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Phatic Communicative Strategies of Female Fashion Online Sellers in E-Commerce Live Show

YULI WIDIANA
WENNY WIJAYANTI
Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya, Indonesia

MOHD NOR SHAHIZAN ALI*
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia

SYED NURULAKLA SYED ABDULLAH
Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Internet-mediated communication (IMC) is an important means of communication during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, IMC is used in various areas, including e-commerce. Since IMC does not allow physical contact, online sellers develop communicative strategies verbally by performing phatic speech acts to maintain social bonds with their customers and avoid communication problems. The discussion of phatic speech acts as a communicative strategy in live e-commerce programmes within the cyberpragmatic approach is interesting to investigate. The study aimed to describe the types and functions of phatic speech acts performed by online sellers in live e-commerce programmes. Data were collected by observing 10 sessions of the live women's fashion sales programme on the e-commerce platform Shopee. All utterances of online female sellers that contained phatic speech acts were transcribed for textual analysis. The analysis was conducted within the framework of the cyberpragmatic approach introduced by Yus (2011). The types of phatic speech acts used by online saleswomen were categorised as greetings, familiarisers, camaraderie intensifiers, and persuasive force. Each type has a specific function. Greetings are those that introduce and close the show, while familiarisers are a strategy for building intimacy with customers. Camaraderie intensifiers such as compliments, jokes, and small talk are significant to maintaining rapport. Persuasive force functioned to intensify customers' trust in the product. The aim of the study was to formulate a model for effective communication strategies in e-commerce for online sellers.

Keywords: *Phatic, communicative strategies, cyberpragmatics, online sellers, e-commerce.*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has massively changed the way we live. One of the most obvious current phenomena is the significant increase in online shopping. As face-to-face communication and physical contact are restricted to avoid COVID-19 infection, e-commerce is the best alternative to conduct a transaction between sellers and buyers. Thus, it is important to carry out current research on sellers' communicative strategies for convincing customers to purchase their products in order to support the growth of e-commerce in general.

E-commerce providers provide an online shopping service that allows sellers and buyers to get in touch with each other easily to make purchases. In this case, the interlocutors perform speech acts. Essentially, speech acts are the actions performed by speakers when

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they use language. These acts can be categorised into different types depending on their communicative function, e.g., assertives (conveying information), directives (ordering, requesting), commissives (promising, threatening), expressives (conveying feelings), declarations (pronouncing a marriage, resigning), and phatics (maintaining social rapport). In addition to the presentation of products with detailed information, e-commerce also offers live show sales where buyers can communicate directly with sellers and vice versa. Therefore, certain politeness strategies in the form of phatic speech acts are used by sellers to encourage buyers to visit the live show. The phatic speech act refers to a type of communication that fulfils a social function rather than conveying a literal meaning or exchanging information. Phatic expressions are primarily used to establish, maintain, or reinforce social relationships, and to create a sense of connection and rapport between individuals. These expressions are often conventionalised phrases, greetings, and small talk that are not necessarily intended to convey specific content and do not necessarily require detailed or genuine responses but rather signal openness, friendliness, and engagement in conversation as social lubricants to maintain the flow of conversation and reinforce the social bonds between speakers. Phatic speech acts are particularly important in various social contexts, such as casual conversations, networking events, initial interactions, or even e-commerce services, where the main goal is to establish a pleasant and cooperative atmosphere as well as build a sense of camaraderie between interlocutors. It is interesting to explore this phenomenon because there is not much research on this topic. This research focuses on analysing the types of phatic speech acts used by online sellers in live online shopping shows. The functions of each type of phatic speech act are then described in detail.

The shift of transaction channels from direct to online contributes to the development of theories in language study, including pragmatics. The abundance of digital data is a lucrative research object for the current study of pragmatics known as cyberpragmatics. The approach of cyberpragmatics is multimodal respectively. The analysis refers not only to the level of utterances but also to a deeper understanding of the particular politeness strategies that accompany the utterances.

The previous study of online seller strategies on eBay proves that the use of "Buy it Now" and reserve prices have limited impact on outcomes due to the competitiveness of the online auction market (Anderson et al., 2007). Another study on online communication shows that a high score for satisfaction with online communication has a greater impact on users' attitudes towards online systems in organisations (Mohamad Salleh et al., 2016). The results can be seen from consumers' satisfaction in using online shopping systems to purchase various products, including fashion products. However, the previous research does not discuss multimodal communication in detail. This study suggests a focus on verbal speech acts and multiple modes of communication (visual, gestural, etc.) in e-commerce live shows. A comprehensive analysis of how these modes interact with phatic verbal strategies represents another gap. Therefore, effective communication in online transactions is important to persuade consumers to purchase the products. In this case, community participation in the use of appropriate speech acts plays an important role in the success of the transactions.

The significance of speech acts in online shopping transactions has been discussed in previous research. Han and He (2012) confirmed that speech acts in internet conversations and behaviours can contribute to ideal and effective communication among participants in online shopping. In light of this statement, this study aimed to explore more about the phatic speech acts used in live shows in e-commerce. The previous study did not discuss specific gender in online shopping, whereas the research focuses on gender-specific analysis since the

study focuses specifically on female fashion online sellers. It appears to be a research gap in understanding how these phatic communicative strategies might differ between genders. Further in-depth analysis of discursive strategies in e-commerce shows that e-commerce live streaming, as a new form of advertising, uses more interactive and personalised persuasive discourse than traditional advertising (Huang et al., 2020). However, the previous study does not seem to address how different e-commerce platforms might influence the nature and effectiveness of phatic communication strategies. Each platform may have unique features that shape these interactions. These findings call for a closer examination of online sellers' persuasive politeness strategies and speech acts that intensify the persuasive force in live e-commerce, especially in online shopping platform. Therefore, the present study focuses on analysing the strategies in more detail.

