

# Language and Communication Behavior of Bugis Ethnic Traders to Prospective Buyers

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**Abstract:** Communication behavior of Bugis ethnic traders to prospective buyers in Manonda market Palu has its own characteristics. It has a variety of speech acts based on cultural values and habits that are still inherent to Bugis ethnic traders so that this communication behavior creates a special meaning that affects the prospective buyers. The aims of this research are (1) to find out and describe the language and communication behavior of ethnic Bugis traders to the prospective buyers, (2) to reveal the meaning of the message caused by the variation of speech acts in communication behavior to prospective buyers. The researcher used a descriptive-qualitative method by choosing 5 (five) Bugis ethnic traders as informants who trade in Manonda market through predetermined criteria. This research used purposive sampling. Instruments of data collection were participatory-observation, interviews, listening, and taking note. The results of this research revealed that; (1) Language and communication behavior of Bugis ethnic traders to prospective buyers used verbal and nonverbal communication simultaneously. The traders dominantly used perlocutionary speech acts with *expressive* and *commissive* types of speech through accommodative and persuasive communication models. To end communication, the traders used *phatic* speech acts. They applied a *conative* attitude structure. (2) The meaning of the message expressed by the traders was more affective. The traders often applied low context culture to the prospective buyers rather than high context culture.

**Keywords:** Communication behavior, message meaning, Ethnic Bugis traders.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Manonda market is one of the traditional markets located in the sub-district of West Palu, Palu city, Central Sulawesi province. In this market the relationship between traders and prospective buyers is unique. It is different from modern markets. Based on pre-observation that has been done before doing actual research, the writer as a researcher saw things that were unique and interesting when he was in this market, including social communication behavior that was seen and heard in interacting such as ways of bargaining between traders and prospective buyers by using variation of code (language), meaningful smile, meaningful body movement as well as distinctive sound and noise. In the perspective of the interactions that occur, the traditional markets have a special uniqueness that become the spirit of the market dynamics. Therefore, this situation is different from modern markets in which communication behavior between traders and prospective buyers is limited.

In the traditional market, communication behavior that is practiced in bargaining for goods is able to have a psychological impact on every prospective buyer. It is even more interesting because there are various types of ethnicity, where each ethnic has its own style and character of behavior in interacting so that it raises its own language and social behavior. This situation occurs because it cannot be separated from the existence of various kinds of cultural dimensions, norms, customs, habits, and language variations of each individual. In such a situation, whether it is realized or not, it presents its own uniqueness in interaction between traders and prospective buyers. Sometimes the traders and the prospective buyers touch each other and measure the depth of each party's heart through communication behavior so that they sometimes create attitude of joy, laughter, and even the possibility of emotional attitudes from both parties. Novianti E (2017) also states that communication behavior can also lead to closer social relationships, mutual respect, and in the end can create understanding mutually beneficial socially and economically.

In terms of culture, the Manonda traditional market has a unique culture because it is caused by various ethnic groups who come to buy and the traders sometimes use communication habits and behaviors that are still attached to the culture and habits of each individual. This situation is important to understand the language and communication behavior of each individual who is different from ethnicity and race. In communicating, the traders and the prospective buyers use two types of language variations at once. Nababan (1986) states the use of language variations is not only influenced by linguistic factors but can also be influenced by social and situational factors. Social and situational factors include who is talking to whom, about what, in what situation, for what purpose, and what language variety is spoken.

In social psychology, W.A. Gerungan (2004) states that interaction aims to provide benefits to changes in human behavior in social life. Therefore, in communication behavior between traders and prospective buyers have special goals from both parties to be achieved, whether these goals related to social motives or economic motives. In a communication behavior carried out by both parties, it is, of course, accompanied by language and meaning. These two things are actually difference both regarding terms and substance.

