A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE LANGUAGE OF SELLERS IN E-COMMERCE LIVE STREAMING."

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study employs discourse analysis aimed at unveiling the speech acts, linguistic persuasion strategies and linguistic features employed in e- commerce live streaming. More so, this study utilizing thematic analysis aimed at exploring the emerging themes focused on the insights of e-commerce live streaming viewers on the linguistic persuasive strategies employed by streamers in e-commerce live streaming. Through purposive sampling, 15 videos of e-commerce live streaming served as the corpora of the study. Consequently, the study revealed that e-commerce live streamers employed different speech acts such as directive, assertive, commissive, expressive and declarative. The key findings of this qualitative study opened the door to a new line of inquiry into the persuasive strategies employed in e-commerce live streaming.

KEYWORDS: *Education, speech acts, linguistic persuasion strategies e-commerce live streaming, linguistic features, pragmatic, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION
Learning The growth of e-commerce live-streaming has led to diverse marketing and consumption patterns globally, presenting challenges for online sellers to boost sales. The persuasiveness of linguistic styles used by sellers significantly influences customers' purchasing behavior during live streams. Challenges related to language arise in various countries, including China, India, and European nations, where misleading language, high-pressure sales tactics, and vague product descriptions affect consumer trust and decision-making processes. Additionally, cultural and language barriers faced by Filipino sellers hinder effective communication, resulting in reduced message effectiveness and revenue decline (Flosi et al., 2021; Pfeiffer, 2022; Druckman, 2021; Fu, 2021; Hofstede, 2016; Bovee, 2021).

While existing research explores persuasive marketing strategies in e-commerce, there's a scarcity of studies analyzing the persuasive expressions and linguistic styles of online sellers in live streaming. This study, proposed by [Author Name], aims to fill this gap by focusing on the linguistic persuasive style of hosts in social e-commerce, incorporating pragmatic analysis with an emphasis on perlocutionary acts. Understanding these linguistic nuances is crucial in the evolving dynamics of online commerce, where accessibility and convenience are vital for customer interaction and business success.

The proposed research holds implications not only for business and marketing domains but also for language education. By examining contemporary language usage in live selling, this study can inform language educators on effective teaching methods in business communication courses, enriching the learning experiences of students. Furthermore, disseminating the results internationally and among live streamers contributes to advancing language education methodologies and enhancing consumer empowerment, industry practices, and ethical communication in the digital marketing landscape.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to unveil and understand the persuasive expressions among online sellers in e-commerce live streaming as well as the perlocutionary acts embedded in the response of the viewers. At this stage of research, persuasive expression is generally defined as the skills and strategies to influence a person's behavior through language use. In the context of e-commerce live streaming, it is a linguistic technique that can guide the consumers' attitude and behavior towards the sellers' intended direction.

Research Questions
1. What speech acts are used by sellers in e-commerce live streaming?
2. What are the linguistic persuasion strategies utilized by sellers in e-commerce live streaming?
3. What are the linguistic features found in these persuasive linguistic strategies?

METHODS
Research Design
This qualitative study utilized discourse analysis to explore how individuals interpret and derive meaning from their experiences, aligning with Creswell and Creswell's definition. Grounded in qualitative research tradition, it employed diverse methods such as content analysis of visual and textual resources, oral history, diaries, and open-ended questionnaires to comprehensively collect and interpret data. The research focused on understanding how e-commerce live streamers strategically used linguistic persuasion tactics to engage potential buyers. Through discourse analysis, the study aimed to identify these persuasion strategies and their impact on prospective buyers' perceptions and decisions, enriching the depth and scope of the findings.

Research Material
This study analyzed ten (10) e-commerce livestream videos from Facebook and TikTok in the Philippines, each lasting at least one hour, focusing on how online sellers used language to persuade customers. The videos, sourced from accounts with over 10,000 followers and posted between 2020 and the present, underwent content analysis to reveal rhetorical strategies present in the discourse

Procedure
As a researcher, I systematically and ethically conducted a study analyzing 10 e-commerce livestream videos from Facebook and TikTok, focusing on linguistic marketing strategies. The qualitative research design utilized discourse analysis, applying theoretical frameworks such as Searle's Speech Acts and Lamb's persuasive techniques. Ethical protocols included obtaining approvals from the Research Ethics Committee and the Dean, validating the interview guide, and securing an endorsement from the dissertation adviser. Participants were selected through maximum variation sampling, and their voluntary participation was ensured via informed consent. Interviews were conducted ethically, with confidentiality and health standards maintained. Transcriptions underwent thematic analysis, and accuracy was verified by participants, ensuring credible and rigorous data analysis.