In another study on e-commerce emails, speech act functions were found to be dominated by representational functions (de Wannal & Heryono, 2020). In this study, phatic functions are investigated as another important speech act in live e-commerce. In addition, a previous study on beauty product advertising on social media highlighted that the use of certain phrases and their connotations often evoke feelings of inadequacy in women about their bodies, so that confidence in their bodies is equated with an "improved" appearance that encourages them to purchase the beauty product (Raslie & Mohd Zaidi, 2022). A similar strategy is used by online fashion retailers to encourage their customers to purchase the products.

Despite the rapid growth of online shopping transactions, the previous study found that consumer perception of the risks of online shopping remains a barrier to the global growth of e-commerce. In this context, it is reasonable to assert that the efforts of global web providers to mitigate certain types of communication risks, such as performance, financial, psychological, and time risks, will improve consumers' intention to shop online (Bashir et al., 2017). In relation to the obstacle, this study highlights effective communication strategies for online transactions through the use of Phatic Persuasive Speech Acts (PPSA).

As the data is sourced from the e-commerce platform, cyberpragmatics is the appropriate underlying theory for this study. The particular interest of cyberpragmatic analysis is the role of the sender's intentions and the quality of the addressee's interpretation when Internet-mediated interactions take place (Yus, 2011). In live e-commerce, the seller's intention and the consumer's interpretation are analysed to describe the types of speech acts and politeness strategies.

A speech act is one of the most important topics in cyberpragmatics. Most of the time, our utterances are automatically interpreted as speech acts, such as assertions, conjectures, testimonies, orders, requests, pleas, threats, offers, and promises (Kissine, 2013). Speech acts are, therefore, acts that refer to the action that is performed through produced utterances. In the context of politeness strategies, the phatic speech act plays an important role in maintaining a social bond among the participants (Aull, 2019; Stenström, 2014; Vanyan, 2022; Widiana et al., 2020). Speech acts in live e-commerce, if consistent with certain politeness strategies, can contribute to effective communication between sellers and consumers and avoid communication issues.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication Issue

There are various reasons for communication issues. Communication issues could occur in different contexts with different characteristics of the participants. Some possible factors that can contribute to communication issues are misinterpretation of messages, misreading of non-verbal cues, misunderstanding generated by assumptions, misunderstanding influenced by emotional state, and unclear messages due to environmental factors. Previous research has shown that communication issues might occur due to technological developments and the development of new media in a society that have caused changes in communication trends (Firanti et al., 2019). In another context, communication issues that occurred in construction project management have affected project delivery in the construction industry (Abd Aziz et al., 2022). Considering the factors that lead to communication issues is important when it comes to establish effective communication, which requires active listening, clarity, empathy and a willingness to understand and consider different perspectives.

Research on communication issues in online shopping live reveals that live selling has a significant positive influence on purchase intention (Akromah & Nurhadi, 2024). However, when shopping online, there can be communication issues between online sellers and their customers, that involve verbal cues and non-verbal cues. When customers participate in a live e-commerce programme, they need to understand verbal cues in the form of specific terms used to complete transactions. If they do not understand these terms, they may experience communication issues that affect the efficiency of online transactions. In terms of non-verbal cues, inappropriate body language, tone of voice, pitch control, and facial expressions from the seller can also lead to communication issues. Both verbal and nonverbal communication characteristics of live commerce show hosts' influence on purchase intention (Hwang, 2022). The communication issues are possible because live e-commerce takes place in a hybrid communication channel, where salespeople perform live in front of the camera while customers follow the show off-camera. In this case, the customers can only communicate with the sellers through text messages in the chat room, while the sellers cannot see the customers.

A certain type of communication in live e-commerce requires certain communicative strategies to be used by both sellers and customers. These strategies may include politeness strategies to avoid communication issues and create harmonious and effective interactions. The aim of the study was to discuss speech acts as communicative strategies and the realisation of pragmatic politeness in connection with each type of speech act.

Community Participation

Community participation refers to the active involvement of individuals in the affairs and activities of their community. It includes participation in various social, economic, cultural and political processes in order to contribute to the well-being and development of the community as a whole. Community participation can take many forms, such as volunteering, attending community meetings, participating in local events, joining community organisations or groups, and actively supporting community initiatives and projects.

In an online communication context, a virtual community is a type of social network of individuals who are connected through specific social media, possibly crossing geographical and political boundaries. Participation in virtual communities, therefore pursues common interests or goals. Some of the most widespread virtual communities are online communities that operate within the framework of social networking services, such as online shopping

platforms. Community participation in online shopping live shows has emerged as a significant factor influencing consumer behaviour and loyalty. In this regard, a virtual community is an aggregation of individuals or business partners interacting around a common interest, where the interaction is at least partially supported and/or mediated by technology and is guided by certain protocols or norms.

Virtual community participation significantly increases loyalty intentions, both through social mechanisms (via community identification) and psychological mechanisms (via trust and satisfaction) (Pai & Tsai, 2011). In this case, the complex relationship between sellers and customers in online shopping settings makes community identification a crucial factor in enhancing customer loyalty intentions. In addition, the findings of previous research contribute to the understanding of the process by which virtual community building facilitates the development of relationships between businesses and consumers in a computer-mediated environment (Pai & Tsai, 2011).

