



Vocative Speech Acts in Indonesian Live Commerce: A Sociolinguistic Study of Address Terms on Shopee

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Abstract

In order to engage audiences, establish rapport, and promote transactions, sellers are depending more and more on linguistic methods as live commerce continues to expand as a digital marketplace form. In online business interactions, such as live selling on sites like Shopee, where people are most used to, sellers usually employ address acts to build rapport and keep the audience interested. By examining the deliberate use of address words by Indonesian Shopee vendors, the study fills this gap. The usage of address words in Indonesian live commerce is examined in this study with an emphasis on how they function as vocative speech acts in online sales transactions to be the most Indonesian use as addressee terms. This study uses a qualitative method followed by a combination of vocative speech act theory supported by sociolinguistics of address terms to analyze how sellers address customers by using specific calls. There are 20 addressee terms used which are 3 the most widely used such as “Kakak, Kak, Sayang” with addressee term of “Kakak” as the most people used in addressing to Shopee live streaming are found in this research.

Keywords: *addressee, descriptive qualitative, live commerce, sociolinguistics, vocative speech act*



Introduction

The rapid development of digital communication has had a massive influence on how people communicate, shop, and start a business (Sumarlam, 2024). Live commerce's explosive rise in Indonesia has changed the online sales scene and brought up new dynamics in the interactions between buyers and sellers. Learning The growth of e-commerce live-streaming has led to diverse marketing and consumption patterns globally, presenting challenges for online sellers to boost sales (Ma'ed, 2024). Unlike traditional e-commerce, live commerce platforms, such as Shopee Live, offer real-time, interactive experiences where retailers use live video broadcasts to engage directly with customers. In this context, building personal and emotional relationships with clients is highly valued in addition to the transactional aspect of sales (Berry, 1983). Particularly about address phrases, the language employed has a significant impact on the atmosphere and tone of these conversations.

Many features of the sphere and the environment of communication, social, and psychological roles of participants determine the specificity of addressing (Basenko et al., 2022). From the addresser's perspective, the addressee is the person who receives the communication (Jakobson, 1960). Indonesian internet sellers frequently use address phrases, which include familial allusions (such as "kak," "adek," and "bunda") and other well-known forms ("say," "beb," "cinta," and "cantik"), to promote closeness, comfort, and intimacy with their audience. In addition to reducing psychological distance and building trust between viewers and merchants, these statements also serve to create a sense of community. When there is no physical presence in live commerce, according to sociolinguistic viewpoints (e.g., Tannen, 1984; Brown & Levinson, 1987), interpersonal rapport and engagement are greatly enhanced by the strategic use of address terms and language signals, particularly in communicative situations such as sales or service encounters.

In this dynamic setting, eloquent and expressive speech acts become crucial for communication (Malinowski, 1923). On the other hand, sellers can use expressive speaking acts to convey emotions, appreciation, and excitement, which improves their relationship with viewers. Together, these speech acts transform the live commerce experience from a straightforward transaction into a social event that influences consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions.

Researchers can gain a better understanding of the relationship between language, technology, and customer behavior in the digital marketplace by looking at how merchants utilize vocative language to establish rapport, encourage loyalty, and increase

sales. In addition to enhancing our comprehension of online communication, this emphasis draws attention to the cultural and emotional aspects that are crucial for fostering enduring connections within Indonesia's thriving live commerce ecosystem. Thus, examining address phrases and the speech acts that go along with them in Indonesian live commerce provides important insights into the sociolinguistic tactics that support profitable online sales on shopee platform, which shows that most Indonesians trust this platform. 7.7 2025 Shopee sale monthly event as the outlook to gather the data where many sellers will do live streaming to promote their product by using the closeness and intention to the buyer. Look at the diagram below:

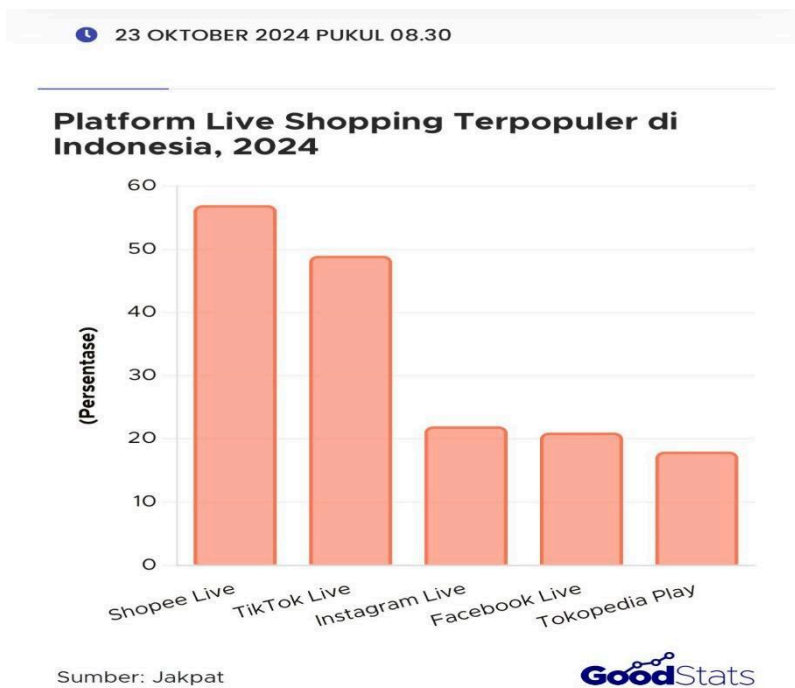


Figure 1. Popular Platform Live Shopping

Literature Review

Prior studies have looked at speech acts in online transactions, tourism advertisements, and social media (e.g., Han & He, 2012; Dewi et al., 2024; Mubarok et al., 2024). Furthermore, previous research takes a cyberpragmatic approach that takes into account multimodal components such as images, emojis, tone, religious emotions, and culturally charged address forms based on (Sumarlam et al.:2024), and another study aimed at

unveiling the speech acts, linguistic persuasion strategies, and linguistic features employed in e-commerce live streaming. More so, this study, utilizing thematic analysis aimed at exploring the emerging themes focused on the insights of e-commerce live streaming viewers on the linguistic persuasive strategies employed by streamers in e-commerce live streaming and (10) e-commerce livestream videos from Facebook and TikTok in the Philippines was deliberated by (Daga-as et al.:2024). Hence, Yunus et al. (2024) used a qualitative descriptive method, where the data source in this research was polite language speech between sellers and buyers in live streaming social media transactions in West Sulawesi. As a study methodology, they employed subjective exploration, which yields expressive information like writing or language, as well as the actions of the people being observed. The subject of this analysis is conveyed through talk or language. Subjective exploration involves gathering expressive information, which is expressed through words and pictures rather than numerical data. This information may be found in personal documents, video recordings, notes, pictures, interview transcripts, and other official records. Chesnokova (2015), She investigated the addressee types of the internet open letters in addition to the linguistic content that allowed bridging the gap between mass and personal communication, thus remediating an epistolary genre. Meanwhile, Rahman & Suhandano (2025) determined the forms and strategies of buying and selling speech acts by live hosts during live streaming sessions on the TikTok account @wardahofficial.

This study demonstrates a dearth of targeted research on the unique functions of vocative speech acts in live e-commerce contexts, particularly in multimodal, real-time, interactive environments such as Shopee Live.

Method

The use of vocative speech acts and address phrases in Indonesian live commerce, namely on platforms like Shopee, is examined in this study using a descriptive qualitative methodology. Direct observation by recording live selling sessions is used to gather data, with an emphasis on the interactions between audiences and salespeople. The study focuses on situations in which vendors actively interact with viewers by employing a range of address phrases and vocative language.

To determine the patterns and purposes of address phrases, the transcriptions of these live conversations are examined. Additional information is obtained by means of questionnaires and interviews with both sellers and frequent viewers in order to deepen the investigation. The purpose of these surveys is to learn about their opinions regarding the efficacy and societal influence of these language techniques. The gathered information is then sorted and analyzed to show how particular address terms support audience participation and successful transactions.

The sociolinguistics of address terms and the vocative speech act theory serve as the foundation for the analysis. The notion of vocative speech acts offers a prism through

which to view how vendors employ direct forms of address to draw in customers, build relationships, and promote communication in an online marketplace. The cultural and contextual elements affecting the selection and purpose of address phrases in Indonesian online commerce are investigated using sociolinguistic viewpoints.

This approach makes it possible for the study to understand how vocative statements serve both pragmatic purposes and the construction of identities and social relationships in the context of real commerce. Through the integration of different theoretical viewpoints, the study provides a thorough grasp of how language is strategically employed to increase engagement and boost sales in online commercial transactions.

