



AN ANALYSIS PERSUASIVE SPEECH ACTS IN E-COMMERCE PRODUCT REVIEWS

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Abstract

This study investigates persuasive speech acts found in e-commerce product reviews on TikTok Shop and Tokopedia. Consumer reviews serve not only as sources of product information but also as persuasive tools influencing purchase decisions. Grounded in Searle's (1979) Speech Act Theory, Leech's (1981) Meaning Theory, and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) Multimodality Theory, this qualitative-descriptive research analyzes 100 product reviews (50 from TikTok Shop and 50 from Tokopedia). The analysis identifies three dominant types of persuasive speech acts directive, commissive, and expressive each supported by affective, connotative, and social meanings. Expressive acts dominate the dataset, showing emotions of praise, satisfaction, and gratitude; directives involve recommendations and invitations; commissives express commitments to repurchase. Moreover, loanwords such as recommended and worth it, along with emojis (e.g., 😊, 😄, ❤️), strengthen the persuasive impact through emotional engagement. The study concludes that persuasive communication in e-commerce is multimodal, emotional, and informal, fostering interpersonal trust and influencing consumer behavior.

Keywords: Consumer reviews, Multimodality, Pragmatics, Persuasive speech acts, Social commerce

1. Introduction

The rapid development of digital platforms has transformed how people communicate and make purchase decisions. In online marketplaces such as TikTok Shop and Tokopedia, product reviews serve not only as evaluations but also as persuasive texts that influence other consumers. These reviews blend linguistic expression, emojis, and emotive language to establish trust and authenticity.

Persuasive speech acts have been discussed in several linguistic studies (Rahayu & Eripuddin, 2023; Drid, 2019; Yu, 2017), yet research focusing on consumer-generated discourse in social commerce remains limited. Previous research mainly emphasized classroom interactions or advertising discourse, leaving a gap in understanding persuasive language in multimodal digital environments.

This study aims to fill that gap by exploring how consumers employ language and visual elements to persuade others. The

research is guided by Searle's classification of directive, commissive, and expressive acts, Leech's semantic framework, and Kress and van Leeuwen's multimodal communication theory.

2. Literature Review

Searle's (1979) Speech Act Theory divides communication into five categories: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Among them, directive, commissive, and expressive acts are dominant in persuasive discourse.

Directive acts encourage actions ("You must try this product").

Commissive acts express commitments ("I'll repurchase next time").

Expressive acts convey emotional responses ("Love this item so much 😊").

Leech's (1981) Meaning Theory explains three relevant types of meaning in this study:

1. Affective meaning emotional tone and feelings behind the words.



2. Connotative meaning value-laden interpretations of symbols or terms.
3. Social meaning politeness and relationship between interlocutors.

Kress & van Leeuwen (2001) propose Multimodality Theory, which highlights how meaning arises from multiple semiotic modes such as text, color, and emojis. In online reviews, emojis like ❤️ or 😊 not only decorate but reinforce sincerity and intensity of emotion.

3. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach, applying a pragmatic analysis framework. The data consist of 100 product reviews from TikTok Shop and Tokopedia within clothing and footwear categories.

Data Collection Techniques:

1. Selecting reviews that contain persuasive language and emojis.
2. Categorizing data into expressive, directive, and commissive acts.
3. Analyzing textual and visual (emoji) elements to identify their persuasive function

Data Analysis:

Data were classified and interpreted using Searle's taxonomy and Leech's semantic typology. The results were tabulated to show how different types of speech acts co-occur with affective or connotative meanings.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Forms of Persuasive Speech Acts

The study found that **expressive acts (47%)** dominated, followed by directive acts (34%) and commissive acts (19%). Expressive acts convey gratitude, praise, and admiration (e.g., "Love it so much 🍀"). Directive acts include recommendations and encouragements (e.g., "You must buy here!"). Commissive acts show intent to repurchase (e.g., "Next order again 😊").

4.2 Multimodal Features

The integration of emojis enhances persuasiveness by appealing to emotions

and authenticity. For instance, 😊 and 🍀 strengthen positive sentiment, while ❤️ and 🔥 emphasize enthusiasm. Loanwords such as recommended, worth it, and real pict add modern tone and credibility.

4.3 Layers of Meaning

Using Leech's framework, the study reveals that:

1. Affective meaning dominates reviews, showing happiness and satisfaction.
2. Connotative meaning reflects positive evaluation of value or trendiness.
3. Social meaning emphasizes politeness and relational closeness between buyer and seller

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that persuasive communication in e-commerce reviews is primarily emotional, informal, and multimodal. Expressive speech acts dominate, illustrating how emotional language and emojis function as persuasive tools that influence trust and purchase intention. The study recommends that future research include audiovisual elements and mixed-method approaches to examine how visual and emotional cues affect consumer decision-making.

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