

Language and Negotiation: Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Patterns between Sellers and Buyers at Watampone Morning Market

Bahasa Dan Negosiasi: Pola Komunikasi Verbal Dan Nonverbal Antara Penjual Dan Pembeli Di Pasar Pagi Watampone

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap pola komunikasi verbal dan nonverbal antara penjual dan pembeli di Pasar Pagi Watampone sebagai bentuk praktik sosial yang sarat nilai budaya lokal. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, data diperoleh melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi verbal didominasi oleh penggunaan bahasa Bugis dan strategi kesantunan, humor, serta metafora lokal yang mencerminkan nilai *sipakatau* dan *siri'*. Sementara itu, komunikasi nonverbal seperti ekspresi wajah, intonasi, dan gerakan tubuh turut memperkuat makna dan efektivitas negosiasi. Keakraban yang terbangun melalui interaksi berulang juga menciptakan efisiensi dan kepercayaan dalam transaksi. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pasar tradisional tidak hanya menjadi ruang ekonomi, tetapi juga arena pelestarian budaya dan identitas lokal melalui praktik komunikasi yang dinamis dan multimodal.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to uncover the pattern of verbal and nonverbal communication between sellers and buyers at Watampone Morning Market as a form of social practice that is full of local cultural values. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were obtained through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The results of the study showed that verbal communication was dominated by the use of the Bugis language and strategies of politeness, humor, and local metaphors that reflected the values of *sipakatau* and *siri'*. Meanwhile, nonverbal communication such as facial expressions, intonation, and body movements also strengthen the meaning and effectiveness of negotiations. The familiarity built through repeated interactions also creates efficiency and trust in transactions. These findings confirm that traditional markets are not only an economic space, but also an arena for the preservation of local culture and identity through dynamic and multimodal communication practices.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional markets are an important social and cultural space in the lives of the Indonesian people. There, economic activities go hand in hand with distinctive and meaningful social interactions. At Watampone Morning Market, the interaction between sellers and buyers not only involves the exchange of goods, but also negotiations that are full of local values. The language used is not only a means of communication, but also a form of expression of identity and culture. The use of the Bugis language in negotiations creates emotional closeness that strengthens social relations between market participants (Ratnasari, 2022). This reflects that the market is not just a place to buy and sell, but also a cultural meeting place.

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Verbal communication is a key element in the bargaining process. Sellers not only offer merchandise in an informative way, but also use persuasive strategies to convince buyers, such as praising the quality of goods, offering bonuses, or using greetings that are familiar and polite (Lilis et al., 2021). Sellers tend to use language tailored to the buyer's identity, including age, gender, and social status. This strategy shows that the language in the market is not neutral, but rather tailored to the context and social relations between sellers and buyers.

In addition, nonverbal communication such as facial expressions, body movements, and voice intonation greatly influence the outcome of negotiations. For example, a smile can reflect an open and friendly attitude, while a hand gesture or nod of the head can emphasize approval or disagreement. Harziko et al. (2018) show that buyers are more likely to agree to the price when sellers show a friendly attitude and are not in a hurry. This indicates that the nonverbal aspect has its own power in forming a comfortable and mutually respectful negotiation atmosphere.

The speech pattern in negotiations also shows a distinctive structure, such as call-answer, request-information, and offer-rejection patterns. Rimang and Ulviani (2020) note that negotiations in traditional markets take place in a consistent sequence, although they are flexible depending on the situation. In Bugis culture, the use of speech is also framed by values such as *siri'* (self-respect) and *sipakatau* (mutual respect), which affect the choice of words and the way of expressing objections or agreements in negotiations.

The pragmatic aspect is also an important part of understanding the negotiation process in the market. Sellers and buyers tend to choose indirect and subtle words in conveying rejection or objection so as not to offend the other person. Susanto (2021) in his research at Kolaka Market shows that the strategy of politeness in speaking is used to maintain a long-term relationship between sellers and regular customers. The choice of polite and respectful language is a social investment for the sustainability of trade relations.

In relation to politeness strategies, Andriyani (2019) notes that sellers use a combination of positive politeness (e.g., compliments and familiar greetings) and negative politeness (such as apologies or pleas) depending on the context of the interaction. This strategy aims to maintain a balance between personal interests and social interests in interactions. Politeness in market negotiations shows that language plays an important role in maintaining harmony and avoiding conflict, even in potentially competitive situations.

Based on Rakhmaniar's study (2024), the contribution of verbal and nonverbal communication to negotiation success is almost balanced, namely 50% and 40%, respectively. This shows that the effectiveness of communication in the market depends not only on what is said, but also how it is delivered. An understanding of facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language is important, especially in situations when words don't adequately represent the speaker's intent. This reinforces the idea that market communication is multimodal communication.

