

The Role of The Indonesian Language in Negotiations between Msme Actors and Consumers in Galis District

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the role of the Indonesian language in the negotiation process between actors of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and consumers in Galis District, Bangkalan Regency. Language is an essential element of economic activity because it functions as a medium for conveying information, offering products, and conducting bargaining between sellers and buyers. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through semi-structured interviews and direct observation of MSME actors at Galis Market. The results show that MSME actors in Galis District use two languages interchangeably, namely Madurese and Indonesian, selected according to the background and character of the consumer. Indonesian is used mainly when interacting with consumers from outside the region or in more formal situations, while Madurese is used to build emotional closeness with local consumers. Persuasive language strategies, such as complimenting the product, emphasizing price advantages, and using a friendly and polite tone, have been shown to increase the effectiveness of negotiation. However, limited Indonesian language proficiency among some business actors and dialectal differences constitute obstacles that hinder effective communication. This study concludes that good command of Indonesian, combined with proficiency in the local language, contributes significantly to negotiation success, consumer trust, and the sustainability of MSME businesses in Galis District.

Keywords: Indonesian language, negotiation, MSMEs, persuasive communication, Galis District.

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INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in the community economy, including in Galis District, Bangkalan Regency. Beyond creating jobs and driving the local economy, the success of MSMEs is also heavily determined by business actors' ability to communicate with consumers. In practice, buying and selling activities are almost always accompanied by negotiation, whether concerning price, product quality, purchase quantity, or type of service. Language is the primary instrument that determines the success of such negotiations; the use of polite, clear, and persuasive language can build consumer trust, while inappropriate language has the potential to cause misunderstanding and hinder transactions.

As the national language, Indonesian holds an important position in economic interactions in multilingual regions such as Galis District, where the community uses Madurese as its mother tongue as well as Indonesian in more formal contexts. This diverse linguistic condition makes communication strategy, including the choice of language code, an important factor in business activity. Unfortunately, not all MSME actors in the region fully understand the importance of effective language use, particularly proficiency in Indonesian, in the process of negotiating with consumers.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between language, communication, and business success. Subhan and Sari (2024) found that appropriate language use plays an important role in improving negotiation effectiveness and entrepreneurial success. In line with this, Alwi, Safitri, and Aswad (2025) confirmed that communication skills in Indonesian significantly affect the success of business negotiations in the trade and manufacturing sectors. On the other hand, Apriliani et al. (2025) revealed that language barriers and psychological factors can become obstacles in MSME business negotiations, as found in a case study in Cikarang. Research by Telaumbanua et al. (2025) showed that persuasive, emotional, and interactive language use can increase consumer engagement and purchase intent, while Azizah et al. (2025) highlighted that appropriate use of Indonesian can enhance business professionalism. Research by Lase et al. (2025) on the MSME sector in Cibarusah District further demonstrated that good communication strategies strengthen the effectiveness of business negotiations and interpersonal relationships with consumers.

Nevertheless, most of these studies have focused on urban areas, digital marketing, or larger-scale businesses, leaving a gap in research specifically addressing the role of the Indonesian language in MSME negotiations in bilingual rural areas such as Galis District. Based on this gap, this study aims to describe the role of the Indonesian language in the negotiation process between MSME actors and consumers in Galis District, to identify the forms of language use applied, to analyze the factors influencing negotiation success, and to explain the obstacles faced by business actors in using Indonesian effectively.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach (Sugiyono, 2021) aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of Indonesian and Madurese language use in the negotiation process between MSME actors and consumers. This approach was chosen because it can describe in detail how the choice of language code influences the negotiation process, the building of consumer trust, and ultimately the success of transactions.

The research was conducted at Galis Market, Galis District, Bangkalan Regency, which is the center of buying and selling activity for the local community and is characterized by a bilingual population.

The research subjects included MSME actors (sellers) and consumers who interacted during buying and selling activities at the location.

Data were collected through two main techniques: interviews and observation. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner so that the researchers could flexibly explore informants' answers while remaining focused on the research objectives. The interview guide included questions about the type of language used, the reasons for language choice, the impact of language use on business operations, situations involving specific language use, the influence of language on customer trust, and the obstacles faced in communication. Direct observation was carried out on Wednesday, 8 April 2026, by observing sellers' language use when serving customers, the factors influencing language choice, the forms of interaction between sellers and buyers, sellers' attitudes of politeness and friendliness, and buyers' responses to the language used.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis by categorizing the findings based on emerging themes—namely patterns of language choice, forms of persuasive language, factors of negotiation success, and language obstacles—which were then interpreted with reference to theoretical frameworks on language, negotiation, and consumer behavior.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. General Overview of the Research Location

Galis Market is a traditional market that serves as the center of buying and selling activity for the community in Galis District, Bangkalan Regency. Various MSME actors run their businesses at this location, ranging from vendors of daily necessities and clothing to local food and beverages. Most people in Galis District use Madurese as their mother tongue, while Indonesian is used in specific situations, especially when interacting with consumers from outside the region. This bilingual linguistic condition makes Galis Market a relevant location for observing the dynamics of Indonesian language use in economic negotiation processes.

