

Variations In Expressive Speech Acts By Age In Buying And Selling Transactions At The Labuapi Traditional Market In West Lombok

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Abstract

This study aims to describe variations in expressive speech acts based on age in buying and selling transactions at Labuapi Market, West Lombok. The approach used is qualitative descriptive, with a focus on pragmatic analysis. The research data consists of utterances between sellers and buyers containing expressive speech acts, collected through observation, recording, transcription, and interviews. The research subjects were grouped into three age categories: youth, adults, and the elderly. The results indicate that various forms of expressive speech acts-such as praise, complaints, expressions of gratitude, apologies, and criticism-are used in buying and selling interactions. The variation in the use of expressive speech acts is influenced by age, as the youth group tends to use language that is more spontaneous, informal, and expressive. The adult age group demonstrated a more balanced use of language between expression and politeness, while the elderly age group placed greater emphasis on politeness and formality in speech. However, age is not the sole determinant, as situational context, communication goals, and social roles also influence the use of expressive speech acts. This study contributes to the field of pragmatics, particularly in understanding language variation within the context of social interaction in traditional markets

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in fostering social interaction (Arianti et al., 2024; Manalu et al., 2025), including in economic activities such as buying and selling transactions at traditional markets. In this context, language functions not only as a means of conveying information but also as a vehicle for expressing the speaker's attitudes, emotions, and judgments (Ningrum & Tazqiyah, 2024). Pragmatic studies view language as a speech act that carries a specific intention depending on the context of its use. One type of speech act that frequently appears in everyday interactions is the expressive speech act, which is a utterance used to convey the speaker's psychological state regarding a particular situation or event.

Expressive speech acts encompass various forms, such as expressions of gratitude, praise, complaints, criticism, and apologies. From the perspective of speech act theory proposed by Searle, (1976), expressive speech acts serve to convey the speaker's attitude or evaluation of a particular situation. Furthermore, expressive speech acts also play a crucial role in building interpersonal relationships and strengthening emotional engagement in communication. Additionally, the variations in the forms of expressive speech acts are influenced by social and cultural contexts, so their usage may differ across various communication situations.

One of the social factors influencing variations in the use of expressive speech acts is age. Age differences are closely linked to social experience, levels of politeness, and language habits that develop within a given social environment. Furthermore, variations in expressive speech acts can be influenced by specific social backgrounds, such as economic status and the social context of interaction, which are ultimately also related to the speaker's age. Consequently, different age groups tend to exhibit distinct characteristics in expressing emotions through language, whether in terms of word choice, intonation, or communication strategies (Alwi et al., 2025).

The traditional market in Labuapi, West Lombok, serves as a space for social interaction that brings together people of various age groups in buying and selling activities. Interactions between sellers and buyers in this traditional market demonstrate dynamic and contextual language use, including expressive speech acts such as praising, complaining, or haggling over prices. Previous research has also shown that in the context of traditional markets, expressive speech acts are often used to maintain politeness and build social relationships between transaction participants (Tama et al., 2025). Therefore, a study of variations in expressive speech acts based on age in buying and selling transactions at the Labuapi Market is important For Understanding The Dynamics Of Language Use Within The Local Community's Sociocultural CONTEXT.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Speech acts are one of the central concepts in pragmatics, which views language as a social act. Speech act theory was first proposed by J. L. Austin, (1976) who divided speech acts into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts; it was later developed by John R. Searle, (1985), who classified illocutionary speech acts into several types, one of which is the expressive speech act. Expressive speech acts are used to express the speaker's psychological attitude toward a situation, such as joy, gratitude, complaints, and praise. Recent research indicates that expressive speech acts play a crucial role in building interpersonal relationships because they allow speakers to explicitly convey emotions in communication (Ahmad et al., 2025).

More specifically, expressive speech acts take various forms depending on the communicative context. In contemporary pragmatic studies, expressive speech acts are viewed not only as expressions of emotion but also as communication strategies to influence the addressee (John W. Creswell & J. David Creswell, 2022a, 2022b). For example, in public or media interactions, expressive speech acts are used to build emotional closeness and the speaker's social image. Furthermore, common forms of expressive speech acts include expressions of gratitude, apologies, compliments, complaints, and criticism, all of which serve specific social functions in communicative interactions.