Watampone Market as part of a multi-ethnic traditional market in South Sulawesi also presents intercultural interaction. A study by Paris and Sultan (2022) found that in the interaction between the Bugis and Mandar ethnicities, the use of Indonesian as a lingua franca is often an option to avoid misunderstandings. This confirms that language adjustment is part of the communication strategy to maintain smooth transactions. Therefore, understanding verbal and nonverbal communication in the Watampone market is not only important to look at local economic practices, but also as a reflection of the social and cultural dynamics of the Bugis community more broadly.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, which aims to describe in detail the pattern of verbal and nonverbal communication between sellers and buyers at Watampone Morning Market. This approach was chosen because the nature of the data collected is natural and contextual, where the social interactions that occur cannot be reduced to numbers, but must be understood in the social and cultural context of the perpetrators (Sugiyono, 2017). This study places researchers as the main instrument, who are directly involved in data collection through in-depth observation and interviews to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Moleong, 2019).

The data collection technique was carried out through three main methods, namely participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was carried out by recording the forms of communication that occurred in the field, both verbally such as speech, greeting, and negotiation strategies; as well as nonverbally such as facial expressions, body movements, and voice intonation. Interviews were conducted with sellers and buyers who were actively involved in market interactions, to find out their reasons, strategies, and perceptions of the communication that

occurred. Documentation in the form of photos and field notes is also used to support the data that has been obtained. The selection of informants is carried out by purposive sampling technique, which is to select subjects who are considered able to provide information that is relevant to the research focus (Nasution, 2016).

The data obtained was analyzed using an interactive analysis model from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which included three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. Data reduction is carried out by sorting and simplifying information that is considered important, then presented systematically in the form of narratives and tables. Conclusions are drawn inductively, based on thematic patterns that emerge during the data collection process. To ensure the validity of the data, source and technique triangulation techniques are used, as well as member checks on informants so that the results obtained truly reflect the reality in the field (Creswell, 2016). This approach is believed to be able to accurately describe the phenomenon of market communication as part of local cultural practices.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that verbal communication between sellers and buyers at Watampone Morning Market was dominated by the use of the Bugis language, especially in the bargaining process. The language is not only a means of communication, but also reflects a strong local identity. Sellers tend to use persuasive, polite, and humorous speech styles to grab buyers' attention and build emotional connections. This linguistic strategy reflects cultural values such as *sipakatau* (mutual respect) and *siri'* (self-respect) that live in the Bugis society. This is in line with the findings of Ahmad (2020) who stated that the form of local communication in traditional markets is part of the social mechanism that maintains cultural values.

The form of verbal communication used is not only in the form of information about the price and quality of goods, but also price negotiations that are dynamic and tiered. Sellers often use local metaphors or parables when explaining the advantages of their products, for example saying "this is fresh fish, fresh from the sea" to emphasize freshness. One of the sellers, Mrs. M, 45, said: "If we talk normally, buyers are not interested. But if they use jokes, subtle language, they are happy and sometimes want to buy even though the price is not right." This kind of speech is an effective strategy to create a comfortable atmosphere and attract buyers' sympathy.

Meanwhile, buyers also use certain verbal strategies to bid on prices, such as raising objections in a subtle style or comparing with prices in other stalls. One of the buyers, Mr. A, 55, said: "I never said it was expensive. I usually say, 'There's a little cheaper *adaji* there,' so that the seller will lower the price." This strategy shows that communication in the market does not take place in a rigid context, but rather is fluid and flexible, taking into account social relations and politeness in speaking. According to Setiawan (2021), this form of linguistic politeness is important to maintain harmony in economic and social relations.

In addition to verbal communication, the nonverbal aspect plays an important role in shaping meaning and influencing the success of negotiations. Sellers who smile, nod, and show open body movements tend to be more trusted by buyers. Facial expressions, tone of voice, and intonation in speaking are also important factors in assessing the honesty or seriousness of the interlocutor. For example, when the seller nods softly and looks the buyer in the eye, this is often interpreted as a form of willingness to accept the price offered. Seller S (38) says: "If I'm too serious, buyers are scared. So I keep smiling, sometimes laughing, so that they feel relaxed."

Direct observation on the ground shows that negotiations are not only about prices, but also social relations. There are relationships that are built on an ongoing basis, especially between sellers and repeat buyers. They tend to have their own communication codes that are more concise and efficient. One of the subscription buyers, Mrs. R, 42, explained: "I don't have to talk much when I shop with her, the seller already knows that I usually ask for a small price cut." This kind of relationship forms communication based on mutual trust and shared knowledge, which can only be formed through repeated interaction and getting to know each other.