Different contexts distinguish the role of community participation. In the online shopping context, technological and social factors like real-time interactivity and media richness influence consumers' purchase intention in live-streaming shopping through attraction and cognitive assimilation (Dong et al., 2023; Xiao et al., 2023). Technological and social factors such as visibility, media richness, guidance shopping and real-time interactivity in live-streaming shopping might influence consumers' purchase intention.

Community participation issues can occur in a variety of contexts, such as local communities, online forums, or the workplace. These issues can include lack of engagement, disinterest, apathy, or unequal representation. In online forums, such as live e-commerce, issues can arise based on the level of solidarity of community participation and require an understanding of verbal and non-verbal cues. Therefore, appropriate speech acts and politeness strategies are critical to building robust community participation.

Cyberpragmatics

Since the study deals with virtual texts, cyberpragmatics is the appropriate underlying theory to analyse the data. The term cyberpragmatics, coined by Yus (2011), deals with the pragmatic analysis of internet-mediated communication. The particular interest of cyberpragmatic analysis is the role of the sender's intentions and the quality of the addressee's interpretation when Internet-mediated interactions take place. In this sense, cyberpragmatics examines how senders and addressees perform an act of sense-making in cyber media, on a scale of contextualisation ranging from highly context-saturated media (videoconferencing, internet-enabled phone calls, chat rooms with webcams, etc.) to highly cues-filtered text-based media (traditional chat rooms, e-mail, instant messaging, etc.) (Locher, 2013; Yus, 2011, 2018). In terms of theory, the study focuses on analysing text-based media data.

Analysing conversational data within the context of the cyberpragmatics framework requires certain contexts with some external aspects such as smileys, emojis, emoticons, avatars, GIFs, and stickers. The typographical tokens are used by netizens to fulfil the need for physical contact when online interactions take place. In addition, the distinctive characteristics of virtual communication are also linked to specific contexts. The role of context is crucial for speakers to interpret what is meant in such a conversational encounter (Bauler, 2019). However, there is the possibility of shifting elements and functions of context, which contributes to changing the meaning of speech intentions in cyberpragmatics (Rahardi,

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2020). In the study, the cyberpragmatic context and its external elements were used to explain the PPSA used by online sellers in live e-commerce communication.

The analytical procedure of the study utilises the adaptation of relevance theory within the framework of cyberpragmatics (Sperber & Wilson, 1995; Yus, 2011). Relevance theory analyses how online utterances are produced by senders and interpreted by addressees through the context and its external elements. The process is illustrated in Figure 1 as follows.

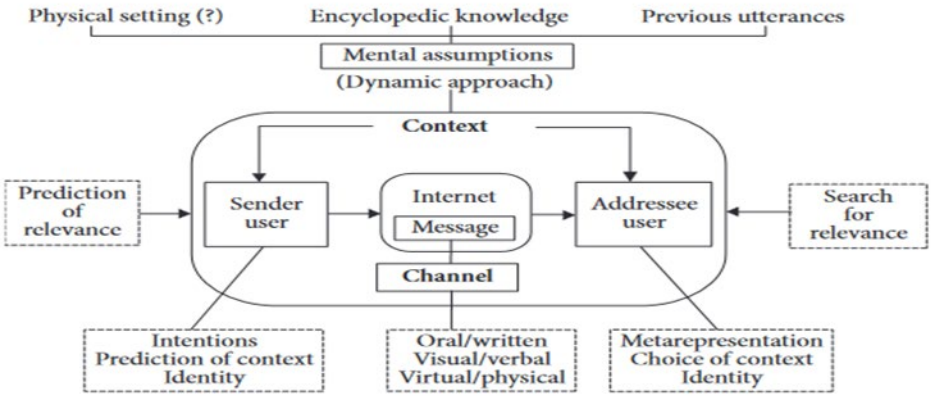


Figure 1: Relevance Theory in Cyberpragmatics Framework (Yus, 2011)

Speech Acts

A speech act is one of the most important discussions in pragmatics. Most of the time, our utterances are automatically interpreted as speech acts, such as assertions, conjectures, testimonies, orders, requests, pleas, threats, offers, and promises (Kissine, 2013). In other words, speech acts are acts that refer to the action performed by the utterances produced. Thus, the speech act focuses on what the addresser and/or the addressee does when a particular utterance is made in a series of conversations.

Speech acts contain some utterances that behave similarly to actions (Ahmed & Mahmood, 2024; Aitchison, 2000; Rahayu, 2021; Witczak-Plisiecka, 2009). The speaker attempts to achieve certain effects with the words he or she produces. In some cases, the effect has been achieved through an alternative action. Thus, a speech act is an utterance that is produced, and an act refers to an action. Producing speech acts are communicative actions that are performed through spoken or written language. Successful communication takes place when the listener gets or does what the speaker intends because speech acts are not only utterances but also interactions and the actual use of language.

Kreidler (2014) categorises speech acts into phatic, assertive, performative, verdictive, expressive, directive, and commissive speech acts according to the general purpose of the speaker. The study analyses the types of speech acts in online interactions in live e-commerce. In terms of types, speech acts have specific functions in a given context. The functions vary and depend on the contexts and cultural norms in which the interactions take place. In the Javanese context of face-to-face communication, phatic speech acts have several functions, such as initiating a conversation, intensifying camaraderie, pleasing others, expressing happiness, and consoling others (Widiana et al., 2020). It is possible that speech acts in live e-commerce have particular functions that are related to persuasive strategies. The speech act strategies are also used in the context of online fashion selling. The study of the pragmatic strategies to attract customers used by hijab fashion bloggers in an online magazine shows that commissive are often utilized, along with other sorts of assertive and directives (Qasim,

2023). Since the previous study does not discuss phatic speech acts specifically, this study aims to describe the importance of phatic speech acts as part of politeness strategies in live e-commerce. A more in-depth discussion on this topic would be a valuable contribution to theories of cyberpragmatics.