2. Patterns of Indonesian Language Use in Negotiation

The results of observation and interviews show that MSME actors at Galis Market use Indonesian and Madurese interchangeably in the negotiation process, with language choice heavily influenced by the background and character of the consumer. Indonesian tends to be used when business actors interact with consumers from outside the region or consumers who display a more formal communication style, while Madurese is used to build emotional closeness with local consumers. This pattern of code-switching is in line with Wardhaugh's (2010) view that a person's language choice is strongly influenced by social and cultural factors within society, and is consistent with the concept of language variation in sociolinguistic studies put forward by Chaer and Agustina (2010), who emphasize that the choice of language variety is always adjusted to the situation, interlocutor, and communicative purpose. In the context of Galis Market, MSME actors' ability to switch from Madurese to Indonesian, or vice versa, becomes an effective communication strategy for reaching consumers of diverse backgrounds while also expanding market reach beyond the community of Madurese speakers.

3. Forms of Persuasive Language Use

In the bargaining process, MSME actors apply various persuasive language strategies to convince consumers, including complimenting product quality, emphasizing price advantages compared to other sellers, using a friendly and polite tone, and adjusting their language style to the character of the consumer they are dealing with. Most of these strategies are delivered in Indonesian when consumers are not familiar with Madurese, indicating that proficiency in Indonesian also serves as a communicative asset for business actors to apply persuasion techniques more broadly. This finding reinforces the results of Subhan and Sari (2024), who stated that persuasive and communicative language use can increase negotiation effectiveness and entrepreneurial success. From a marketing communication perspective, this is also consistent with Kotler and Keller's (2016) view that delivering persuasive marketing messages plays an important role in shaping consumers' perception of product value, as well as with Tjiptono's (2014) view that the quality of communication and service also determines customer satisfaction in both the service and trade sectors.

4. Factors Influencing Negotiation Success

Several factors were found to influence the success of negotiations between MSME actors and consumers, namely appropriate word choice, a friendly tone, linguistic politeness, the ability to adapt language to the character of the consumer, and fluency in Indonesian for serving consumers from outside the local community. Business actors who are able to convey messages clearly, whether in Madurese or Indonesian, tend to find it easier to reach mutually beneficial agreements. This finding is consistent with the research of Alwi, Safitri, and Aswad (2025), which showed that communication skills in Indonesian influence the success of business negotiations in the trade sector. In addition, this result is also in line with the research of Lase et al. (2025) in Cibarusah District, which demonstrated that good communication strategies in the MSME sector can improve the effectiveness of business negotiations while strengthening interpersonal relationships between business actors and consumers.

5. Obstacles in the Use of Indonesian

This study also identified several obstacles faced by MSME actors in using Indonesian effectively, including limited Indonesian proficiency among some business actors who predominantly speak Madurese, dialectal differences between sellers and buyers, and a lack of understanding regarding the importance of persuasive communication in increasing sales. These linguistic limitations have the potential to cause misunderstandings, particularly when interacting with consumers from outside the region who do not speak Madurese. This finding is in line with the results of Apriliani et al. (2025), who stated that language barriers and psychological factors can affect negotiation outcomes in MSMEs, especially in business interactions involving different linguistic backgrounds.

6. The Influence of Language on Purchasing Decisions and Consumer Satisfaction

The results show that effective language use, whether in Indonesian or Madurese, has a positive influence on purchasing decisions and consumer satisfaction. Consumers who feel comfortable with the seller's manner of communication tend to find it easier to make purchasing decisions and tend to show loyalty toward that business actor. Clear and polite use of Indonesian also helps bridge communication with consumers who do not speak Madurese, thereby expanding the MSME's customer base. This finding supports the research of Telaumbanua et al. (2025), which showed that persuasive, emotional, and

interactive language can increase consumer engagement and encourage purchase intent, and is in line with the research of Azizah et al. (2025), which confirmed that appropriate use of Indonesian can enhance business professionalism as well as consumer trust in business actors.

7. General Discussion

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that Indonesian has a strategic role that complements Madurese in the negotiation process between MSME actors and consumers in Galis District. Madurese functions to build emotional closeness and reflect local identity, while Indonesian functions as a communication bridge that expands market reach and supports a professional impression in business interactions. MSME actors' ability to combine both languages appropriately, together with persuasive language strategies, politeness, and adaptation to the character of the consumer, is key to negotiation success. Nevertheless, limited Indonesian proficiency among some business actors remains a challenge that needs to be addressed so that MSMEs in Galis District can reach a wider market and improve their competitiveness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that Indonesian plays an important role in the negotiation process between MSME actors and consumers in Galis District, particularly as a means of formal communication and a bridge to consumers from outside the region, used interchangeably with Madurese according to context and consumer character. The use of appropriate, polite, and persuasive language has been shown to increase transaction success and strengthen the relationship between business actors and consumers. Factors such as word choice, a friendly tone, linguistic politeness, and the ability to adapt language to the character of the consumer also determine negotiation success, while limited Indonesian proficiency and dialectal differences remain obstacles faced by some MSME actors. Effective language use has also been shown to positively influence purchasing decisions and consumer satisfaction, so strengthening MSME actors' Indonesian language proficiency in Galis District needs to be continuously encouraged, whether through independent initiatives or local government training programs, so that local MSMEs can compete and develop sustainably.

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