

Mitigating Devices to Save Face in Sellers and Buyers' Communication in Bukittinggi Traditional Market

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Abstract

Due to their contents and ways of expression, several speech acts can potentially threaten the participant's face during an interaction. Mitigating devices can be employed to reduce the harmful effects of these face-threatening acts (FTAs). In this study, the researchers focused on interactions between sellers and buyers in the traditional market in Bukittinggi, West Sumatera, which uses the colloquial Minangkabau language. This descriptive qualitative research investigated the mitigation functions that exist in buying and selling interactions. In addition, it sought to identify the different types of mitigation strategies used by participants. Research data were collected by recording the exchanges between sellers and buyers. The data analysis technique used in this study was contextual analysis, which involved evaluating the data that had been collected, recognized, and classified by using the dimensions of context. The result showed that the face of the interlocutor was protected in this purchasing and selling encounter using various mitigating devices. The most commonly used mitigating device is indirect speech acts. Other devices, including disclaimers, impersonal constructions, hedges, euphemisms, question tags, and apologies, were also found to be mitigating devices used by communicators. The purpose of using these mitigation devices is to carry out mitigation functions such as self-defense, prevention, or repair. Both the buyers and the sellers can carry out all of these functions.

Keywords: *mitigation, mitigating devices, mitigation functions, face-threatening acts, Minangkabau language.*

INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that one of the things that must be taken into account when speaking is politeness. This thought has a significant impact on society because politeness is one of the essential elements of maintaining interpersonal harmony. According to Sadeghoghli & Niroomand (2016), the politeness principle limits human communicative behavior by encouraging us to refrain from offending or causing communicative conflict and to maintain communicative harmony. Politeness theories and principles must be applied in society in order to maintain harmonious interactions among people (Dewi et al., 2021). Even if some people frequently act in ways that endanger, hurt, or diminish regard for one's face, everyone always upholds and strives to respect each other's faces (Widya, 2017).

In many situations, we are given the choice or are obliged not to do acts that put other people's faces at risk. However, in other situations, we are not given the choice or are not compelled to do so. According to Brown & Levison (1987), the face is vulnerable to threats originating from particular speaking behaviors. This behavior type is called a face-threatening act (FTA). Some speech acts, such as requests, refusals, disagreements, and rejections (Yao, J. et al., 2021), tend to put the face of communication participants in danger because of their meaning or mode of expression. Culpeper (2011), using the term 'face-attack' instead of 'face-threatening', argues that when the speaker actively communicates a face-attack or the hearer interprets and/or constructs conduct as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of both situations, it will lead to impoliteness. In order to avoid impoliteness, a speaker must choose a strategy by considering the speech's events, such as whom he is speaking to, where he is speaking, what he is speaking about,

for what, and so on, in order to avoid this. When utilizing this method, the speaker is assumed to be mitigating what they have to say.

Holmes (1984) defines mitigation as a strategy to lower a speaking act's negative consequence. Fraser (1980) describes mitigation as the speaker's intention to lessen the undesirable effects of carrying out a certain kind of speech act. Regarding this, according to Caffi (2007), the concept of mitigation has mostly been applied to the variety of strategies used by interlocutors to minimize the consequences of FTAs. From these definitions, it seems that mitigation is closely related to politeness. It is considered a component of the more significant problem of politeness (Ali & Salih, 2020). They also stated that in order to linguistically repair the harm done to someone's face by what one says or does, language mitigation refers to tactics that people use to prevent face-threatening circumstances in conversation. It specifically refers to the words, phrases, tools, or techniques that speakers employ to lessen the negative effects of what they say.

The appearance of mitigation from distinct illocutionary acts can be found in various speech circumstances, including the seller-buyer interaction. In this context, politeness is also crucial (Goudarzi et al., 2015; Revita et al., 2017). This study focuses on purchasing and selling interactions in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, which employs the colloquial Minangkabau language. The objectives of this study were to analyze the mitigation functions that exist in buying and selling interactions and to find out the mitigation devices used by communication participants.