The research falls within the broader scope of pragmatics and the more specific scope of cyberpragmatics. In this respect, context should be taken into account when analysing the research data. The contextual elements in cyberpragmatics are crucial to analyse as the social relations of participants shift from direct to indirect conversations due to the shift in communication media. The current classification of cyberpragmatic contexts is social context, societal context, cultural context, and situational context (Rahardi, 2020). The external virtual elements or the typographical tokens that appear in social media communication are considered as the aspects that determine the meaning of pragmatics (Yus, 2011, 2021). Perhaps emojis in live communication in e-commerce are an essential aspect in determining the meaning of a series of conversations.

Politeness Maxims

The use of virtual politeness is a significant focus of the cyberpragmatics approach, as politeness maxims play an important role in virtual communication. Indeed, communication that adheres to politeness maxims can create a social bond among members of a speech community. The effectiveness of PPSA in the cyberpragmatics context to perform politeness is an interesting subject of investigation as there is no guidance for their use. In particular, politeness maxims are a strategy to please others.

Politeness maxims vary by culture. Brown and Levinson (1987) made a breakthrough in politeness study by introducing the theory of negative politeness and positive politeness. Although this theory has similarities with Javanese politeness maxims, it could not account for all politeness concepts in Javanese culture. Javanese politeness strategies are closely related to the traditional politeness concepts of *Kurmat* 'respect', *Tepa Selira* 'tolerance', *Andhap Asor* 'humility', and *Empan Papan* 'self-awareness' (Gunarwan, 2007; Widiana, 2023). The maxim of Kurmat requires speakers to show great respect to the addressees. In doing so, the speaker should choose the appropriate Javanese level of speech and use the appropriate term of address according to the social status of the listener. The *tepa selira* maxim expects speakers to put themselves in the addressees' shoes in order to understand how they feel under the given circumstances. The *andhap asor* maxim encourages speakers to behave modestly and avoid showing off. The maxim *empan papan* requires speakers to be aware of the circumstances of the environment and the social status or position of the addressee so that they can behave appropriately. Poedjosoedarmo (2017), meanwhile, proposed the other essential Javanese maxim of *sumanak* (friendliness). The maxim expects a Javanese to be friendly and consider his or her interlocutor as *sanak* (relative or family) to establish a close relationship and harmony in communication, regardless of status and power.

The politeness maxims are an unwritten guide for Javanese to avoid conflict. As far as Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness is concerned, the *kurmat* maxim and the *tepa selira* maxim are similar to the concept of negative politeness, which states that the speaker is considerate of the listener's feelings. The kurmat maxim requires the speaker to respect the listener. The tepa selira maxim expects the speaker to put himself in the listener's shoes. However, Brown and Levinson's concept could not explain the alternate use of the Javanese speech level in terms of politeness. Brown and Levinson's positive politeness, which focuses

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on the listener's situation, seems to correspond to the *andhap asor* maxim and the *empan papan* maxim. The *andhap asor* maxim expects speakers to praise the listener more than themselves. The empan papan maxim prompts speakers to consider the social status of the listener in order to choose an appropriate mode of expression and speech level. Choosing an appropriate mode of expression and speech level is an important concept of Javanese politeness. Brown and Levinson's positive politeness could not explain this particular concept. The Javanese politeness maxims should determine the pragmatic persuasive strategies employed by female fashion online sellers in live e-commerce.

METHODOLOGY

The study is designed within the framework of cyberpragmatics, as the data were collected from an internet-mediated source. The data of the study was taken from the live e-commerce of Shopee Indonesia since the shopping platform is one of the dominant e-commerce platforms in Indonesia, which has one of the fastest-growing digital economies in Southeast Asia (Barus, 2024). This makes it particularly representative of regional e-commerce discourse patterns. The platform also features diverse communicative contexts, including product descriptions, reviews, seller-buyer interactions, and promotional content—all valuable for analyzing pragmatic features like speech acts. Moreover, Indonesian e-commerce communication often blends formal and informal registers, uses code-switching between Indonesian and local languages, and employs culturally specific politeness strategies that provide unique pragmatic research opportunities. Thus, Shopee Live's e-commerce for women's fashion served as the data source. An observational method is used for data collection (Sudaryanto, 2016). 342 conversations with phatic speech acts were collected from 10 Shopee Lives of 3 online shops. The account of the 3 online female fashion shops are CDCmodels (4 Live Sessions), Bajumi Clothing (3 Live Sessions), and officialhirembulan (3 Live Sessions). The e-commerce platforms selected for data collection were those that maintained an audience exceeding one hundred concurrent viewers during live streaming sessions and exclusively marketed women's apparel for adult demographics. The duration of each live show is approximately two hours. The conversations were recorded and transcribed for textual analysis. The final step is to classify the phatic speech acts and politeness strategies.

The cyberpragmatic approach is a method that integrates practical, ethical, and technological strategies to ensure that data collection is fair, unbiased, and reliable. When applied to mitigating bias in data collection, this approach emphasises critical thinking, transparency, and adaptive decision-making in digital environments. A cyberpragmatic approach involves questioning the source, purpose, and context of data to uncover potential biases before they influence results.

