

The speech acts of consumers' complaining and sellers' responses on the review page of the e-commerce platforms

Emier Abdul Fiqih^{1*} and Dadang Sudana¹

¹Indonesia University of Education, Bandung

*Corresponding author: emierafp@upi.edu

KEYWORDS

complaint
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review page
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ABSTRACT The study aims to investigate the speech act of complaint that is realized by costumers on review page of the e-commerce platforms in Indonesia. This study uses speech acts of complaint categorized by Trosborg and aspects of perlocutionary acts by Leech. The object studied are negative reviews found on the review pages of the e-commerce platforms which is analyzed by using a descriptive qualitative research. The results showed that Annoyances is the most realized and Explicit blame (person) is the least realized speech act of complaint from customers. Also, the respond from seller tends to bring hearer to know as the most realized perlocutionary acts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Online reviews are one of the references to obtain information on items or products. Consumers have the opportunity to access detailed information about items or products through these online reviews (Bounie, 2005). Regarding online reviews, online reviews are an important source of information that allows other consumers to find detailed and reliable information from the experiences of consumers who have used them before (Yoo & Gretzel, 2008).

Online reviews have a significant share of consumers. People trust the rating from online reviews as trustworthy source of information that can help them in making decision (Gavilan, 2019). Online reviews are one of the features that are categorized as social features and can be found on e-commerce platforms (Curty & Zhang, 2013). E-commerce platform is a system of trading goods or services and other business activities through electronic media (Edris & Winahayuningsih, 2015). On the e-commerce platform, there are online reviews that are displayed on the product sales page. These reviews come from consumer experiences in shopping, both reviews related to products sold and or seller responses. These online reviews are important not only for consumers but also for sellers. For buyers, there is an assessment that also affects the credibility of the buyer, while for the seller, the review will affect the seller's rating on the e-commerce platform. Not only that, satisfaction with the service response after the purchase is also important for the seller. The reason is that customer satisfaction plays an important role because there is a big difference in loyalty, between customers who are just satisfied and those who are satisfied (Lovelock & Wright, 2007). Therefore, the online review feature is generally used as one of the inputs for the seller's reputation system that can help the process

of forming consumers for merchant accounts within the scope of e-commerce (Tadelis, 2016).

The e-commerce platform review page contains positive or negative things about a product sold by a company or merchant made by consumers (Auliya et al. , 2017). The review page shows the advantages and disadvantages of the product. Albeit, the potential consumers tend to be more influenced by negative comments on product reviews that they want to buy (Pentheny, 2015). Concerning negative reviews, these reviews are usually the utterances of buyers who complain through writing which are not just dwelling on complaints alone. The buyer's speech also has implications that can affect the general reader, especially potential buyers. Thus, the speech of complaining has a significant effect on the decision of prospective buyers to buy some product. Therefore, complaints from buyers contained on the product review page of the e-commerce platform are speech acts.

Complaints submitted by these consumers must also use the right language and choice of words. If the choice of language is stronger, harsher, demeaning, and direct, the speech is not a complaint but a criticism (Moon, 2001). Therefore, it is essential to use language and choose the right words to deliver that the meaning of the speech properly. In the complaint utterance, the interlocutor can understand what the previous buyers were complaining about when whether to buy a product or not. The complaint submitted must include the speech act of complaining.

The speech act of complaining can be a face-threatening act when the speaker violates sociocultural rules in saying something. This can result in disturbances in communication and potentially damage the speaker's relationship with the speech partner. However, speech acts are highly dependent on the situation (Moon, 2001).

Regarding complaints, complaints are still a topic that is not only a national issue but also an international issue. The study discussed the scale of development of customer satisfaction by handling complaints and service recovery in an e-commerce setting (Kumar et al., 2021). In Indonesia, the study researched the effect of price, product reviews, convenience, and security on online purchasing decisions on Shopee e-commerce (Andiani, 2019). The study states that product reviews have a significant effect on Shopee's e-commerce online purchasing decisions. Previous research that examines the speech act of complaining has been conducted (Puksi, 2016). The study focuses on the speech acts of complaining hotel guests on four hotel review provider pages. The result is that direct accusation is the most used complaining strategy by hotel guests in conveying the complaints they experience during their stay with room features and consumer service being the components that complain the most. This result may occur because complaining on social media creates direct communication compared to communication in public areas that tolerate harm rather than making direct complaints that may hurt others (Fernandes & Fernandes, 2017). From previous studies, some gaps are rarely investigated in previous studies. This gap makes there are still few studies that examine speech acts on review pages of e-commerce platforms from a linguistic perspective.