The study of mitigation to save face in communication is essential since it involves significant facets of human communication, including the one done by sellers and buyers in traditional markets. Communication between sellers and buyers is frequently sensitive due to business transactions, trustworthiness, emotions, persuasion, and complex negotiations. The buyer wants a product that matches their expectations, while the seller wants to convince the buyer.

Communication that is not sensitive may harm the listener's feelings and motivation. Due to this, effective communication that respects both parties' interests is crucial to achieving the goal. Mitigation promotes awareness of the conversation's context, minimizes disagreements, assures communication efficacy, upholds social norms, improves communication skills, and helps speakers maintain positive social relationships. Overall, mitigation is essential for handling interpersonal communication by considering others' feelings in various contexts.

Some scholars have developed their foundational ideas on this topic. The study by Caffi (2007) is one of the most influential subsequent studies. According to her, mitigation affects three domains or scopes: the proposition, the illocution, and the deictic origin of the utterance. She uses the terms bushes, hedges, and shields to describe each of the three domains. She adds that mitigating devices can be used simultaneously. Another work is from Fraser (1980), who has introduced two motivations to mitigate. They are self-serving mitigation, which aims at self-interest, and altruistic mitigation, which aims to benefit others or the broader community. Fraser also proposes specific mitigating devices such as indirect speech acts, impersonal construction, disclaimers, parenthetical verbs, tag questions, hedges, and euphemisms. Slightly different from the classification of two motivations for mitigation proposed by Fraser, Briz, and Abelda (cited by Ramada, 2020) introduce an additional motivation, which they refer to as the mitigation function. These three mitigation functions are self-protection (speaker-oriented), preventive (hearer-oriented), and repair. The classification of Briz and Abelda is what underlies our research.

Many studies have been conducted on this topic. As the phenomenon of mitigation can be found in languages worldwide, many experts have researched this topic in various languages. Those studies discussed how this mitigation is applied in various languages. Mitigation has been studied in Spanish (Flores-Ferrán & Lovejoy, 2015; Ramada, 2020), Arabic (Hazem & Mohammad, 2021), American

English (Khammari, 2021), German (Ackermann, 2023), and Chinese (Querol-Bataller, 2023). Each of those studies examines mitigation in a different context compared to this research, which took communication in trading as its research object. Flores-Ferrán & Lovejoy (2015); Hazem & Mohammad (2021); Khammari (2021), and Ackermann (2023) only tried to look at mitigation devices without discussing mitigating functions. Meanwhile, this study tried to look at those two aspects of mitigation: the functions and the devices used. Ramada (2020) includes boosting as a tool to save face in conversation.

A few studies on politeness in Minangkabau have also been conducted by a few academics, such as (Efrianto & Afrita (2019), Revita and Trioclarise (2020), and Chandra et al. (2023). Some scholars, including Isnaniah and Huda (2022), (Revita et al., 2022), and Haristianie et al. (2023) have also discovered politeness in Minangkabau literature.

Some researchers have also conducted studies related to the Minangkabau language in the trading world. Regarding manners in trading, Minangkabau traders are renowned for their positive politeness (Erlan et al., 2013; Fadhilah & Dewi, 2017). The traders use Positive politeness in all contexts and modes of utterance (Anugrah et al., 2020). Furthermore, Minangkabau traders utilize a variety of maxims to develop language politeness with customers, as evidenced by (Nasution et al., 2018) and (Revita et al., 2020).

From the literature review that has been carried out, no literature specifically discusses language mitigation in buying and selling interactions, especially those in the regional language, Minangkabau. Various speech acts, either directly or indirectly and literal or non-literal, are used in conversations between sellers and buyers, which are frequently susceptible to interaction and prone to aggressive behavior. As a result, it appears to be worthwhile to conduct a mitigation analysis of various sorts of speech acts that occur in the interaction of sellers and buyers in the Bukittinggi traditional market. We formulated two

research questions: (a) What mitigating functions are found in interaction between sellers and buyers in Bukittinggi traditional markets?; and (b) What mitigating devices are used by sellers and buyers in this kind of interaction? This study is expected to describe communication patterns between sellers and buyers in traditional markets in Bukittinggi, Sumatera Barat, especially concerning how they conducted save-facing by employing functions and mitigating devices.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research aimed to identify what mitigation functions and what mitigation devices emerge in the buying and selling interactions between sellers and buyers at the traditional markets in Bukittinggi. To deal with the problem, this research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. This research was conducted in three stages: data collection, data analysis, and presentation of the result.