Data Analysis
The study examined e-commerce livestreams on Facebook and TikTok to understand the linguistic and communicative strategies used by live streamers to promote products and engage audiences. Using qualitative discourse analysis and theoretical frameworks such as Speech Acts, persuasive techniques, and Social Judgement Theory, it analyzed speech categories, persuasive techniques, and linguistic elements in the livestreams. This revealed the complex strategies live streamers use and their effects on audience perception and behavior in online retail. Additionally, interviews with a diverse group of viewers explored their perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions influenced by the livestreams. This comprehensive approach provided valuable insights into how persuasive techniques shape consumer behavior and offered practical implications for marketers in online retail and social media marketing.

Ethical Considerations
This paper was evaluated thoroughly by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Immaculate Conception based on the ten ethical tenets of research: social value; informed consent; vulnerability of the research participants; risks, benefits, and safety; privacy and confidentiality; justice; transparency, qualifications of the researcher; adequacy of facilities; and community involvement. As such, the study was subjected to careful scrutiny to affirm that the ethical principles were strictly applied in the research process at all times to protect human participants, most particularly those who belong in the vulnerable sectors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Speech acts used by e-commerce live streamers.

Speech Acts	Sample Statement
Directives	• *""Let's share our live selling video to our six viewers. Please share the video online so we can attract more viewers. Also, don't forget to hit the like button below, give it a click."* ***(EL01)*** • *"There it is, it's very hot, let's have a jackpot, ma'am, it's first come, first served here! So, what are you waiting for, come on!"* ***(EL02)***
Assertive	• *"It really looks gorgeous. What brand is it, dear? (Target Collection). It's a US brand from the Target collection, right? Because it's US bail, as we mentioned earlier, my dear friends, US Bail. I'm not kidding, this is truly US Bail, I promise."* ***(EL04)*** • *"We have many beautiful bags here, all from other countries. That means our items are original."* ***(EL05)***
Commissive	• *"Please mention and invite your friends, guys, because we will give a free plant to those who mention and share our live stream a lot."* ***(EL07)*** • *"Even though we bought it cheaply, we could sell it to you for 945 pesos, but we won't do that. You know us, as a couple, we are very honest, and that's our commitment to you."* ***(EL08)***

Expressive	• *"Well, this is just a try, my dear customers. If it doesn't sell, at least I tried. /laughs/ But if many people buy it, then that's happiness." (EL10)* • *"Smile... okay, hello to my 12 beautiful viewers... Alright, hold on, let's not get too excited..." (EL11)*
Declarative	• *"This product is crafted from high-quality materials to ensure durability and longevity." (EL13)* • *"Oh, someone commented 'mine.' It's yours now, Ma'am Daisy! This item is all yours, ma'am...*

The excerpts placed in the table discusses various speech acts within John Searle's theory, focusing on directives, assertive, commissive, expressive, and declarative speech acts. It begins by analyzing directives, highlighting how seemingly inclusive statements function as commands, urging specific actions from the audience to increase visibility and viewership. The assertive speech acts are characterized by the speaker confidently asserting opinions and beliefs about the product's appearance, brand, and origin. Commissive speech acts involve the speaker committing to future actions, such as providing rewards to engaged viewers, fostering trust and accountability.

Expressive speech acts convey the speaker's psychological state and attitudes towards the situation, exhibiting cautious optimism, light-heartedness, and satisfaction or joy. Finally, declarative speech acts assert the quality and attributes of the product authoritatively, shaping consumers' perceptions and expectations. Overall, the summary encapsulates how each type of speech act functions within the context provided, demonstrating their roles in guiding audience behavior, establishing trust, and shaping perceptions.

Table 2
Linguistic persuasion strategies utilized by sellers in e-commerce live streaming.