Previous research tends to answer the strategy chosen by consumers and does not analyze further the responsibility of the complainant to complaints from consumers. In this case, specifically, it is rare to find research that discusses acts, especially the speech act strategy of complaining, the response of the complainant to the complaint from the consumer, and there has been no comparative study of negative reviews across platforms such as the two largest e-commerce platforms in the world based on a study from iprice in the second quarter of 2021, namely Tokopedia and Shopee. Therefore, the research is needed that can provide an overview of the complaining speech act strategy chosen by consumers and the response from the complaining party, in this case, the seller, on the e-commerce platform page in Indonesia and the differences in the strategies chosen based on the profiling of different e-commerce platforms. This research is also expected to provide new insights related to business and linguistics

2. METHOD

This research uses descriptive qualitative research method. This research can be categorized as descriptive qualitative research because it can analyze a problem in detail.

The subject of this research is a review page on an e-commerce platform. The review page on the e-commerce platform was chosen because of the popularity of the page as a reference in finding reviews of certain products. The selected review data comes from a product from previous buyers of that product who bought one and two star ratings. The data taken are in the form of speech acts complaining from consumers to convey what they complain about after buying certain products intended for other page readers which are analyzed based on the classification of complaining speech act strategy (Trosborg, 1994) and the seller's response to buyer complaints based on perlocutionary speech act aspects (Leech, 2011). The author also limited the data taken to only 100 data from the two selected

e-commerce platforms. In this study, the object of research is a speech act strategy to complain which is on the review page of the e-commerce platform.

The data in this study were obtained through documentation techniques with the upload, listen, and note methods. The method used for data collection is content analysis through observation techniques and analysis of the content of product review speeches on review pages of e-commerce platforms. The selection of Supermassive Indonesia as the object of research was chosen based on the store, including a cross-platform online store which is the Official Store on Tokopedia and Shopee Star on Shopee. Previously, the author made observations regarding Supermassive Indonesia stores on other e-commerce platforms, namely Bukalapak. However, after observations were made, the complaints on the Supermassive Indonesia store review page at Bukalapak were inadequate to serve as research data. Another consideration in choosing the store is that the selected store does not use bots in responding to complaints on negative reviews regarding the products they sell.

The data collected focuses on negative reviews found on the review pages of these cross-platform stores. Next, the author opened a review page of the e-commerce platforms. In the store selection process, authors categorize these products on two different e-commerce platforms that are selected based on one and two star ratings.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Speech acts of complaint

From the 100 data analyzed, 128 the speech act of complaint were obtained. The classification of the speech act of complaint in this study was carried out by making the utterances in a complaining statement as a unit if there was a sentence that summarized the complaints.

The most frequent complaining speech acts found on the two e-commerce platform pages were annoyances. This may be due to several factors. First, consumers generally don't like to write long speeches, and they usually complain about more than one complaint. In that case, it's quicker and easier to write down complaints in the form of unpleasant conditions in short sentences (Puksi, 2016). With this strategy, the face-threatening action has been able to threaten the negative face of the shop as a speech partner because the complaint contains implicatures asking for compensation from the speech partner (Brown & Levinson, 1978).

The speech act of complaining about hints is the second most frequently implemented strategy by consumers on two e-commerce platform pages. The least risky is face-threatening. This strategy does not try to directly show the complaints. It is considered as the weakest strategy in the speech act of complaining. However, this is in line with the goal of consumers realizing their complaints through the hints strategy, it is possible to improve self-image from dissatisfaction with certain goods or services that have been purchased or used and get a second chance to get satisfaction after experiencing disappointment.

3.2 Seller's respond to consumers' complaints

For the response pattern from the seller, out of 16 (sixteen) aspects of the perlocutionary speech act, only 8 (eight) aspects of the speech act of Leech (2011) were found in the 116

TABLE 1. Frequency of Complaining Speech Acts on Indonesian E-Commerce Review Page