The recording technique was used to collect the research data. Recording techniques in pragmatic research is essential to understanding the use of language in real contexts and social interactions. It allows authentic data collection, improves validity, and allows context analysis of communication. To collect natural conversation data, the researchers observed face-to-face interactions between sellers and buyers at Bukittinggi's Pasar Atas and Pasar Bawah traditional marketplaces. The recording process took approximately 3, with the following details: 1 week at Pasar Atas Bukittinggi and two weeks of recording in Pasar Bawah Bukittinggi.

The recordings were conducted with the participant's consent. The researchers merely explained the goal of the study and reassured the participants that the recording was meant to capture genuine conversational interactions in order to preserve the naturalness of the data. The researchers also deployed covert recording equipment to prevent interfering with the recording process. A sound recording device was utilized to record sellers and buyers interactions. The first

author, a native Minangkabau speaker, actively participated in the recording. She frequently took part in conversations as both a listener and a speaker to pique interest and generate responses containing mitigation devices and mitigating functions. Once recordings are taken, the writers transcribe the data of the form manually.

The data analysis technique used in this study was the contextual analysis approach, which involved evaluating the data that had been collected, recognized, and classified using the dimensions of context. The contextual approach means that data is analyzed by examining its relationship with the context to obtain a particular utterance's meaning or significance. After doing the analysis, the results of the analysis would be presented formally in the form of a description.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

In Bukittinggi's traditional market, interactions between buyers and sellers still adhere to the politeness principle. The data analysis found some mechanisms for reducing the illocutionary force of speech. These mitigating devices are occasionally employed in conjunction with other politeness cues like intonation, speech rate, and gestures. This is in line with what (Revita & Trioclarise, 2020) states that the Minangkabau ethnic group mostly uses tone of voice, speed of speech, and courteous body language and gestures to convey their politeness.

The results of the data analysis support the proposed mitigation functions by Briz and Abelda (quoted in Ramada, 2020), which include self-protection (speaker-oriented), preventive (hearer-oriented), and repair. Several mitigation devices, including question tags, indirect speech acts, impersonal constructions, disclaimers, apologizing, hedges, and euphemisms, are employed to achieve these goals. Context is also necessary to determine whether a linguistic device can be considered a mitigation device. Villalba Ibáñez (2020) stated that no linguistic

device can be deemed a mitigating device without considering other factors. The explanation in this section is divided based on each mitigation function found.

1. Self-protection

Self-protection on the speaker's part is one of the justifications put up for the use of mitigation by speakers. This sort of mitigation would be categorized as a self-serving function of mitigation in Fraser's (1980) definition of mitigation theory, although Holmes (1984) would consider it to fall under the speaker-oriented category. In this function, the possibility exists that the speaker delivering an utterance may be the beneficiary of mitigation (Ramada, 2020). Self-protection means that the speaker seeks to save his own face because self-protection is a function of mitigating devices that are targeted at the speaker. Data on interactions between sellers and buyers during the buying and selling process in the Minang language demonstrates that both the seller and the buyer perform this self-protection function.

Excerpt 1

- 01 Buyer : *Bara sarawa jo baju ko sa stel, Da.*
'How much does it cost, Da?'
- 02 Seller : *Rp. 350.000 sa stel, Ni. Buliah turun stek, Ni.*
'Rp. 350.000. You can get it cheaper'
- 03 Buyer : *Da maha na Uda malatakkkan harago mah Da, ragu wak ka*
04 *maago.*
(I think it is too expensive. I am not sure I can bid or not)
- 05 Seller : ***Kan sasuai jo kualitas barang nyo, ndak Ni?** Rancak harago
rancak lo kualitas nyo Ni. Istilah nyo kalah mambali, manang
mamakai.*
'This is in accordance with the quality of the goods. if the price
is high the quality of the goods is also good.'

