 2023, 10 in 2024, and reaches 16 in 2025. Although a temporary decline appears in 2022, the general trajectory indicates that sensory-based evaluation becomes increasingly dominant over time. This pattern suggests that as Mikayla gains more experience and authority in the beauty industry, she relies more heavily on embodied reactions such as describing texture, finish, hydration, or visual results rather than issuing explicit praise.

From a Gricean perspective, this reflects a strategic use of implicature under the Cooperative Principle. Instead of maximizing quantity through constructed examples of what direct claims might look like, such as "this product is excellent," she allows viewers to infer quality through sensory cues. Some data points representing this category include:

"My skin looks like literal glass, like perfection." (V14, 2025 – result-oriented)

"This feels like there's nothing on my face." (V3, 2021 – sensory)

"Look at how plump, hydrated, and juicy that made my under eye." (V15, 2025 – result-oriented)

"Look at that melting action, that little melty-melt." (V9, 2023 – result-oriented)



Figure 1. Screenshot of Mikayla Nogueira's Tiktok Video Depicting Sensory-Based Product Evaluation

These utterances, on a literal level, are descriptions of sensory experience and visual results following product application. Mikayla describes her skin's appearance through visual metaphors such as "literal glass" and "perfection," referring literally to a smooth and radiant complexion. In another utterance, she conveys that the product feels as though it is not on her face, literally indicating a lightweight and comfortable texture. Additionally, her use of

imperative forms such as "look at..." directs the audience's attention to specific visible changes, the plumper under-eye area, or the blending effect of the product on the skin. At face value, these are simply personal observations and invitations to witness a result.

However, within the framework of Grice's (1989) Cooperative Principle, the meaning of these utterances extends beyond their literal content. Specifically, expressions such as "literal glass" and "perfection" constitute a flouting of the maxim of Quality, as these terms are not literally verifiable, no skin is made of glass, and "perfection" cannot be objectively confirmed. By knowingly producing unverifiable claims, Mikayla departs from the expected standard of truthfulness in a way that is transparent to her audience. This deliberate flouting signals that a stronger, evaluative meaning intended; the product delivers exceptional results. Similarly, the utterance "this feels like there's nothing on my face" flouts the maxim of Quantity by withholding an explicit product claim, offering instead a sensory description from which the audience must infer the evaluative conclusion that the product is superior in formulation and comfort.

The effectiveness of this categories relies on shared background knowledge within the beauty discourse community. For a viewer embedded in beauty culture, "this feels like nothing on my face" immediately implies a desirable, premium-quality product. This point is particularly significant because the same utterance may generate entirely different interpretations depending on the listener's familiarity with beauty discourse. The implicature, therefore, is not universal but audience-specific, contingent on the listener's prior knowledge of cosmetic evaluation standards. This confirms Grice's (1989) position that conversational implicature is inherently context-dependent, requiring shared assumptions between speaker and listener for the intended meaning to be successfully conveyed. This is further consistent with Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 2000), which holds that audiences select the interpretation yielding the greatest cognitive effect with minimal processing effort. The Gricean implicature is easily derived here precisely because the audience already possesses the contextual assumptions needed to reach the intended evaluative conclusion.

Thus, product evaluation in this category is constructed indirectly through sensory experience and visual result. By positioning herself as a user sharing an experience rather than a promoter issuing a recommendation, Mikayla maintains an authentic communicative persona while simultaneously generating strong persuasive implicatures. Persuasion operates through audience inference, not explicit claims.

Personal Experience as Implicit Product Endorsement

According to table 1, the use of Personal Experience remains relatively stable but gradually increases over time: 8 instances in 2021, 8 in 2022, 10 in 2023, 10 in 2024, and 12 in 2025. Unlike Indirect Evaluation, this category does not show sharp fluctuation but demonstrates steady growth.

This category demonstrates that Mikayla consistently frames product evaluations through personal narratives, whether they involve past experiences, professional backgrounds, or specific life situations. Instead of directly stating that a product is the 'best' or a 'must-buy', she embeds the product within personal stories that carry high emotional value or credibility. The gradual increase toward 2025 may indicate that as her professional status grows, she increasingly integrates her personal journey into product evaluation, transforming endorsement into experiential storytelling. Consequently, persuasion is built through the authority of experience, rather than through explicit commercial claims.

Some utterances that represent this category are:

"If this ends up being my wedding foundation, I'll be pretty surprised." (V5, 2022).

"I cannot tell you the number of times I have traveled and I forgot to bring a pencil sharpener... I was screwed. This saves that problem." (V12, 2024).