The data were described and discussed based on the relevant theory of cyberpragmatics (Yus, 2011, 2018). In addition, the cyberpragmatic context was also taken into account when analysing the data. The contextual elements of cyberpragmatics are crucial for the analysis as the social relationships of the participants shift from direct to indirect conversations due to the change of communication media. The current classification of cyberpragmatic contexts is social context, societal context, cultural context, and situational context (Rahardi, 2020). The external virtual elements, such as gestures, facial expressions, and body language that occur during live e-commerce, are considered to be the aspects that determine pragmatic meaning.

RESULTS

The types of phatic speech acts used by online sellers in Shopee Lives are greetings, familiarisers, camaraderie intensifiers, and persuasive force. Each type represents a specific function. Table 1 illustrates the types and functions of speech acts in Shopee Lives.

Table 1: Types and functions of phatic speech act

Types	Function	Σ
Greetings	Commencing & ending the show	24
Familiarizers	Building intimacy	89
Camaraderie Intensifiers	Maintaining rapport	97
Persuasive Force	Intensifying product trust	142
	Total	**352**

The types of phatic speech acts used by online sellers have been categorised into greetings, familiarisers, camaraderie intensifiers, and persuasive force. Greetings are used for hospitality to start and end the live show, while familiarisers are one such politeness strategy used by sellers to build intimacy with customers. Camaraderie intensifiers which consist of compliments, jokes, and small talk are important in maintaining rapport. Persuasive force is used to intensify customers' trust in the product and persuade them to purchase the product. The results show that persuasive force is the dominant type of phatic speech acts used by female online sellers to promote their fashion products. In contrast, greetings do not occur frequently in live e-commerce. A detailed analysis of the individual types of phatic speech acts is provided in the next section.

Greetings

Delivering greetings to commence the e-commerce live show is crucial because hospitality is the most important thing to get consumers to join the show. The following conversation provides an example of greetings in live e-commerce.

(The participants in the conversation are the female fashion online seller and her customers. She opens the live e-commerce with a greeting in Arabic.)

S2: ***Assalamu'alaykum****. Yuk kita mulai aja ya Bunda karena yang nonton sudah seratusan lebih.*
'*Assalamu'alaykum*. Let's begin the show, Ladies because the viewers had already been more than a hundred.'

C1 : *Atasan Bun*.
'Top, please.'

C2: *Setcel Crinkle*.
'Crinkle Top and pants set.'

The seller began the live show with the Islamic greeting *Assalamu'alaykum*. The peculiar Islamic greeting is delivered because the seller is a Muslim woman, which can be recognised by her Muslim dress and the hijab she wears. The greetings serve as a code that the show has begun so that customers do not have to answer them. The greetings were effective in attracting customers to participate in the show as they started posting comments

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about the products being reviewed, such as Atasan Bun 'Top, please' and Setcel Crinkle 'Crinkle top and pants set'.

Familiarisers

Familiarisers are a significant phatic speech act to build intimacy between sellers and consumers. Female online sellers use special forms of address for consumers such as *Kak* and *Bunda*. An example of the use of familiarisers can be seen in the following conversation.

(The online fashion seller offers a shirt to her customers. She discusses the details of the product. The customer responds by asking about the size of the shirt)

S1: *Ada yang mau kemeja gak, **Kak**? Ini kemeja impor lho. Bahannya silky premium.*
'Is there anyone who wants to buy shirts? It's an imported shirt. The material is premium silk.'

C3 : *LDnya berapa **Bunda**?*
'How many centimeters is the body width?'

S1: *LDnya 105.*
'The body width is 105 cm.

The address term *Kak* is used by sellers towards consumers who watched her live e-commerce. The term *Kak* is used because the seller assumes that the consumers are young. After all, the fashion product is suitable for young women. However, consumers addressed the seller as *Bunda* because she looks like a mature woman. All forms of address used in live e-commerce are feminine because the products on offer are women's fashion.

Camaraderie Intensifier

A camaraderie intensifier is an attempt to maintain rapport during the live show. This can be done through compliments, jokes and small talk. A camaraderie intensifier was used in conjunction with the familiarisers. An example of the use of a camaraderie intensifier can be found in the following excerpt from a conversation.

(The participants in the conversation are a customer and an online seller. The customer asks the seller about the payment method)

C5: *Boleh CO mandiri gak Bun?*
'Could I do self-checkout, ma'am?

S4 : *Kalau mau CO mandiri boleh **kakak cantik***.
'You could do self-checkout, beautiful.'

The conversation took place between the consumer and the seller. The consumer asked the seller whether she could buy the product directly from the display and not from the live show. To intensify the camaraderie, the seller addressed the consumer with the compliment *kakak cantik* 'beautiful' when she answered the question. The function of the compliment is to maintain the rapport between the seller and the consumer and to give more comfort to the consumer in the transaction. Compliments are only used with similar gender because the seller assumes that consumers are female. This assumption is based on the fact that the product is women's fashion. A compliment spoken by the seller is relevant because

the seller and consumer are female participants. Other forms of camaraderie intensifiers are jokes and small talk.

Telling jokes is another strategy of camaraderie intensifier. The excerpt of the following conversation is one of the examples.

> (The seller shows jackets with the letters 'R' and 'NY' embroidered on them. She makes a joke by pronouncing the possible words of the initials 'R' and 'NY'. The customers join in the joke by typing the possible words from the initials.)