The excerpt illustrates the interaction between the seller and the buyer when the buyer is aware of the price of the items she wants to purchase. The buyer

hesitates to bid because it turns out that the price is too high. The seller's pricing is far higher than the buyer's estimate, which makes the buyer feel that he cannot determine a fair price for the item and makes her reluctant to place a bid.

In line 05, the seller employs mitigation as a strategy to shield his face by responding to the buyer's utterance with a tag question for the mitigating device. To request affirmation or consent, he used the question tag form. The question tag's rising intonation less impacts the statement that the price will match the item's quality. By doing this, the seller anticipates the other person's perception of him, which may be that he is overconfident or arrogant in his assertion.

In addition to the usage of question tags as the mitigating device, according to some data indirect speech acts are employed as a tool to lessen the degree of threat to the seller's or buyer's face as shown in excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2

- 01 Buyer : ***Da, awak kamari dek tadanga uda murah manjua dari***
02 ***nan lain, Da.***
'I'm here because I heard that you sell cheaper than others'
03 Seller : ***Sia nan mangicek an ka uni model tu, awak manjua***
04 ***galeh samo juo jo nan lain nyoh ni.***
'Who told you that? the price I gave is the same as what
other sellers gave.'
05 Buyer : ***Iyo itu kicek urang, Da.***
'People told me that.'
06 Seller : ***Cubo lah caliak-caliak dulu ni, ma tau ado nan katuju***
07 ***di Uni***
'Please try first maybe there is something you like.'

In this situation, the seller and the buyer use mitigating tools to save their faces. The buyer statement in line 01 may have a variety of illocutionary forces. However, considering the situation, the buyer wants to negotiate a lower price with the seller. She uses an indirect speech act to explain his purchase instead of simply requesting a reduced price. The customer claimed to know that the price

she wants is less expensive at this store than in other stores. If the seller rejects her, she uses this indirect speech act to protect her face from embarrassment.

The buyer takes action to protect herself when the seller asks where the information came from. The buyer softens his speech by using impersonal construction in line 05. When referring to the outside source, the buyer just only says "*urang*" 'someone' and does not reveal who gave her the information. "*Urang*" can be used to describe a single person, a group of people, or everyone in this situation. In order to maintain the seller's goodwill toward her, the buyer does this.

Finally, The seller also employs an indirect speech act in line 06 in response to the buyer's statement. In order for the customer to inspect and test the item first, he prefers to make suggestions rather than a clear yes or no. He took this measure to shield his face because it is possible that the price of the goods he was offering was not genuinely less expensive than other retailers.

Excerpt 3

- 01 Buyer : *Ko bara haragonyo ko, Da?*
'How much does it cost?'
- 02 Seller : *Rp. 35.000, Ni.*
'Rp. 35.000.'
- 03 Buyer : *Ndeh maha mah da. **Kalau buliah Rp.25.000***
04 ***baanyo, Da?***
'How expensive it is! How about Rp. 25.000?'
- 05 Seller : *lah harago ka bali se wak agiahan tu nyo Ni*
'it's already the fixed price.'

When a buyer intends to place a bid on an item, the utterance in line 03 is a way for the buyer to safeguard himself or herself. Because this claim can harm buyers' faces who request price reductions, it is known as self-protection. Another approach for purchasers to bid on items frequently seen in traditional markets in Bukittinggi is in the statement in lines 03–04. Additionally, two mitigation techniques are applied in this speech, softening it compared to a direct speech act. The phrase "*kalau buliah*" 'if it is OK' at the beginning of the statement

serves as the first mitigation strategy. The indirect speech act, which asks someone to do something by using an interrogative statement, comes next. With this disclaimer and indirect speech act, the buyer's illocutionary force to ask is softened, reducing the threat on his face when the seller's response does not meet his expectations. This is the justification for the self-protection classification of the statements in 3/SP-B/ISA.

From the scenarios mentioned above, it is clear that both participants to an interaction are capable of engaging in self-protection using mitigation devices with a self-protection function. The goal of utilizing this mitigation is to protect your own face from any potential face-threatening actions. When concerned that their words can alter the perceptions of their listeners and, eventually, affect their faces, speakers may soften their remarks to preserve the picture of themselves that is presented. One can save face using appropriate mitigating devices, such as indirect speech acts and impersonal construction.