"After all the craziness of the VMAs and Fashion Week, my under eyes are tired and puffy... this was 1000% the reset I needed." (V15, 2025).

Technically, Mikayla is only recounting her personal experiences. She mentions her wedding plans only six months away, describes her frustration when traveling without a pencil sharpener, and complains about the exhausted state of her skin after attending major events like the VMAs and Fashion Week. She does not explicitly urge her audience to follow her lead. Instead, she simply shares stories about her own personal struggles or needs.

However, within the framework of conversational implicature (Grice, 1989), the meaning of these utterances goes beyond mere personal stories. By framing a product as a potential 'wedding foundation,' Mikayla flouts the maxim of Quantity. Rather than providing the explicit product evaluation that a cooperative endorser would be expected to deliver, she offers only a personal narrative, withholding any direct claim about the product's quality. This

deliberate understatement forces the audience to infer what is left unsaid: that only a product of extraordinary performance would be considered worthy of such a significant and personal context. The implicature of superior quality therefore emerges not from what is explicitly stated, but from what the audience must supply through inference to make the utterance relevant and meaningful.

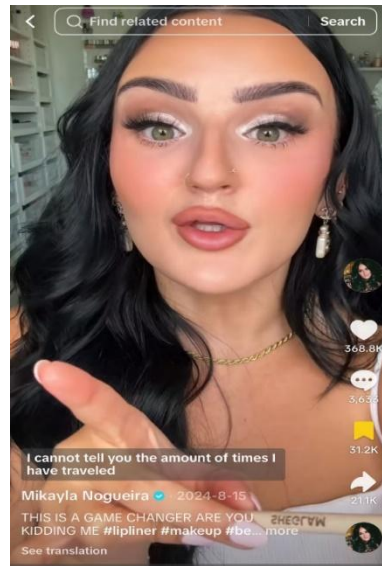


Figure 2. Screenshot of Mikayla Nogueira's Tiktok Video Depicting Personal Experience Sharing

In her travel experience narrative, the '*I was screwed*' story creates a concrete problem, allowing the product to emerge as the solution. Implicitly, the product is positioned as both practical and essential. Here, she adheres to the maxim of relation (relevance) by linking the product to a real-life need. However, this simultaneously generates an implicature that the product is necessary, rather than merely optional.

Statements regarding the VMAs and Fashion Week establish a context of extreme exhaustion. When she claims the product is '*1000% the reset I needed*', this hyperbole can be understood as a flouting of the maxim of quality as the figure '1000%' is not literal, but serves to amplify emotional impact and enthusiasm. The resulting implicature is that the product is not merely helpful, but transformatively effective, capable of delivering visible results even under the most demanding skin conditions, such as the physical toll of attending back-to-back high-profile events. This positions the product as exceptional precisely because the context in which it is evaluated is exceptional, making the implied endorsement more persuasive than any explicit claim could achieve.

Overall, personal experience functions to make recommendations feel more convincing. Mikayla does not directly command her audience to purchase a product, instead, she demonstrates how the product performs in real-life situations she has personally experienced. From there, the audience is led to conclude that if the product is worthy of pivotal moments such as weddings, travel, or major events, then its quality must indeed be high.

By doing so, implicature arises through personal narratives that build trust and emotional proximity, without the need for overt promotional claims. Rather than feeling like they are being presented with an advertisement, the audience feels as though they are being offered a solution by a friend who has faced similar challenges. This is what transforms the review into a trust-based recommendation, which is persuasively more powerful than traditional advertising.

Conversational Framing to Create Recommendation without Direct Claims

It can be seen in table 1, conversational framing displays noticeable fluctuation across the five-year period, with 9 instances in 2021 and 2022, a slight decrease to 8 in 2023, followed by an increase to 13 in 2024 and 15 in 2025. The sharp rise in the final two years suggests a strategic shift toward dialogic evaluation. This category emerges when Mikayla frames product evaluations in the form of casual conversation, rhetorical questions, or testing challenges, instead of making hypothetical direct claims like '*this is the best*' or '*you should buy this*.' This pattern appears consistently throughout various years of data, particularly in videos featuring high-hype products or those with rising price points. Rather than offering immediate praise or recommendations, she creates a dialogic situation that makes the audience feel as though they are participating in the evaluation process alongside her.