The results of the study also showed that differences in age, gender, and social background influenced the communication style used. Male sellers tend to be more direct and quick in responding to offers, while female sellers are more likely to use a persuasive approach and gentle nonverbal expressions. On the other hand, young buyers tend to use mixed Indonesian with Bugis, while older buyers are more dominant in using full Bugis. This phenomenon shows the existence of a dynamic process of code-switching and code-mixing in market communication, as stated by Kartikasari (2019)

that the mixing of languages in informal communication often reflects social closeness and situational adaptation.

From the results of the interview, it was also found that humor is a communication strategy that is very commonly used in the market. Humor is used not only to dilute the atmosphere, but also as a tool for indirect negotiation. One of the sellers, Pak D (50 years old), revealed: "If the buyer bids too low, I say 'tauji noodles are the price of the colonial era'... They laughed and ended up raising the offer a bit." This shows that humor is not only entertainment, but also has a pragmatic function in market interaction. These findings are in line with the theory of symbolic interactionism which states that meaning is formed and negotiated through symbols in social interactions (Blumer, 2015).

Persuasive and warm verbal communication patterns are evident when sellers use language that invites buyers' sympathy. One of the sellers, Mrs. S, 40, said: "When I talk to buyers, I always try to use polite and friendly language, so that they feel appreciated and want to come back." This statement shows that friendly attitude and subtle language are key strategies in building customer loyalty in traditional markets. This approach not only serves as a way of selling products, but also as a form of interpersonal communication that strengthens social relationships in the market community.

In the context of price negotiation, buyers also tend to use a subtle and indirect approach to keep the relationship with the seller harmonious. For example, Mr. H (52 years old) explained, "I usually don't immediately say that the price is expensive. I said, 'If it can be a little cheaper, I'll buy a lot,' so that the seller doesn't feel offended and wants to lower the price." This kind of communication strategy reflects the buyer's social awareness of the importance of maintaining a good relationship with the seller, even when bargaining. This emphasizes that communication in the traditional market is not just an economic transaction, but a social interaction full of nuances of politeness and wisdom.

The use of humor in communication is also one of the elements that strengthens the relationship between sellers and buyers. Seller Pak R (47 years old) stated, "Sometimes if the buyer bids too low, I answer jokingly, so that no one is offended and the atmosphere remains fluid." This kind of humor helps reduce tension during the negotiation process, so that both parties feel comfortable and open to reaching an agreement. This approach also reflects local wisdom that views social interaction as a moment that must be enjoyed and kept warm.

In addition to verbal communication, the nonverbal cues that appear in the trade interaction are also very important. Seller Mrs. Y (35 years old) revealed, "Sometimes I just need to smile and nod my head, buyers already understand and it is easier to lower the price." This suggests that nonverbal communication can speed up the negotiation process by conveying a message of approval or willingness without the need for a lot of words. This kind of communication is effective in maintaining social harmony while strengthening trust between sellers and buyers.

Finally, the familiarity that is woven into repeated communication between sellers and buyers creates a distinctive and meaningful pattern of interaction. Mrs. R, 42 years old, one of the subscription buyers, said, "If I have been shopping here for a long time, I don't have to talk much. The seller already knows how I bid and usually gives me a special price." This familiarity indicates that communication in the market is not just a matter of momentary transactions, but social relationships that continue to be maintained through language and daily interactions. This type of communication pattern shows the importance of the market as a social and economic space that is integral to the life of the Bugis people.

The pattern of verbal communication in traditional markets such as Watampone Morning Market is a reflection of a rich and dynamic oral culture. Language not only functions as a means of exchanging information, but also as a medium to build a group's social and cultural identity. The use of the Bugis language in daily communication in this market shows how the local language is maintained despite the influence of the national language. This indicates the process of cultural preservation through social interaction in public spaces such as markets, which is also an arena for cultural socialization for the community (Chaer, 2018).

In addition, the verbal communication used by sellers and buyers is greatly influenced by the norms of politeness and manners of the Bugis people. The concept of *sipakatau*, which emphasizes the importance of mutual respect, is evident in the way they speak and interact. Politeness in language and negotiation avoids conflict, while strengthening sustainable social relationships. This phenomenon shows that communication in the market is not just an economic transaction, but also a social interaction that is loaded with cultural ethical values (Alimuddin, 2019).

The use of verbal strategies such as humor and metaphors is an important part of the negotiation process in the market. Humor serves as a social lubricant that melts the tension and creates a comfortable atmosphere for both parties. Meanwhile, metaphors or parables provide additional meanings that enrich communication and emphasize the quality of the goods sold. The use of this

strategy indicates that sellers and buyers have pragmatic intelligence in using language according to the context of the situation (Yule, 2017).