S08: *Kakak Bunda, kali ini saya punya jacket Korea terbaru. Bagus banget pokoknya dah. Ada dua macem yang Bunda. Yang aku pakai ini huruf 'R' dan yang dia pakai (pointing to the model) itu yang hurufnya 'NY'.* ***Silakan Bunda, mau yang 'R' ini bisa Rahma, Rani, atau Raffi Ahmad (name of famous male celebrity) atau yang 'NY' ini singkatannya nyonya ya bukan New York (laughing)****. Ayo gercep Bunda keburu abis ntar.*
'Sisters and Moms, I now have the latest Korean-style jacket. The quality is very good. There are two types, Moms. I wear the one with the letter 'R' embroidered on it and the other one has the letter 'NY'. Moms, the one with the letter 'R' could be the initial of Rahma, Rani, or Raffi Ahmad, or you can choose the 'NY' which is the initial of Nyonya (Mrs.), not New York. Grab it quick, Moms, and don't miss out.'

C12: *'R' tu Rambo*.
'R' stands for 'Rambo'.'

C13: *'R' nama gue Rara*.
'R' is my name 'Rara'.'

C14: *Mpok, 'NY' singkatan Nyolong* (Grinning emoji).
'Ma'am 'NY' stands for *Nyolong* (stealing).'

Uttering jokes is an effective strategy for attracting customers' attention. The excerpt from the conversation describes how the jokes uttered by the seller evoke reactions from customers. The jokes about the acronyms (e.g. NY stands for Nyonya 'Mrs' or Nyolong 'stealing' instead of New York) create an atmosphere that makes the live show even more attractive. This could naturally attract more customers to join and participate in the live show. Also, jokes could intensify the intimacy between sellers and customers.

Another strategy to create a camaraderie intensifier is small talk. Small talk is an effective way to promote hospitality between sellers and customers. An example of small talk that helps intensify camaraderie intensifier is the following conversation.

> (The conversation takes place in the live show at the weekend. The seller commences small talk by inquiring about her customers' weekend activities. She then suggests that the customers spend their weekend shopping in her online store.)

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S06: ***Bunda, udah weekend nih. Bunda ngapain aja kalo weekend. Daripada gabut nggak ke mana-mana mending belanja-belanja aja di sini ya Bunda ya****. Barangnya dijamin baru-baru.* Fresh from the oven.
'Moms, it's weekend now. What are you doing on the weekend? If you don't go anywhere, you'd better do shopping here. I have new products. Fresh from the oven.'
C23: *Spill midi dress dong Bund*.
'Display, midi dress, please.'
C24: *Ada atasan lengan balon?*
'Do you have a blouse with puffy sleeves?'

Small talk is an implementation of politeness to show hospitality. In conversation, the seller tries to create a friendly atmosphere by asking the question *Bunda ngapain aja kalo weekend* 'Moms, what are you doing on the weekend?'. The question does not have to be answered. It is just a strategy to show friendliness and attract customers' attention. The attempt is successful as customers type directly into a chat room and ask the seller to display the products.

Persuasive Force

In a retail transaction, a persuasive force is important to attract consumers to buy the product. Live e-commerce in women's fashion shows a particular strategy of persuasive force performed by the seller to attract consumers. A detailed illustration can be found in the excerpt of the conversation as follows.

(The conversation takes place in live e-commerce. The customer asks the seller to review a dress displayed in virtual showcase number 26. Then, the seller tries the dress on and explains that the fashion product is of good quality)

C7: *Kak, review etalase 26.*
'Sister, please review display number 26.'
S3 : *Ini etalase 26* (wearing the clothes). *Ini bagus banget lho kakak. Cantik banget kalau dipakai*. ***Apalagi kalau kakak yang pakai pasti lebih cantik***.
'This is from display number 26. It is very good, Sister. It looks so pretty when we wear it. If you wear it, it will even look prettier.'

The consumer asked the seller to review a product on display with the number 26. Then, the seller tried on the clothes. The persuasive force is performed by complimenting the consumer *Apalagi kalau kakak yang pakai pasti lebih cantik* 'If you wear it, it will look even more beautiful'. However, a compliment is phatic as it is not intended to praise the consumer but rather to persuade. The compliment is therefore made to persuade the consumer to buy the product.

The other form of persuasive force is an exaggerated statement, as can be seen in the following excerpt from the live show.

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(In live e-commerce, a seller displays and reviews knit culottes that she offers to her customers. She emphasises that the culottes are the cheapest compared to other online stores. Then, the female seller directs the customers on how to order the product by mentioning the clue and the color. One of the customers directly orders the culottes by mentioning the clue and the color based on the seller's instructions.)

S2: *Sekarang kita jembrengin kulot rajut ya.* ***Ini kulot rajut termurah sejagad raya****. Kulot rajut ter-the best ini gua kasih harga grosiran 140 ribu ecer. Yang mau fix rajut hitam, rajut milo, dan rajut krem*.
'Now, we're going to review the knit culotte. This is the cheapest knit culotte in the universe. I give a grocer price of 140 thousand per piece for the best-knit culotte. If you want to purchase, please write black knit fixed, milo knit fixed, and cream knit fixed.'

C8: *Fix rajut hitam*.
'Black knit fixed.

The seller tried to persuade the consumer to purchase the product by exaggerating and claiming that the price of the product was the cheapest by saying, *Ini kulot rajut termurah sejagad raya* 'This is the cheapest knit culotte in the universe'. Exaggeration is a persuasive force to assure the consumer that the price is the lowest.