Persuasive Techniques	Sample Statements
Repetition	• *Share the live. Share, share, share! Let's share the live! Let's share." (EL01)* • *"We have an available Marble Congo, okay, Marble Congo guys, you might like it for only 1,800 pesos, guys." (EL07)*
Inclusive Words	• *"Rachel, please send me the details, our shipping is through Flash Express." (EL01)* • *"We're just selling off our Morayta clothes, they're cheap, so please share our live." (EL10*
Emotive Words	• *"It's really beautiful, guys, and it's big." (EL07)* • *"Hello, sir Kris, I'm excited. Wait a moment for the number... Let's proceed to number four, how much was the price before? The previous price was 24,400, ma'am..." (EL11)*
Generalization	• *"It came from abroad. That means our items are original." (EL05)* • *"So, LCC Essentials is one of the most trusted stores, and everything we sell here is 100% original." (EL08)*
Alliteration	• *"There it is, sad and smile." (EL01)* • *"Peace be upon you, sisters and friends! Hello Everyone!" (EL12)*
Pun	• *"We have another one, Miralyn Quibo Alburoto. Alright, don't be Miralyn Alburoto." (EL01)* • *"It's yours now, ma'am Terry, don't Terry me, Terry Calderon." (EL02)*
Rhetorical Question	• *"You don't want it to be expensive, but you also don't want it to be cheap. How should we price this then? Do you like bags?" (EL04)*
Jargons	• *"I'm asking for mine here, again, mine are EF46 and EF47." (EL06)* • *"Let's be the second miner, maybe Misshie is the joy miner." (EL11)*
Anecdote	• *"I know a lot of people cried, got hurt from the breakup of Kathniel, so let's just mine to move on, right? For all the Kathniel fans out there, you really know, they were greatly affected by their breakup, so just mine now." (EL06)* • *"Before, we used to sell a lot here, probably around 300 in one posting, when it's on hand it gets sold out so quickly." (EL09)*
Appeal	• *"Our product will bring back cherished memories and create new ones for generations to come." (EL01)*

	• *"Even though it's stressful here in selling, I still want to sell because of those who support us." (EL10)*
Hyperbole	• *"If you buy this, it's like you've been to Disneyland or your kids."(EL01)* • *"Next, hey, you're all so beautiful, mamsh, very beautiful, from medium to semi-large, from medium to semi-large, you're really sexy, just right, you'll see." (EL04)*
Colloquial Language	• *"It's embarrassing... just kidding... shy... later, I'll do a fortune-telling, but no one will answer you..." (EL13)* • *"Here, sisters, just take these for free, they're free, sisters, just take these as freebies" (EL14)*
Analogies	• *"It's hassle-free now, and this is antibacterial, so it can kill a lot of germs, 99.9%! Like Safeguard, just kidding!" (EL06)* • *"Here are the details of her leaves, guys, oh there they are, so beautiful. Its color will be even more beautiful and vibrant when it's with the right person, hahaha!" (EL07)*
Simile	• *"I'll just give this to you, ma'am, for only 200 pesos. Here, ma'am, for only 200, it's beautiful, it's made of wood, so this item is considered good as new." (EL02)*
Imagery	• *"It's made of leather, brown in color, like chocolate brown but not too dark. It's beautiful and small, just enough to put money, phones, chargers. When you go to the mall, it's like that!" (EL05)* • *"Okay, this one, medium to semi-large, I still use this size. Its color is like a parka citrus, just like heading towards that orange color. Medium to semi, I'll add a slit. It's long, suitable for formal, classy events, it's a long dress, sisters." (EL04)*
Assonance	• *"Ma'am, please include mine number nine, mine number nine, sold for ma'am Tinay." (EL11)* • *"Convertible piece, medium to large, guys, it's a jumpsuit too, suitable for us, cute hahaha, just a bit wrinkled, guys, just a bit wrinkled." (EL13)*
Attacks	• *"It's beautiful, oh, it's Silver Frost, it's quite big, for others, ma'am, it's already 1000-1200 pesos for something this big, ma'am." (EL06)* • *"It's a Philodendron Melaloni, round form. It's really beautiful, guys, and it's quite big. That's how big it is." (EL07)*
Logic/Reason	• *"And it has gold hardware, mommy, it's gold hardware, and some have film coating on top, others are all with film intact, here, and here, see, it's still covered with film, meaning, it's still in plastic and flapped, that's what we should look at, even if you ask bag collectors." (EL03)* • *"This is the shower gel, the full size is 250 ml and the minis are 100 ml. This is not a liniment, it's a massage cream, the beauty of this is even if you're meters away, it won't have any smell, it's odorless and it's a cream." (EL09)*
Expert Opinion	• *"So, this is the HERMES Kelly 25 Togo leather and look at the corners, we won't talk about that anymore, mommies, compare the details of this to the HERMES shop, or search it on Google, come on. All my products are proven original, check it out in the reviews." (EL03)* • *"Okay, this kind of Aglo guys... this kind of Aglo, the mother plant of this is from Thailand, if you search it on Google, you won't find it in the Philippines..." (EL08)*
Evidence	• *"Here's something nice, brand new, only 400 pesos, it's aluminum. Ma'am, you can use the stoneware for storing food, the stoneware, chemical-free. We already have many repeat buyers of this because of its quality." (EL02)* • *"Okay, for this one, we have anti-bacterial hand soap with apple, and it's buy 1 take 1, 500ml. It's hassle-free now and this is tested anti-bacterial, so it can kill a lot of germs, 99.9%."(EL06)*
Euphemism	• *"It can be used for ponytails for your little girls, for braiding." (EL02)* • *"It's an economical alternative and it's made by someone skilled, they're from the pharmaceutical field." (EL09)*