In the context of interactions between sellers and buyers in traditional markets, expressive speech acts play a very significant role in maintaining politeness and ensuring the smooth flow of transactions. Several studies indicate that in buying and selling transactions, speakers frequently use expressive speech acts such as praising, complaining, or expressing gratitude as part of negotiation strategies and to maintain social relationships between sellers and buyers (Cahyo et al., 2024; Saleh et al., 2024). This indicates that the use of expressive speech acts is not merely linguistic in nature but is also closely tied to the prevailing social and cultural norms within society.

Variations in the use of expressive speech acts are influenced by various social factors, one of which is age. Age differences are related to levels of experience, emotional maturity, and understanding of linguistic politeness norms. Previous research has shown that different age groups exhibit different tendencies in the use of expressive speech acts, both in terms of frequency and form (Putra et al., 2025). For example, in children, variations in expressive speech acts such as compliments, apologies, and complaints are found to be simple and spontaneous, whereas in older age groups, they tend to be more complex and controlled. Thus, age is an important variable in this study for determining language variation in social interaction.

In addition, there are theoretical perspectives that do not fully support the view that age is a dominant factor in the use of expressive speech acts. Several studies indicate that other factors, such as situational context, social roles, and environmental background, have a greater influence than age. For example, in an educational context, variations in expressive speech acts are more influenced by whether the situation is formal or informal than by the speaker's age (Purba et al., 2025; Putra et al., 2025). Furthermore, social factors such as economic background and the communication environment can also determine variations in the use of expressive speech acts (W. Sari et al., 2022);(Ahmad et al., 2025). Thus, although age is a factor, contextual factors must still be considered in the analysis of expressive speech acts.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method with the aim of describing variations in expressive speech acts based on age in buying and selling transactions at Labuapi Market, West Lombok. The qualitative method was chosen because this study focuses on understanding linguistic phenomena in their natural context and interpreting the meaning behind the utterances produced by speakers. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research aims to explore and understand the meanings derived from social or humanitarian issues. Thus, this approach is considered appropriate for examining expressive speech acts in real-life interactions within a traditional market setting.

The data sources for this study were the utterances of vendors and buyers involved in sales transactions at Labuapi Market. Data collection techniques were conducted through direct observation, recording, and interviews to obtain authentic data (Hanyfah et al., 2022). Research subjects were grouped based on age categories, namely youth (15-30 years), adults (31-50 years), and the elderly (51 years and older). The listen and record technique was used to document utterances containing expressive speech acts (DINA ATIQOH, 2022). This method aligns with the view (F. K. Sari & Cahyono, 2022) that the listen and record technique is the primary method in language research for obtaining data directly from language use in natural contexts.

The data analysis process was conducted in several stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The collected data were classified based on the type of expressive speech acts and the speakers' age groups, then analyzed using a pragmatic approach grounded in Searle's speech act theory. Data validity is tested through source and method triangulation to ensure the validity of the research results (Husnullail & Jailani, 2024; Susanto & Jailani, 2023). Thus, this method is expected to produce a comprehensive description of the variation in expressive speech acts based on age in the context of buying and selling transactions at the Labuapi traditional market in West Lombok.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that in buying and selling transactions at Labuapi Market in West Lombok, various forms of expressive speech acts were observed among sellers and buyers, including expressions of praise, complaints, expressions of gratitude, apologies, and criticism. These forms emerged naturally during interactions in response to transactional situations. These findings align with previous research stating that expressive speech acts such as praise, complaints, and expressions of gratitude are dominant forms in traditional market interactions. This indicates that the function of expressive speech acts is not only as an expression of feelings but also as a communication strategy in economic activities. The following are the results of the study on expressive speech acts between sellers and buyers at the traditional Labuapi Market in West Lombok.

Table 1: Research Findings on Expressive Speech Between Sellers and Buyers at the Labuapi Traditional Market, West Lombok.