2. Prevention

Prevention refers to protecting participants in a conversation who are not the speaker's utterance from potential facial injuries. Protecting other participants' face does not mean leaving speakers' own face needs unattended (Ramada, 2020). Despite being aware of the threat posed by other people's faces, the speaker continues to pay attention to the requirements of his face. The following excerpts demonstrate this.

Excerpt 3 demonstrates how indirect speech serves as a prevention function of mitigation. In this transaction, a negotiation occurs between the buyer and the seller. The buyer employs mitigation devices like a disclaimer and indirect speech act to decrease the threat level he would otherwise experience if the seller rejected his offer. It turns out that the seller's response also takes the form of an indirect speech act, in which he refuses to immediately grant the buyer's request with a yes

or no declaration instead offering arguments that signal his disagreement. For instance, the statement "*lah harago ka bali se wak agiahan tu nyo Ni*" indicates that the seller can no longer lower the price because the amount he provided already represents the item's fair market value. Here, the merchant takes safety measures. It saves the buyer's face by softening the utterance with an indirect speech act mitigation devices to avoid the buyer from feeling offended by the seller's denial. Furthermore, he tries to save his face to avoid being considered arrogant.

Excerpt 4

- 01 Buyer : ***Da, ndak kurang timbangannyo tu, Da?***
'is the scale correct?'
- 02 Seller : *Hahaha lai pas timbangan nyo ni.*
'Hahaha. Of course its correct.'
- 03 Buyer : ***Ndak tambah stek, Da?***
'Don't you want to add some more?'
- 04 Seller : *Jadih, Ni. Alah awak tambah.*
'Ok. I've already added some.'

The aforementioned conversation is produced in the context of negotiating. The buyer requests a price reduction on the items he purchased. He used an indirect speech act in line 01 when he said, "*Da, ndak kurang timbangannyo tu, Da?*" The query is intended to tempt the seller to add more to the item being weighed rather than alert them that the scale is inaccurate. The buyer also employed indirect speech actions in line 3, still in the form of questions in sentences. These two utterances are used to mitigate the effect of utterances which, if uttered directly, might threaten the face of the other person, in this case the seller.

As was already mentioned, when applying prevention, the speaker genuinely tends to the needs of his own face. In line 1, the buyer attempts to preserve face by indirectly speaking. The language used is one of inquiry rather than accusation or warning. The case that appears in line 03 the same case that appears in line 01. In line 03, the buyer employs an interrogative sentence intending

to inquire in an effort to protect his own face and prevent the seller's denial from threatening his face. However, the buyer is also trying to protect her own face by uttering indirect speech acts, which actually mean increasing the number of goods. This is often done by buyers in Bukittinggi traditional markets. The response from the seller to this request was also conveyed by an indirect speech act by the seller (see line 2). He mitigated the response to save the buyer's face and his. This what Ramada (2020) states that: protecting other participants' faces does not mean leaving speakers' own face needs unattended. Another important thing is that this utterance's mitigation effect will be felt if the right intonation and facial expressions support it.

In trading, the buyer frequently decides against buying and stops the transaction. The dialogue from the following excerpt is one of the dialogs that appears. Before explaining why he did not buy, the buyer apologizes. The apology that is offered at the beginning of the remarks serves a dual purpose of self-defense and prevention. Because the buyer is seeking to shield his face from the humiliation of not buying it by first apologizing, it is known as self-protection. Furthermore, it acts as a prevention since, by apologizing, the buyer keeps the seller from becoming upset and offended by the transaction's failure.

Excerpt 5

- 01 Buyer : *Da, maaf Da. Awak caliak dulu yo, Da*
 'I am so sorry to say this. I have to go.'
02 Seller : ***Mungkin alun bajodoh wak lai, ndak Ni? Ndak baa***
03 *do, Ni.*
 'Maybe we're not matched yet. Its ok.'