The excerpt explores various persuasive strategies employed in e-commerce livestreams, ranging from repetition and inclusive language to emotive words and appeals to logic. Repetition is highlighted to emphasize key points and encourage audience engagement, while inclusive words foster a sense of belonging and unity among viewers. Emotive words are used to evoke strong emotional responses and create connections with the audience, enhancing persuasion. Generalization and alliteration add rhythm and emphasis to messages, making them more memorable and impactful.

Additionally, the excerpt discusses the use of rhetorical questions, jargon, anecdotes, appeals, hyperbole, colloquial language, analogy, simile, imagery, assonance, attacks, logic/reason, expert opinion, evidence, and euphemism in persuasive communication within the e-commerce context. Each technique serves a distinct purpose, from engaging the audience and simplifying complex ideas to bolstering credibility and softening unpleasant messages. By employing these persuasive strategies effectively, sellers aim to capture attention, build rapport, and ultimately persuade viewers to take desired actions, such as making a purchase or sharing the livestream.

Implications

Future research in the field of linguistic persuasion strategies in e-commerce live streaming should focus on several key areas. Firstly, expanding the breadth and depth of understanding regarding speech acts through larger and more diverse datasets could provide a comprehensive overview of linguistic interactions. Secondly, employing mixed-methods approaches could offer insights into the impact of linguistic variables on consumer perceptions and behaviors. Additionally, leveraging advanced analytical techniques such as corpus linguistics and computational linguistics could uncover nuanced patterns in persuasive language use. Lastly, adopting larger-scale participant recruitment strategies and longitudinal studies could enhance the generalizability and robustness of findings. Overall, future research should aim to deepen our understanding of persuasive communication dynamics in e-commerce settings, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in digital marketing communication.

CONCLUSIONS

Embarking on the exploration of linguistic persuasion strategies employed by e-commerce live streamers has been an enlightening journey. This endeavor has not only provided valuable insights into digital marketing discourse but has also created an opportunity to establish a new academic niche. The availability of materials for this study has been instrumental in carving out this niche and contributing to our understanding of linguistic persuasion in the context of e-commerce live streaming.

The absence of prior research in this area presented an exciting opportunity to pioneer new insights, driving the researcher's motivation to shed light on this uncharted territory. Throughout the journey, challenges such as time constraints, financial limitations, and the complexities of analyzing persuasive strategies were viewed as opportunities for growth. Collaboration with advisers, consultation with peers, and strategic planning were crucial in overcoming these obstacles and ensuring the successful completion of the study.

Navigating the intricacies of linguistic persuasion strategies in e-commerce live streaming posed significant challenges, yet these obstacles served as pivotal points in the researcher's quest for understanding. Despite the hurdles encountered, the journey has been immensely rewarding, fostering the development of critical thinking skills and a deeper comprehension of digital marketing discourse in the e-commerce sphere. This pioneering study sets the stage for future research, inspiring scholars to delve further into this dynamic field of study.

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