"*I've not seen a single bad review of this. Imagine if I don't like it.*" (V3, 2021)

"*We know that you know what we know that you know.*" (V10, 2024)

"*I do not say this lightly: This is e.l.f.'s best product to date.*" (V14, 2025)



Figure 3. Screenshot of Mikayla Nogueira's Tiktok Video Illustrating Conversational Framing in Product Evaluation

In the first utterance, *"I've not seen a single bad review of this. Imagine if I don't like it"*, Mikayla literally states that she has not encountered any negative reviews of the product, then humorously imagines the possibility that she might dislike it. On the surface, this appears neutral and even slightly skeptical. However, this utterance flouts the maxim of Quantity. Rather than providing a direct evaluation of the product herself, she offers only an observation about others' reviews, withholding the explicit endorsement that a cooperative speaker in her position would be expected to deliver. This deliberate withholding forces the audience to infer the implied meaning: that the overwhelming absence of negative reviews constitutes sufficient evidence of the product's quality. The second sentence, *"Imagine if I don't like it,"* functions not as genuine doubt but as irony, a rhetorical device that further flouts the maxim of Quality by saying something the audience understands she does not literally mean. According to Grice's (1989) Cooperative Principle, listeners assume that a speaker's contribution is relevant and purposeful. Within this context, the combined effect of both sentences generates the implicature that she will almost certainly agree with the positive consensus, constructing a recommendation through social proof rather than personal claim.

In the second utterance, *"We know that you know what we know that you know."* (V10, 2024), Mikayla employs a deliberately repetitive and circular structure that flouts the maxim of Manner, which requires speakers to be clear, orderly, and avoid unnecessary obscurity. The sentence is intentionally ambiguous at the surface level, yet within the context of a sponsored endorsement, the audience understands it as a presupposition of shared knowledge that the product's quality or reputation is already widely recognized and needs no further elaboration. This flouting of Manner is strategic: by speaking in a way that is deliberately unclear yet contextually interpretable, Mikayla creates a sense of solidarity and mutual recognition with her audience. The maxim of Relation also operates here, as viewers interpret the "shared knowledge" as referring specifically to the product's established hype or credibility. The implicature is therefore that the product is so well-regarded that an explicit recommendation would be redundant, persuasion operates through collective recognition rather than direct promotion.

In the third utterance, *"I do not say this lightly: This is e.l.f.'s best product to date."* (V14, 2025), Mikayla first emphasizes the seriousness of her statement before declaring the product as the brand's best to date. Literally, she is signaling that her evaluation is not casual. Pragmatically, this introductory clause functions as a credibility marker. It implies that she does not frequently make strong claims, and therefore, when she does, the statement carries particular weight. By highlighting the deliberateness of her judgment, she reinforces the maxim of quality, presenting herself as a careful and trustworthy evaluator. The persuasive force lies not only in calling the product "the best," but in framing the statement as considered and sincere. The introductory clause *"I do not say this lightly"* functions as a credibility marker that flouts the maxim of Quantity by adding information that would be unnecessary if the audience already assumed her evaluations to be careful and considered. The implicature is not only that the product is excellent, but that this excellence is rare enough to warrant a departure from her usual communicative restraint.

Taken together, these three utterances demonstrate that conversational framing in beauty endorsements operates through a range of maxim manipulations flouting Quantity by withholding direct claims, flouting Quality through irony and hyperbole, and flouting Manner through deliberate ambiguity. Rather than issuing direct purchase commands, Mikayla

constructs persuasion through shared expectations, collective knowledge, and credibility framing, making the endorsement appear conversational and authentic rather than overtly commercial.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined how conversational implicature operates as a pragmatic strategy in Mikayla Nogueira's TikTok beauty endorsement videos, focusing on how indirect language constructs both persuasion and authenticity. Drawing on Grice's (1989) Cooperative Principle, the analysis of 15 sponsored videos (2021–2025) reveals that conversational implicature is a systematic and deliberate persuasive strategy rather than an incidental feature of influencer communication. Three recurring patterns were identified: indirect evaluation through sensory and result-oriented expressions, personal experience as implicit endorsement, and conversational framing that generates recommendations without direct claims. Across these categories, maxim flouting serves as the primary mechanism for generating implied meanings, allowing Mikayla to position herself as an ordinary user while enabling audiences to infer evaluative conclusions through contextual reasoning. A longitudinal pattern further shows that implicature frequency increased from 2021 to 2025, suggesting that as her platform grew, reliance on indirect persuasion deepened. This aligns with the argument that established influencers increasingly prioritize perceived authenticity as audiences grow resistant to overt commercial messaging. Theoretically, this study contributes by demonstrating how Gricean pragmatics applies productively to influencer content, an area underexplored in previous implicature research. Practically, the findings offer audiences a basis for more critically informed consumption and provide researchers with a replicable framework extendable to other influencers, platforms, and cultural contexts. Future studies may incorporate multimodal elements or cross-cultural comparisons to broaden the analytical scope.

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