In terms of substance, language is only a symbol used in the communication process. As the symbol, language is

'arbitrary' and 'irreversible' (Ibrahim, 2005). Furthermore, Deddy Mulyana (2002) explains that the 'arbitrary' is a characteristic of language as something that is diffuse, arbitrary, and varied according to the agreement of the person who uses it for the meaning of his actions. Therefore, we get many quotes or terms of the same language, but have different meanings. It is further explained that 'irreversibility' is a characteristic of language as something that has a certain influence in every communication. It means that every language and communication behavior that people do will have a positive impact on others.

Ibrahim (2005) states that the superiority of language is only limited to symbols used in a communication process, then the language or symbols are actually what you want to exchange in communication, but the substance that is exchanged is actually the meaning behind the symbols. He further explains that if meaning is a substance in communication, then meaning must be obtained from the communication process carried out by someone. 'Words don't mean people's means', is a proverb of communication to remind us about language and meaning in communication (Ibrahim, 2005). This proverb reminds us that words (language) actually have no meaning but people give meanings to the language or the words that sound through the communication behavior they play. When communication takes place, at least two people give meaning to the communication, namely the 'sender' and the 'receiver'.

Verbal and nonverbal communication behavior bring up linguistic symbols in the form of variations and dialects, of course, it will also bring up its own meaning at certain loci which can lead to diverse understanding and interpretation due to cultural differences, norms, and habits of each individual ethnicity. Language and communication behavior between individuals can cause mutual influence both in language variants (codes) and speech acts which have implications for the functions and meanings that arise (Jamiluddin, 2019).

Everyone who lives in a different socio-cultural environment has different ways to communicate with others. Therefore, the way of human to communicate with others can also create a culture. Edward T. Hall (1979) states 'communication is culture and culture is communication'. Thus, culture, norms, and habits influence human life. Poetic and metaphorical speech acts (characterized by parables of words that contain meanings that are not real), for example, are widely practiced in communication behavior in the form of interactions that contain more connotative meanings (Titik Gandariani, 2017).

The use of the word meaning is also related to the style of speech. This style or distinctiveness of speech by Edward T. Hall (1976) is called 'high context culture' and 'low context culture'. Low context culture is interpreted as verbal messages that are explicit, direct, straightforward, and frank. This means that the principle is the same as what is said, for

example in Bugis language '*yach*', '*ye*', '*bah*', '*iyye*', and so on means '*agree*'. Furthermore, in high context culture, Mulyana (2008) explains that by using contextual communication (situations), verbal messages are implicit, vague, and ambiguous, for example in Indonesian language, the expressions '*murah -bu(chiep,mam)*', '*berbeda ditempat lain (different from other places)*', '*harga khusus(special price for you)*', and so on. All these speech acts expressed by the traders have connotative meanings. It is different from a low-context culture, where communication behavior is practiced by using short, dense, and clear speech that leads to a message meaning. These speech acts that have denotative meanings that go directly to the real meaning.

Devito, J.A. (1997) states that there are several theories of meaning that must be approached properly. First, meaning does not lie in words, but in humans. The words that a person uses in communicating are only as a means to deliver certain meanings that they want to exchange. Second, meanings change while words are relatively static. Therefore, we can see the different meanings of the same word (term) at different times and places. Third, meaning requires desire. Fourth, the meaning is unlimited, the words in a language are very limited. Fifth, meaning is only partially communicated. This is caused by various aspects that accompany the interactive communication process that takes place.

In this study, the researchers described and analyzed descriptively about the language and communication behavior of Bugis ethnic traders to prospective buyers and the meaning of messages from speech acts by Bugis ethnic traders to prospective buyers at the Manonda Palu market. Therefore, in this study, the 'speech act' theory of J.R Searle (1969) is the reference for clarifying '*declarative*', '*representative*', '*commissive*', '*directive*', and '*expressive*' speech acts. This type of speech act can be interpreted based on the understanding and interpretation between the communicator and the communicant. This study is in the perspective of the sociology of communication and the sociology of language that related to social factors that are reciprocal with language, such as social behavior, individual communication behavior, social adaptation, and speech act behavior in communication.