Persuasive force is also used to intensify consumers' trust in the product. An example of a conversation in this regard is given as follows.

(The conversation is in live e-commerce among a woman online seller and her customers. The seller tries to assure the customers about the premium quality of the cardigan that she offers.)

S2: ***Ini bahannya gak usah diragukan lagi. Pokoknya mewah banget. Kita jualnya barang bagus, say. Bukan abal-abal****. Yang mau fix cerah merah, cerah hitam, cerah kuning, cerah BW*.
'No doubt about it. The material is premium. We only sell good quality products, my dear. Not the fake ones. If you want to purchase it, please make your comments in red bright fixed, black bright fixed, bright yellow fixed, and bright broken white fixed.'

C3: *Fix cerah merah*.
'Red bright fixed.'

C4: *Fix cerah hitam*.
'Black bright fixed.'

C5: *Fix cerah kuning*.
'Yellow bright fixed.'

The seller offered a knitted cardigan by asserting a persuasive force that the material of the product is premium to reassure consumers that they had no doubts about the quality of the product. The strategy is successful as consumers order the product directly by providing comments based on the clue and the colour of the cardigans.

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DISCUSSION

The persuasive force is the predominant type of phatic speech act in live e-commerce. In terms of its function to persuade the consumer to buy the product, the persuasive force is an important speech act to strengthen the consumer's trust in the product. Persuasive speech acts are most effective in live streaming environments due to the ability in responding to viewer questions and concerns instantaneously and creating a sense of urgency that improve real-time engagement dynamics. Furthermore, persuasive speech acts leverage critical psychological mechanisms to highlight limited stock or time-sensitive offers, demonstrate product popularity and positive user experiences, build trust and rapport through conversational techniques, and promise quick solutions or benefits. The mechanism improves the psychological triggers on consumers to purchase the product offered. Thus, these factors leverage immediate interaction, psychological triggers, and platform design to create compelling sales experiences. The prevalence of persuasive speech acts in Shopee Live reflects evolving digital communication strategies, consumer behaviour in online marketplaces, technological mediation of sales interactions, and cultural adaptations in e-commerce communication.

In contrast, greetings are not frequently used by online sellers as their function is limited to the beginning and end of the live show. In addition, online sellers endeavour to build intimacy with customers through the customers by utilizing familiarisers such as *Kak/Kakak, Bunda*, *Say/Sayang, Beb*, and *Cantik*. Another important function of the phatic speech act in live e-commerce is to maintain rapport between sellers and consumers through the use of camaraderie intensifiers in the form of compliments, jokes, and small talk.

Phatic Persuasive Speech Acts (PPSA) utilized by female online fashion sellers on Shopee Live consist of greetings, familiarisers, camaraderie intensifiers, and persuasive force. The dominant speech act that was frequently used by female online sellers is persuasive force. Obviously, persuasive force is significant in promoting fashion products. As for the politeness strategy, persuasive force is performed by exaggerating and emphasising aspects related to the quality and price of the product. The finding supports previous research showing that price is one of the most important considerations for consumers when it comes to purchasing a product on online shopping platforms (Singh & Sailo, 2013). Persuasive speech acts are effective in persuading consumers to purchase the product by texting their orders in the chat room using the specific clues instructed by the sellers. As for cooperative principles, communicative relevance between sellers and consumers could work well in online transactions based on the relevance maxim. This fact supports the relevance theory used in cyberpragmatics analysis. Relevance theory applied in cyberpragmatics focuses on communicative relevance between speakers (e.g. sellers) and addressees (e.g. consumers).

The other strategy to persuade consumers to buy fashion products is by conducting camaraderie intensifiers phatic speech act. This type of PPSA could be performed through phatic compliments that imply that consumers' performance will improve if they wear the fashion product promoted by the sellers. The findings support a previous study on online beauty product advertising, which emphasised that consumers' self-confidence in their own bodies equates to an "improved" appearance, which encourages them to purchase the product (Raslie & Mohd Zaidi, 2022). In contrast to beauty product advertising, fashion online sellers never use utterances that reduce consumers' self-confidence. On the contrary, fashion online sellers tend to give compliments to consumers to boost their confidence to wear the fashion product as the product could improve their performance.

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The functions of PPSA in online shopping transactions have similarities with those of face-to-face communication. Previous research has formulated that the functions of speech acts are initiating a conversation, intensifying camaraderie, pleasing others, expressing happiness, and consoling others (Widiana et al., 2020). In online shopping, greetings serve to commence and end the live show, while camaraderie intensifiers are used to build intimacy between sellers and consumers.

In certain contexts, a violation of cooperative principles occurs when consumers do not respond to the seller's greeting when they start or end the live e-commerce. However, this does not affect the communicative relevance between sellers and consumers, as consumers understand that the greeting informs them that live e-commerce is starting and that the greeting serves to end the programme. Therefore, instead of responding to the greeting, consumers begin to ask sellers for a product review by entering the products they want to know about in detail into the chat room. In other words, consumers do not consider it important to respond to the greeting when shopping online. Due to the limited functions, phatic greetings are not frequently used by sellers and consumers. For this reason, violating cooperative principles by not responding to greetings is not a violation of the principles of politeness, so consumers are not considered impolite. The linguistic phenomenon in this study differs from the previous study by (Sharif et al., 2019), which shows that things related to mockery and humiliation from sellers towards consumers are evidence of the decline of cultural values in Asian culture. Things related to the decline of cultural values do not occur in online transactions of female fashion products in Indonesia. Responding to greetings is not important because both sellers and customers know that greetings are only phatic as they serve to commence and end the live show.