The function of nonverbal communication is no less important in the process of market interaction. Gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and voice intonation act as social signals that strengthen or weaken verbal messages. For example, a smile and a nod of the head are signs of approval that do not need to be said explicitly. This nonverbal communication also helps avoid conflict and speed up the negotiation process because it can express emotions and intentions that are difficult to express in words (Knapp & Hall, 2017).

The dynamics of verbal and nonverbal communication in this market also show the existence of a code-switching and code-mixing process. The change of language and the use of a mixture of Bugis and Indonesian languages occurs flexibly according to the situation, social status, and proximity between the seller and the buyer. This phenomenon shows effective language adaptation to achieve communication goals while maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships. This also confirms the importance of bilingual or multilingual communication competencies in plural social contexts (Gumperz, 2015).

Furthermore, communication patterns in the market are also influenced by the social structure of the community, such as age, gender, and social roles. Female sellers tend to use more subtle and persuasive language and expressions, while male sellers are more direct and focused on the efficiency aspect of communication. Buyers of different age groups also adjust their language style and word choice. This variation reflects social and cultural awareness of the communication norms that apply in the Bugis community (Tannen, 2016).

Repeated and continuous interactions between sellers and buyers foster more efficient and personalized communication patterns. The familiarity that exists allows for implicit communication codes that are only understood by both parties. This shows that communication in traditional markets is not just a transactional process, but also builds a strong social network, which is an important social capital for the survival of the community (Putnam, 2000).

Finally, market communication as a social practice not only serves economic needs, but also becomes a vehicle for cultural preservation and transformation. Traditional markets such as Watampone Morning Market function as a lively cultural dialogue space, where language and communication become a medium that preserves and renews local values. Thus, the study of communication patterns in the market not only provides linguistic understanding, but also insights into the social and cultural dynamics of society more broadly.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that buying and selling interactions at Watampone Morning Market are complex social practices, where verbal and nonverbal communication are used strategically to reach agreements while maintaining social relations. Language is not only a means of transaction, but also a means of building intimacy, showing politeness, and strengthening cultural identity. These results support the view of Rani and Abdurrahman (2020) that traditional markets function as cultural spaces where language and actions form each other's meanings. Thus, understanding communication patterns in the market is also a way to understand the socio-cultural dynamics of the Bugis community more broadly.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that communication between sellers and buyers at Watampone Morning Market is a complex and meaningful social practice. These interactions not only serve as a tool for economic transactions, but also as a space to negotiate local cultural values, establish social relations, and maintain the linguistic identity of the Bugis people. The Bugis language as a local language still dominates the practice of verbal communication, either purely or through a combination with Indonesian, depending on age, social background, and close relationships between individuals. This shows that the market is not only a center of trade, but also a center of cultural and linguistic heritage.

Verbal communication in buying and selling interactions is shown through various strategies, such as the use of persuasive words, humor, and typical Bugis expressions that have symbolic meanings. Sellers and buyers use language that is not only informative, but also expressive and relational, to create an atmosphere that is comfortable, familiar, and trusting with each other. This verbal strategy reflects the social skills and linguistic intelligence of the community in creating negotiations that benefit both parties without creating conflicts. Price offers, rejections, and approvals in negotiations are expressed in ways that demonstrate courtesy and alignment with local norms.

Meanwhile, nonverbal communication plays an important role as a complement and even reinforcing of verbal communication. Facial expressions, smiles, tone of voice, intonation, and gestures

are an integral part of the negotiation process. Sellers who are able to manage nonverbal cues well tend to be more successful at capturing attention and building buyer trust. Likewise, buyers, who by showing interest through certain eye gazes or expressions, can influence the seller's response in making an offer. This nonverbal communication contains meanings that are often stronger than words, and forms harmonious social dynamics in buying and selling activities.

Social interactions in the market do not take place just once, but occur repeatedly, which ultimately forms long-term social relationships. Sellers and buyers who have known each other build a more concise, efficient, and familiar communication pattern. In fact, in some cases, communication occurs only through certain gestures or intonations that are mutually understood. This phenomenon shows that market communication is not a neutral practice, but rather tied to the experiences, relationships, and social structures that exist in the community. In this context, traditional markets become a mirror of the social order of local communities that are alive and evolving.

Thus, verbal and nonverbal communication at Watampone Morning Market not only reflects economic activity, but also shows the role of language as a dynamic and adaptive cultural instrument. Market societies are able to integrate the function of language as a means of transaction and as a means to reinforce social values such as trust, politeness, and solidarity. These findings reinforce the understanding that traditional markets are spaces of cultural communication, where language, bodies, and local values combine to be forces that maintain social cohesion in society. Therefore, maintaining the existence of traditional markets also means maintaining the cultural heritage of authentic and meaningful local community communication.

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