In sociological communication, communication behavior in interaction is influenced by socio-economic aspects, culture, norms, habits, and customs so that it brings up various individual communication behaviors both from the linguistic aspect and its variations as well as in the messages that appear in speech acts in a speech event. In addition, nonverbal communication behavior in the form of body language can also bring up its own meaning because it is influenced by culture, norms, and one's habits in interacting with other people (Jamiluddin, 2019).

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was a descriptive-qualitative research in the form of a written description of communication behavior of Bugis ethnic traders both in verbal communication and

nonverbal communication conducted to prospective buyers at the Manonda Palu market and its surroundings. This study was an ethnographic communication. Bambang Wibisono (2007) states that the ethnographic study of communication is a study that understands the meaning of an action or social behavior of people who communicate/interact. Furthermore, it is said that understanding meaning can be obtained through communication between one another and what is generated.

The location of this research is the Manonda market Palu and its surroundings. The traders in this market were multi-ethnic, but the researcher only took Bugis ethnic traders as informants of this study. The informants were five (5) traders, chosen purposively. They were Bugis ethnic traders in Manonda market and its surrounding. In determining the five informants, the researcher first chose the first informant in the field as a 'gatekeeper', namely someone who is recognized as part of the Bugis ethnic merchant community who trades in Manonda market Palu. Therefore the 'gatekeeper' was a Bugis ethnic who really knows the condition of the other informants. This 'Gatekeeper' has the requirements that the researcher has set before. The requirements were that he has been selling for a long time (approximately 10 years), he speaks Bugis language every day with his family, he was approximately 40-50 years old, he has an important influence on fellow Bugis ethnic traders, and he is communicative. Before the 'gatekeeper' looks for and determines the other four informants, the researcher determined the criteria that must be met to select and assign other informants to the 'gatekeeper', namely ethnic Bugis traders who have been selling in Manonda market for about 6 years, the place is relatively crowded, and the informants at least graduated from Junior High School and communicative.

The data collection technique was carried out in natural conditions (not artificial), holistic and integrative, so the main data collection techniques were observation- participatory, interview, listening, and taking-notes. Data analysis technique used inductive/qualitative data analysis triangulation from the selected data results. Therefore, the researchers used ethnographic analysis techniques.

### III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The researcher explains the results of the research and simultaneously discuss them. Furthermore, it is analyzed in order to get a clear discription of the results of this research.

#### A. *Language and Communication Behavior of Ethnic Bugis Trader to Prospective Buyers*

The results of this research revealed that the language and behavior of traders communicate to prospective buyers in Manonda market Palu, using verbal and nonverbal types of communication. Verbal communication that is widely practiced by the traders were simple, short, and concise speech showing illocutionary speech acts (illocutionary acts) in the form of messages containing information about the price of merchandise. The results of the research found that

when prospective buyers came from the same ethnicity, they generally chose the same language in interacting, but if the prospective buyers came from other ethnicities, the traders sometimes used code mixing and code switching in interacting. Based on the result of the research, the researcher revealed that the traders were accommodating, flexible, informative, and showing a sense of familiarity to potential buyers. Furthermore, in the process of interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication behavior were practiced to create a happy atmosphere.

The results of this research showed that in communicating, traders used speech acts in the form of illocutions, namely messages and information about the price of merchandise. If you pay attention to the speech, both the prospective buyer and the trader on both sides were proactive and persuasive. The traders were very informative in offering his merchandise. The communication behavior that was practiced by the traders was familiarity. They expressed a familiar speech and sometimes contains a sense of humor to lighten the atmosphere. Even though there is bargaining, the response of traders to prospective buyers is not only in an economic perspective but also in the perspective of good social relations so that the hope of traders can become customers. In communicating, the traders used *commission* speech acts, for example *offering*, *agreeing* to what a potential buyer wants. In the interaction, the trader used '*phatis*' speech acts through the expressions '*bah*', '*iyye*', '*iye*' means 'agree'