The aforementioned data demonstrates mitigation device and functions from the seller's perspective and displays prevention and seller self protection. The message in line 02 depicts the seller's response after the buyer opted not to purchase the item. "*Alun bajodoh wak lai, ndak Ni? Ndak baa do, Ni.*" Here, the

seller uses the word "*mungkin*" 'may be' as a hedging device to express his own opinion on the current situation. The illocutionary force is again reduced by adding a question mark at the end of the statement. Due to the implementation of this mitigating strategy, which makes the speech incredibly polite and conceals the seller's fury or disappointment, the buyer's face is also saved because he will not feel offended by the seller's statement. With this speech, the seller tries to protect both his own face and the buyer's because blunt words could also put the seller's face in risk. Buyers may see sellers as unfriendly, impatient, and rude.

In discussing apologies as a type of mitigation, the writers would like to clarify that in communicative interactions—in this case, interactions involving buying and selling in the Minangkabau language—apologies frequently come across as an act of courtesy to the other person. In reality, one of the categories for mitigating devices in Fraser (1980) taxonomy of mitigating devices, cited in this study, does not include apologies. Nonetheless, this apology might be added to the Minangkabau categorization because Minangkabau people frequently use this device to mitigate their utterances. One could decrease the impact of future words and the threat to both the speaker's and the other person's face by first apologizing.

Excerpt 6

- 01 Buyer : *Agiah lah tambahnyo, Da.*
'Can you add some more?'
- 02 Seller : ***Kalau awak tambah dima balabo wak ni, noh untuang galeh ko sagetek lo di awak ni, kalau awak labiah an manimbang nyoh ni tuh panek sen nan dapek di awak tuh ni.***
'If I add I'll not get some profit. The profit is only a little.'

It is possible to refuse a request directly or indirectly. The interlocutor's face will surely be at risk from a direct rejection. The seller uses an indirect speech act to reject the buyer's request subtly. This action is taken to avoid or diminish the

buyer's disappointment or shame when the seller agrees to his request to negotiate the price.

Another mitigating tool used in purchasing and selling circumstances is euphemism. Through numerous excerpts, one can see how euphemism is used in everyday speech to convey various intense and unutterable sentiments. One can also see how euphemism makes use of rich linguistic expressions to achieve distinctive rhetorical meanings and produces distinctive linguistic effects to make people appear polite (Cao, 2020). The discussion outlined below occurs when the seller declines the buyer's offer. As a result, the sale and purchase agreement fails, and the buyer decides to leave. The term "*caliak lu*," which means "see first," is used to facilitate conversation in line 5 (see excerpt 7 below) and to keep the interlocutor's face, in this case the seller's.

Excerpt 7

- 01 Buyer : *Ndak dapek ko nRp. 55.000, Buk?*
'How about Rp. 55.000?'
- 02 Seller : *Ndak baliak modal wak do, Ni.*
'No, it have nt paid back.'
- 03 Buyer : *turunanlah agak 5000 gai, Buk.*
'How about 5000 cheaper?'
- 04 Seller : *alun dapek lai, Ni.*
'No, it can not.'
- 05 Buyer : *Bialah. **Caliak** lu yo, Buk*
'Its Ok. I have to go.'
- 06 Seller : *Ni, marilah dulu, Ni. Tambahlah agak 5000 lai dih,*
07 *60.000 lah dih.*
'No, come here. Why don't you add another 5000.
So it will be Rp.60.000?'

Customers frequently shop only window, simply walking about and looking at the goods. However, occasionally some customers overstep the markup by holding onto goods as if they were merely curious rather than intending to make a purchase, oblivious to the sellers around them who were

staring at them. This behavior frequently makes the seller feel uneasy. The utterance frequently uttered by the seller to rebuke the buyer is "*Ado nan bisa wak tolong, Da?*" 'Can I assist you?' (see excerpt 8 below). It is an indirect speech act used by sellers in order to save the buyer's face because a straightforward warning might make him feel ashamed. This utterance also serves the mitigation functions of prevention using the indirect speech act.