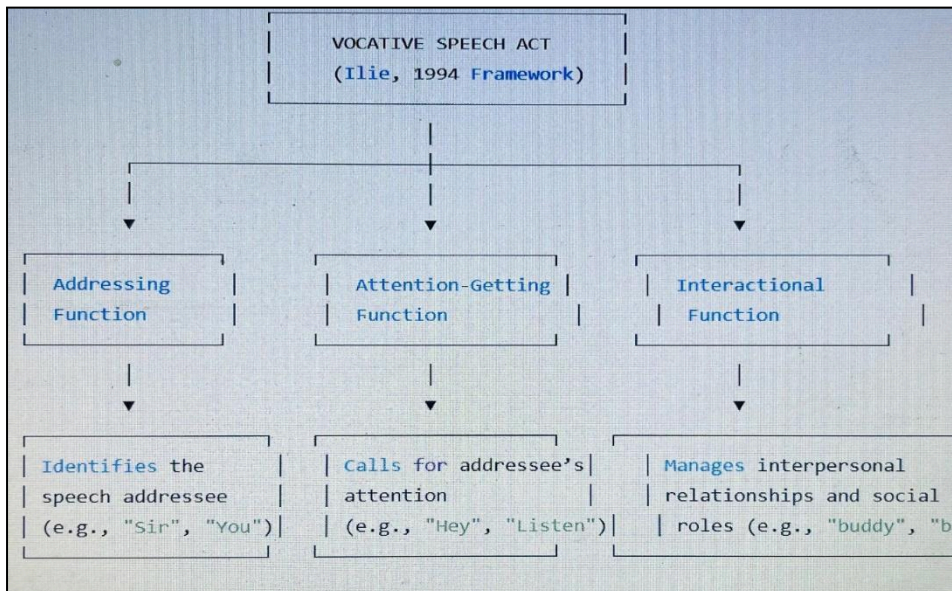


Figure 2. Vocative Speech Act

Findings and Discussion

The writer gathered the data from the live streaming online sales from Shopee. The data has been collected as 100 data points. Three methods were employed by the author to analyze this research: category construction, shortening category and data, and naming the category. These three steps are based on Meriam and Tisdell's (2015) methodology. The first step is doing the categorization; the writer listens and watches the live streaming for about 2 minutes and records the live streaming. The second step is sorting

the data. The writer takes notes of the addressee’s name called by the sellers during live streaming and notes the addressee based on the shop’s name and the addressee’s call. The third step is naming the category of the marked data to classify the same addressee call because there will be the same addressee call from one to another. Look at the table below:

Table 1. Example of a table with a three-column format

No	Addressee	Amount
1	Kakak	41
2	Kak	33
3	Sayang	29
4	Beb	25
5	Bunda	7
6	Bun	4
7	Sayangku	10
8	Besti	4
9	Teh	1
10	Guys	2
11	Say	4
12	Best	2
13	Kakak Cantik	1
14	Kakak Sayang	1
15	Cinta	2
16	Cintaku	2
17	Beb	1
18	Teteh	1
19	Temen”	3
20	Bes	1

The addressee calls are found in 20 various terms. One Shopee shop can contain only one addressee; the shop sellers can use one addressee, including (Teh, Kakak Cantik, Kakak Sayang, Bebeb, Teteh, and Bes). Furthermore, one Shopee shop can use more than 1 addressee term during live streaming; it can be 2, 3, or more various addressee calls. The data that has been gathered shows the results based on the table that proves most sellers during the live streaming online sales use the address call “Kakak”. It is

called by 41 Shopee shops. The second most addressed call is “Kak,” which is called by 33 Shopee shops, and the third is “Sayang,” called by 29 Shopee shops. The sellers use those addressee calls to attract attention, show politeness, and intimacy in expressing solidarity to manage social relationships.

Conclusion

The study concludes by emphasizing the critical role that vocative speech acts and address terms play in establishing social relationships and facilitating efficient communication across Indonesian live commerce platforms. Through the intentional use of well-known and loving address forms like "Sayang," "Kakak," and "Kak," vendors can establish a sense of community, foster trust, and lessen psychological distance with their audiences. These linguistic techniques show the potent nexus of language, technology, and consumer behavior in Indonesia's developing digital marketplace by improving audience engagement and rapport while also making a substantial contribution to successful online sales transactions.

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