The results of this research also obtained data that the communication behavior applied was accommodative and persuasive. Accommodative is interpreted as the attitude of a trader who is very easy to adapt himself to the wishes of the prospective buyers in interacting, while persuasive is interpreted as an utterance to encourage and persuade prospective buyers to follow and want to buy goods offered by the traders. The traders must compensate by communicating well, accommodating, and persuasively to potential buyers, both in the form of verbal and non-verbal communication.

The results of observations in this research revealed that language and nonverbal communication behavior were often practiced by traders to prospective buyers in the form of body language (body movements), such as moving body parts and so on. Verbal and nonverbal communication that was practiced by the trader to the prospective buyer took place simultaneously. This communication model emphasized or strengthened speech acts that have been revealed in verbal communication, or vice versa.

Furthermore, the results of this research found that speech acts in the form of verbal communication by traders to prospective buyers were, among others, '*ambil-miki semua 5000* (take these all, mom just 5000)', '*lombo'na bu* (chili,mom)', '*baru in* (still fresh, mom)', and so on. In nonverbal communication the data obtained from this research were, among others, '*by sorting out the merchandise while*

*listening to potential buyers, 'cleaning the merchandise and dirt that sticks to the merchandise', and so on.*

Implicitly, perlocutionary speech acts practiced by the traders in communicating were speech acts uttered by traders who often have perlocutionary force to prospective buyers, or effects for those who listen. Rohmadi (2004) states that the perlocutionary act is a speech act whose expression is speech to influence the interlocutor. The speech act used by traders in the interaction was the type of 'expressive' speech act which serves to express a psychological attitude towards a situation that is being experienced by the prospective buyer, for example 'thank you', 'congratulate', 'apologize', 'praise', and so on.

In nonverbal communication, this research found that many traders practiced body language that shows signs and politeness in introducing and offering their merchandise. A smile is accompanied by body movements, looking down to direct potential buyers (nonverbal communication). However, both verbal and nonverbal communication were practiced simultaneously. Based on the interview done during this research, the researchers revealed that the traders practiced this model as a form of appreciation to potential buyers so that potential buyers felt valued and happy.

The results of this research also found that the variations of speech acts that functioned by the traders to the prospective buyers have their respective behaviors in communication behavior. Based on the interview done by the researchers, these functions were practiced by the traders to the potential buyers, namely the function of 'directives', regulating the behavior of the interlocutor. When viewed from the relationship between traders and prospective buyers, they work 'phatic', as found in this research, including 'iye(yes)', 'hati-hati-ki bu (be careful, mom) (driving)', 'beso-beso lagi bu (anytime, mom)', and so on. It can also be seen from the topic of 'referential' working speech, including 'this is 'enak ini-bu nice, mom)', 'ini juga bu (this is also, mom)! goreng-goreng (delicious to fried, mom)', and so on. This research finding is in line with Fishman's view in Chaer (2014) which states that varieties have their respective functions, among others, they can be seen from the point of view, listener, topic, and contact. Furthermore, it is explained that from the point of view of the narrative it can work as an *emotive*. Viewed from the point of view of the listener or interlocutor works as a *directive*, which regulates the behavior of the interlocutor. From the point of view of the relationship between the communicator and the communicant, the expression works *phatic*. When viewed from the topic of speech, the expression works *referentially*. Therefore, language and communication behavior practiced by ethnic Bugis traders to the prospective buyers have their respective functions.