Familiarisers are the type of Phatic Persuasive Speech Act often used by female online fashion sellers. Familiarisers in the form of endearments such as *Kak, Bunda*, *Beb, Bestie, Sayang*, and *Cantik* only refer to adult female customers and sellers, as the product being offered is intended for adult women. Therefore, the sellers assume that all customers are women as they have no information about the gender of the customers. It is difficult to determine the gender of the customers because the communication is hybrid. The sellers communicate directly in front of the camera, while the customers type texts in a chat room. Similar familiarisers are also used by customers to call female sellers. The term *Kak* 'Sist' generally refers to young saleswomen between the ages of 20 and 30, while *Bunda* 'Mom' refers to adult saleswomen between the ages of 30 and 40. In contrast, saleswomen use both terms depending on the products they are selling. If they are reviewing fashion products for young women, they use *Kak*. If the product is suitable for more mature women, saleswomen tend to call their customers Bunda. Such familiarisers can effectively establish familiarity between sellers and customers. In this sense, familiarisers are important to avoid friction and conflict that can occur in live e-commerce. On the other hand, previous research on online shopping in the real estate business shows that friction between sellers and customers can occur during price negotiations (Chen, 2020).

The findings support Yus's cyberpragmatics theory (Yus, 2011, 2018, 2021) that online communication develops its own contextualisation cues to compensate for the lack of physical presence. Sellers probably use specific linguistic markers unique to livestream commerce. Furthermore, the research shows how sellers maximise relevance in communication by balancing cognitive effort and contextual effects - making their messages easily processable while providing value. Moreover, the study demonstrates how sellers

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adjust their language to match their perceived audience in digital contexts. However, the result might challenge the notion that computer-mediated communication is inherently less rich than face-to-face interaction. Live stream sellers likely develop compensatory strategies that create rich social connections. Specifically, the study might reveal how platform-specific communication norms emerge that do not align with general cyberpragmatic principles, suggesting more fragmentation of digital communication practices.

In terms of traditional politeness theory, Brown and Levinson's model (Brown & Levinson, 1987) might be challenged since the research shows that politeness strategies in e-commerce livestreams differ from conventional expectations, with more direct approaches being preferred. Using endearment terms to address the viewers of the live shows is one of the direct approaches found in the live e-commerce context. Employing shared cultural knowledge in greetings and rapport maintenance to create a community feeling is another direct approach employed by online sellers.

A study on PPSA and the realisation of politeness by female online fashion sellers on online shopping platforms contributes to the cyberpragmatics and pragmatics of politeness. Aligned with the previous studies, the findings show the significance of social bonding through language, importance of rapport-building, and the use of conversational markers (Akromah & Nurhadi, 2024; Han & He, 2012; Widiana et al., 2020, 2024) in digital contexts. On the contrary, the study has a divergence from the previous studies in terms of different politeness markers compared to traditional communication, emergence of platform-specific linguistic norms, and integration of visual and textual communication strategies.

The implication of the study is closely related to a model of politeness strategies that are effective in online shopping transactions. Perhaps the results of the study can be applied by both sellers and customers to maintain courtesy and social relations. In this way, they could overcome consumers' perceived risks in online purchases due to inefficient online communication (Bashir et al., 2017). It also helps improve the digital economy and reduces the impact of digital civility threats on internet users, as measured by Microsoft in their Digital Civility Index survey.

CONCLUSION

The investigation led to a classification of phatic speech acts consisting of greetings, familiarisers, camaraderie intensifiers, and persuasive force. Greetings are used to start and end the show. To establish intimacy between the seller and the consumer, familiarisers are used as the term of address from the seller to the consumers and vice versa. Meanwhile, camaraderie intensifiers such as endearments, jokes, and small talk are used alongside familiarisers to maintain rapport. Persuasive force is the most dominant phatic form used by sellers to persuade consumers to buy their products. Persuasive force is conveyed through compliments and exaggerations regarding the quality and price of the product.

The use of phatic speech acts in live e-commerce is a kind of politeness strategy by sellers to show hospitality to consumers. Hospitality plays a major role in persuading consumers to buy a product. Therefore, phatic speech act in live e-commerce is a part of business strategy for online marketing, that can have a great impact on successful e-commerce. This study contributes to the research and advancement of cyberpragmatics by using the hybrid data of verbal utterances and written comments in a live online show. Further development of cyberpragmatics research in relation to live e-commerce could be done by exploring other topics of speech acts such as directives and assertive.

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BIODATA

Yuli Widiana is a faculty member in the English Language Program, Faculty of Communication Science, at Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya, Indonesia. Her research interests include pragmatics, cyberpragmatics, sociolinguistics, linguistics, cultural communication, politeness, and media. Email: widianayuli@ukwms.ac.id

Wenny Wijayanti is a lecturer in the Indonesian Education Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, at Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya, Indonesia. Her research interests include pragmatics, classroom discourse, and curriculum design. Email: wenny.wijayanti@ukwms.ac.id

Mohd Nor Shahizan Ali is assigned to the School of Media and Communication Studies (MENTION), at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. He is interested in conducting research in the fields of documentary, broadcasting, visual communication, and media literacy. Email: shahizan@ukm.edu.my

Syed Nurulakla Syed Abdullah belongs to the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. His research interests are in the fields of translation, linguistics, and cultural studies. Email: syedakla@upm.edu.my

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