Excerpt 8

01 Seller : *Ado nan bisa awak tolong, Da?*
"Can I help you?"

3. Repair

In addition to self-protection and prevention, repair is a third mitigation function. When the speaker or the interlocutor has already taken a face-threatening action, repair is utilized. Mitigation is employed to repair the harm done to an interlocutor's face. Apologies frequently serve a repair role. Speakers who acknowledge and accept responsibility for their acts that hurt other participants frequently make mitigated corrections. This might not always be the case, but it can be a tactic used to pursue an apology (Ramada, 2020).

The person who committed the face-threatening act is attempting to improve the circumstance or relationship by using the repair function of mitigation for a variety of reasons. The following list includes buyer and seller exchanges demonstrating the repair function.

Excerpt 9

01 Buyer : *Pak, ado minyak goreng merk ".....", Pak?*
'Do you have cooking oil, Sir?'
02 Seller : *Ondeh, awak ndak manjua minyak murah do, Buk.*
'owh, I don't sell the cheap one.'
03 Buyer : *Ooo bialah Pak, kalau baitu.*
'Oh, its ok.'

- 04 Seller : ***Buk, kamarilah dulu Buk. Kok Buk caliak minyak nan iko dulu ba nyo? Mungkin lai suai jo Ibuk.***
‘Come her, Ma’am. Why don’t you try another Brand? May be it will fix you.’
- 06 Buyer : *Ndak bialah, Pak. Awak caliak tampaik lain se lah.*
‘No. Its Ok. I will check another store.’

In the preceding excerpt, the customer orders cooking oil from brand X. Although the seller claims that he does not supply the intended cooking oil in response to the buyer's question, the seller does remark that the cooking oil the buyer indicated is cheap. The customer responded to the threat put directly to her face; perhaps she simply acquiesced out of a desire to avoid starting an argument. Realizing his statements had offended the buyer, the vendor tried to mend the damage in his face. The vendor does this to retain customers because many other customers observed when he attacked the customer's face. He appears to have thought about how he would come across to potential cooking oil buyers. The speech in line 04 shows the mitigating device used for this repair function. The device in use here is the indirect speech act. By posing a question, the seller is actually intending to offer a different brand to the prospective buyer. The potential buyer, however, seems to have lost interest in doing business with the seller, making it appear that the seller's attempts at mending were less successful.

Excerpt 10

- 01 Buyer : *Ndak dapek ko nRp. 55.000, Buk?*
‘How about Rp. 55.000?’
- 02 Seller : *Ndak baliak modal wak do, Ni.*
‘No, it have nt paid back.’
- 03 Buyer : *turunanlah agak 5000 gai, Buk.*
‘How about 5000 cheaper?’
- 04 Seller : *alun dapek lai, Ni.*
‘No, it can not.’
- 05 Buyer : *Bialah. Caliak lu yo, Buk*
‘Its Ok. I have to go.’
- 06 Seller : *Ni, marilah dulu, Ni. Tambahlah **agak** 5000 lai dih,*
07 *60.000 lah dih.*

‘No, come here. Why don’t you add another 5000.
So it will be Rp.60.000?’

The exchange mentioned above occurs when bargaining comes to a deadlock and the customer decides not to buy. It frequently occurs that the seller calls the potential buyer again after they decline an offer before caving in and lowering the price. The seller frequently calls the customer again to continue the conversation after disappointing the buyer by being unable to offer a price in accordance with his desires. It is occasionally reduced even when the new price does not always satisfy the buyer's needs.

The buyer could feel threatened in the face if the seller refuses his request. The seller then makes an effort to improve the situation by minimizing the utterance to get the buyer's attention. Line 06 of the phrase contains mitigating devices in the form of hedges, which, according to Tang (2013) are categorized as rounders that perform the approximator function. An approximator is a hedge that can change the meaning of a proposition from its initial context or offer additional interpretations. In communication, the approximator helps the speaker make an appropriate utterance, and it does not appear to attack the other person to achieve the communication goal.