#### B. The Meaning of Variations in Speech Acts of Bugis Ethnic Traders to Prospective Buyers

The results of observation and interview with Bugis ethnic informants in this research, the researchers obtained

data that in communication behavior of the traders to the prospective buyers, first the traders used nonverbal communication, namely seeing and giving a smile to prospective buyers, then when prospective buyers respond it, then traders used verbal communication through speech acts, such as '*singga-ki (come in, please!, word 'ki' here as an honor to be invited), 'mari-ki (welcome)', 'liat-liat-miki dulu (see, please!)*', '*apa yang dicari? (can I help you?)*', and so on. These expressions or speech acts used by Bugis ethnic traders to the prospective buyers hoped to stop at the place of sale. These expressions mean inviting prospective buyers to shop at the trader's place. These expressions also mean '*a kind and courteous welcome*'. The symbols of non-verbal communication played by ethnic Bugis traders with *body movements* and other *body language* also mean '*appreciation to prospective buyers*'. This communication behavior was carried out by the traders because it has been formed and used to it because of the Bugis ethnic culture and customs that are still inherent in the hearts of each individual. The Bugis ethnic custom is always polite and friendly to anyone and always welcomes every guest with a polite, friendly, and courteous manner. This kind of behavior is well maintained by the traders. According to Ilyas Lampe (2017) language, in addition to its function as a transformer for the exchange of message meanings, the function of inheriting social values is also very prominent.

Data of this research result also revealed that expressions '*ambil-miki (take, please!)*', '*pili-pili-miki (choose, please!)*' and followed by word '*miki (an expression of honor to everybody)*', and so on mean that in speaking Bugis ethnic traders always place others in a higher position, besides that these expressions are a form of appreciation to prospective buyers. Ethnic Bugis always uses *commissive* speech acts, such as *bidding, agreeing* to what is said by prospective buyers. This research also revealed that in interaction, Bugis ethnic traders often use speech acts that work '*phatic*', namely establishing relationships, maintaining, telling feelings of friendship or in speech acts interpreted as a form of social solidarity. The '*phatic*' functions found in this research, such as '*iye (yes)*', '*hati-hati-ki bu (be careful to ride on your motor cycle, mom)*', '*besok-besok lagi bu! (any time, mom!!)*', '*ini saya kasi-ki (I give you this, mom)*', and so on. All the functions of speech acts that were expressed by the Bugis ethnic trader to prospective buyers were effective, namely messages that are full of feelings, attention, empathy, and so on so that they could affect the communicant (prospective buyers).

According to Edward T. Hall (1979) that a person's way of communicating also shapes culture (*communication is culture and culture is communication*). Thus, culture, norms, and habits in relation to human life. Expressions or speech acts, such as '*singga-ki*', '*mari-ki*', '*liat-liat-miki dulu*', (verbal communication) and '*smile*', '*head nods accompanied by hand movements*' (nonverbal communication) have a meaning of appreciation to prospective buyers. The communication

behavior carried out by traders is because it has long been formed and is accustomed to the Bugis culture and ethical habits which are always polite and friendly.

The results of the research also found that the communication behavior practiced by ethnic Bugis traders to prospective buyers used *short, concise, clear, and direct speech* that led to a message meaning. The expression contains more denotative meanings that are directly related to the actual meaning. The style and distinctiveness of communicating or speaking of Bugis ethnic traders by Edward T. Hall (1976) and Mulyana (2008) uses a low context culture. This low context culture is interpreted as a verbal message that is *explicit, concise, direct, straightforward, and frank*. The expression is basically same as what is said, for example *'iyye', 'ye', 'yah'*, and so on means *'agree'*. Furthermore, it is said that in high context cultures the verbal message is *implicit, vague, and ambiguous*. Communication behavior that is practiced in this high context culture has more connotative meaning.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This research revealed that (1) language and communication behavior of Bugis ethnic traders to prospective buyers use the language and behavior of verbal and nonverbal communication simultaneously through the dominance of perlocutionary speech acts through *expressive and commissive* types of speech in accommodative and persuasive communication models. (2) The meaning of the message expressed by Bugis ethnic traders is more affective. The traders often apply low context culture to the prospective buyers rather than apply high context culture.

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