Number	Speaker	Age	Participant	Expressive Utterance	Type of Speech Act
1	Young	15 years old	Customer	“Wow, this is really cheap!”	Compliment
2	Young	22 years old	Customer	“Oh, this is expensive, though.”	Complaint
3	Young	30 years old	Seller	“Thank you, Ma’am.”	Thanks
4	Adult	37 years old	Customer	“Can you lower the price a little?”	Request
5	Adult	46 years old	Seller	“Thank you very much, Ma’am.”	Thanks
6	Adult	50 years old	Seller	“Come on, ma’am, these vegetables are still fresh.”	Compliment
7	Elderly	53 years old	Buyer	“Please lower the price, okay.”	Request
8	Elderly	55 years old	Buyer	“Thank you, may you be blessed.”	Thank you
9	Elderly	58 years old	Buyer	“Sorry, I’m not going to buy this after all.”	Apology
10	Elderly	60 years old	Seller	“The quality of this item is excellent.”	Compliment

Source: Compiled Data

Based on the results of the above study, it is evident that the younger age group (15-30 years old) tends to use expressive speech acts that are spontaneous, informal, and emotional. Comments from buyers such as “*Wow, this is so cheap!*” or “*Oh my, this is really expensive, sis*” demonstrate direct expressions that do not strictly adhere to formal politeness norms. This phenomenon aligns with pragmatic studies indicating that expressive speech acts are often used to build emotional closeness and convey attitudes directly in communication. Thus, the younger age group prioritizes expressiveness over politeness structures.

Among adults (ages 31-50), the use of expressive speech acts tends to strike a better balance between expression and politeness. They use phrases such as “*Can you lower the price a little?*” or “*Thank you very much,*” which demonstrate greater linguistic control. This indicates that adults possess more mature pragmatic abilities in adapting their speech to the social context. Other studies also show that speech acts in buying and selling transactions are dominated by illocutionary acts with specific intentions, such as persuading or bargaining over price. Thus, expressive speech acts in this group also function as negotiation strategies.

Furthermore, older adults (over 50 years old) tend to use more formal and polite speech acts. Phrases such as “*could you please lower the price?*” or “*thank you, may you be blessed*” demonstrate a strong adherence to norms of politeness. This aligns with the principle of politeness in pragmatics, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining social relationships through language. In the context of traditional markets, politeness is a crucial aspect of interaction as it relates to local cultural values and communication ethics. Therefore, older adults prioritize social harmony over spontaneous emotional expression.

However, the results of this study also indicate that age is not the sole variable determining variations in expressive speech acts. In some cases, it was found that vendors of various ages used similar speech patterns when in specific situations, such as when dealing with regular customers or in a crowded market. This is supported by research stating that in sales interactions, dominant speech acts are actually influenced by communication goals and situational context, not solely by age (Yulanda, 2021). Thus, the context of the interaction plays a crucial role in determining speech forms.

Furthermore, there are theoretical perspectives that do not fully support the dominance of age as a factor in the use of expressive speech acts. Several studies indicate that factors such as social context, the speaker’s role (seller or buyer), and the purpose of communication have a greater influence than age (Suryawin et al., 2022). For example, in a study on expressive speech acts, it was found that the primary function of speech is to convey psychological attitudes and build social relationships, regardless of the speaker’s age. This suggests that while age contributes to linguistic variation, other pragmatic factors such as the situation and communicative purpose remain the primary determinants in the use of expressive speech acts.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that expressive speech acts in buying and selling transactions at Labuapi Market, West Lombok, appear in various forms, such as praise, complaints, expressions of gratitude, apologies, and criticism. These speech acts are used contextually by sellers and buyers as part of a communication strategy to convey attitudes and feelings, as well as to build interpersonal relationships during the transaction process. Thus, expressive speech acts not only function as emotional expressions but also play a pragmatic role in facilitating the smooth flow of buying and selling interactions.

Variations in the use of expressive speech acts indicate differences influenced by age. Younger age groups tend to use more spontaneous, informal, and expressive speech, while older age groups demonstrate more controlled language use that is adapted to the situation. Meanwhile, older adults prioritize politeness and formality in their speech. These differences reflect the relationship between age and social experience, linguistic maturity, and understanding of societal norms of politeness.

However, age is not the only determining factor in the variation of expressive speech acts. Situational context, communicative goals, and the speaker’s social role also influence the form and function of the speech acts employed. Therefore, future research on expressive speech acts must comprehensively consider various social factors and the pragmatic scope. These findings are expected to contribute to the development of pragmatic studies, particularly in understanding the dynamics of language variation in social interaction based on age in traditional markets.

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