Tang (2013) separated the approximator function into two categories: adapters and rounders. The utterance “*Ni, marilah dulu, Ni. Tambahlah **agak** 5000 lai dih, 60.000 lah dih.*” contains the word “*agak*” because the speaker sets a cap on the negotiation price, engage in the rounder role. Rounders are frequently used while discussing mathematics and measures (Tang, 2013). The speaker in this statement utilizes rounders “*agak*” since it considers buyer happiness. The ultimate objective of communication is to get the buyer to agree to purchase his goods at a fair price that benefits both sides. Even when the price is not as low as what the buyer requested, the supplier might still charge more for the product.

The results of this research are in line with and a bit distinct from previous studies. The first is research conducted by Flores-Ferrán & Lovejoy (2015). Their

research only focuses on mitigation devices, not mitigating functions. They tried to compare non-native and native speakers of Spanish in an institutional setting. This study and the previous one discuss mitigating devices based on Fraser (1980). Learners (non-native speakers) used devices redundantly, whereas native speakers used a variety of tools that frequently co-occurred with other strategies. The research findings also show that parenthetical verbs, hedges, pauses, tag questions, challenge questions, and discourse markers are a few of the mitigation strategies that were looked at. It is quite the same with this research's findings where several mitigation tools fall within Fraser's classification, including indirect speech acts, impersonal constructions, euphemisms, hedges, and tag questions. A mitigation device not mentioned by Fraser is found in Minangkabau language data, which is apology. Apology is usually expressed by the word "*maaf*" 'sorry'. The use of this expression is highly productive in buying and selling interactions in the traditional market of Bukittinggi.

Furthermore, compared to the research conducted by Ramada (2020), the results also show differences. Although both studies tried to look at the mitigation function, Ramada found that boosting and mitigation are also considered a face-protection strategy. On the other hand, in this research, all the data indicate that mitigation serves as a tool to protect the face of both the speaker and the hearer. Ramada also did not analyze mitigation devices specifically, as in this study.

This recent study does not focus on a single speech act as the sole trigger for face-threatening acts, thus requiring mitigating devices to weaken the force of speech. Unlike Khammari's (2021) research, which solely concentrates on one speech act, namely disagreement, and Ackermann's, (2023) study which focuses only on speech acts of request. The researchers identified several speech acts vulnerable to face-threatening actions, including denial, request, rejection, and disagreement. This is consistent with the research conducted by Yao et al. (2021),

which also asserts that various speech acts are susceptible to threatening the speaker's face, such as requests, rejections, and disagreements.

CONCLUSION

Effective communication now seems to depend on paying attention to the other person's face. By seeing the other person's needs, we can decide what to say. The employment of diverse mitigation tools, which have many applications in the community, is one effective strategy for speech mitigation. This recent research shows that mitigation functions are divided into three categories: self-protection, prevention, and repair. All of these functions can be completed by either the buyer or the seller. (1) Both the seller and the buyer perform the self-protection function, highlighting the speaker's attempts to maintain his own face. (2) Both parties fulfill the prevention role to preserve the interlocutor's face. Nonetheless, according to the data, the speaker can simultaneously concurrently save his own face with this function. Therefore, the speaker simultaneously saves their own face while attempting to mitigate speech in order to save the interlocutor's face. (3) The repair process is then performed following a FTA that has been done. This indicates that the speaker has previously threatened the other person's face. The speaker then modifies their remarks in an effort to make things right.

The results also show that several mitigating devices were used to protect the interlocutor's face in this buying and selling interaction. The indirect speech act is the most frequently used mitigation strategy in the Bukittinggi market. Other strategies include disclaimers, impersonal constructions, hedges, euphemisms, and question tags. The authors found another tool for mitigation in addition to Fraser's suggestion, namely an apology. Evidence suggests that apologizing to the other person will diminish the threat they perceive. As a result, it would seem that including an apology as an additional mitigating device is required in the case of the Minangkabau language. These findings allow us to describe the pattern of

mitigation in Minangkabau traditional markets. Almost all the data indicates that mitigation functions and devices appear in the same context: when sellers and buyers engage in bargaining.

From this research, it is evident that mitigation is a mechanism to save face in communication. A broader study may lead us to identify other mechanisms within these face-saving strategies, including in regional languages such as Minangkabau. Research can also be developed by examining the boosting function, which may also be used to save face in the Minangkabau language.

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