Strategy	Frequency	Examples
1. Hints	25	Barang bentuknya sama tp tidak sama persis seperti yg ditawarkan.
2. Annoyances	38	ga nyampe pake 1 minggu erorr kaleng kaleng.
3. Ill consequences	7	Tidak baik saya merasa tidak puas kertasnya kekecilan pengajuan pembatalan enggak di terima Pokoknya kecewa kapok balik ke sini lagi
4. Indirect Accusation	14	Bluetoothnya gak bisa pairing, walupun tersimpan tapi gak bisa tersambung. Password dah bener, tapi gak mau pairing. Dicoba relog jg percuma, gak ngaruh. Solusinya gimana ini?
5. Direct Accusation	21	Ga bisa buat ngeprint, Penjual tidak ramah, Pelayanan buruk,
6. Modified Blame	8	Oreder yang ketiga kalinya, yang dua kemaren sih puas packing rapih buble wrap bagus, eh sekarang ga pake buble wrap, cuma disumpel sampah plastik, kecewa aja sih padahal udah langganan tapi ko gini
7. Explicit Blame (behavior)	11	service parah sekali. Di minta buka faktur pajak, pertama kali lupa. saya ingatin lagi kirim ke email, di bilang iya tpi masih gk di kirim
8. Explicit Blame (person)	4	CS NYA GA BANGETTTT !!!! Cuma nanya di chat aja tanggapan nya gitu banget, modelan begini dibilang admin ramah sentosa ??? Bales chat cust aja bahasanya ga ditata, bilangan cust punya masalah hidup, baperan, OMG coba deh training dlu jd CS tu gmn kwkwk !!!!!
Total	128	

TABLE 2. Perlocutionary Acts on The Complaining Speech Acts Found in Indonesian E-Commerce Review Page

No	The aspect of perlocutionary act	Frequency
1	Memberitahu (bring hearer to know)	58
2	Membujuk (persuade)	15
3	Menakuti (frighten)	12
4	Membuat Petutur Melakukan Sesuatu (get hearer to do)	10
5	Melegakan (relieve tension)	8
6	Membuat Petutur Berpikir (get hearer to think)	6
7	Menjengkelkan (irritate)	5
8	Mempermalukan (embarrass)	2
Total		116

utterances found. The analysis of perlocutionary speech acts found in product reviews of these three e-commerce platforms is part of answering the second problem in this study

From the analysis result, *Annoyances* is the strategy most realized by consumers on the review page of e-commerce platforms. Of the 8 (eight) complaining speech act strategies, the *Annoyance* is the speech act of complaint most often realized by consumers. This may be due to several factors. First, consumers generally don't like to write long speeches, and they usually complain about more than one complaint. In that case, it's quicker and easier to write down complaints in the form of unpleasant conditions in short sentences (Puksi, 2016). The face-threatening action has been able to threaten the negative face of the shop as a speech partner because the complaint contains implicatures asking for compensation from the speech partner (Brown & Levinson, 1978). This is possible because of the motive to seek compensation and act to resolve the inconvenience caused and experienced by consumers as turbulent (Heung & Lam, 2003).

On the other hand, the *Explicit blame* (person) is the least realized strategy. This strategy is the most highly-rated strategy for face-threatening and is considered too extreme for many consumers. It is likely that explicit blame (person) has a motive not to seek compensation and settlement actions but only to express anger and seek forgiveness from the store as a speech partner (Heung & Lam, 2003). That makes it different from consumers who realize his complaint with the annoyances strategy on the review page of the e-commerce platform review.

From seller's perspective, they respond tend to *bring hearer to know* about the complaint that the consumers write. Bring hearer to know can be found 58 times from seller's responses in the review page on the e-commerce platform. While the positive face of consumers are secured, that case does not occur to sellers. The importance of review page on the e-commerce platform expose the positive face of sellers because the consumers hold more power than sellers related to review on the e-commerce platform. That's how sellers tend to respond more positively such as *bring hearer to know*.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research speech act of complaints realized by buyers and responses from sellers to buyer complaints on the review page of e-commerce platforms in Indonesia. *Annoyances* is most often realized by buyers. This strategy does not try to directly show the complaints and is considered as one of the weakest strategy in the speech act of complaint. However, this is in line with the goal of consumers realizing their complaints through the *Annoyances* strategy, it is possible to improve self-image from dissatisfaction with certain goods or services that have been purchased or used and get a second chance to get satisfaction after experiencing disappointment. With low face threats, the response from buyers also tends to only tell about what the buyer is complaining about.

Due to time constraints in the study, further research is expected to further explore the possible differences between e-commerce platforms, namely Tokopedia and Shopee, which have consumer profiles with different characteristics. Not only that, the further research can explore the factors or motives the consumers consider when writing complaints in the review page on the e-commerce platform.

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