

# Language Variations of Conversation in Buying and Selling Transactions at Dempo Permai Market, Pagar Alam City: Variasi Bahasa Percakapan dalam Transaksi Jual Beli di Pasar Dempo Permai Kota Pagar Alam

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**General Background:** Language serves not only as a medium for communication but also as a reflection of social identity and cultural interaction. **Specific Background:** Traditional markets offer a unique linguistic setting where diverse speakers engage in dynamic, real-time exchanges. **Knowledge Gap:** Despite previous studies on market language use, the role of language variation as a strategic communication tool in economic interactions remains underexplored, particularly in Pagar Alam City. **Aims:** This study aims to identify speaker-based language variations—idiolect, dialect, sociolect, and chronolect—in transactional conversations at Dempo Permai Market and to assess their communicative and cultural functions. **Results:** Findings from 37 informants reveal multilingual interactions involving Bahasa Indonesia, Besemah, Javanese, Palembang Malay, and youth slang. These variations are influenced by speakers' age, education, and social status and serve to build rapport, facilitate negotiation, and reflect regional identity. **Novelty:** This research uniquely connects language variation to strategic communication and buyer-seller relationship-building in traditional economic settings. **Implications:** Insights from this study can inform communication training for market vendors, sociolinguistic curriculum development, and local language preservation policies, emphasizing the economic and cultural value of linguistic diversity in traditional marketplaces.

## **Highlight :**

- Language in traditional markets shows variation based on speakers' age, background, and region.
- Code-switching and dialect use serve as communication strategies in transactions.
- Local language reflects identity and supports sustainable traditional market development.

**Keywords :** Language Variation, Buying and Selling Transactions, Traditional Market, Sociolinguistics, Pagar Alam

## Introduction

Language is a crucial tool for human interaction and communication. Through language, individuals can express thoughts, acquire knowledge, and share experiences. Effective and clear language use enables interlocutors to better understand the messages being conveyed. Furthermore, language shapes how people communicate and transmit information, and the success of that communication is often reflected through the variation in language used.

Language variation refers to the diversity of language use depending on context and situation. This variation arises from the dynamic nature of social interactions among individuals or groups. It can be categorized based on various aspects: speaker-related (including dialects, idiolects, sociolects, and chronolects), functional use, level of formality, and communication medium (spoken or written). In public spaces like traditional markets—where people from diverse social and regional backgrounds interact—these variations are particularly prominent, especially in transactional conversations.

A buying and selling transaction is essentially an agreement between a seller and a buyer to exchange goods, services, or other forms of value. It often involves bargaining until both parties reach a consensus on the price. Traditional markets provide a setting where such transactions occur directly and spontaneously, making them a rich site for observing real-life language variation in practice.

Dempo Permai Market, located on Lettu Hamid Street in South Pagaram District, is one of the major traditional markets in Pagaram City. With an area of 3,064 m<sup>2</sup>, it functions as a center for daily food supply transactions in the community. Preliminary observations conducted on Sunday, November 3, 2025, revealed a high degree of language variation in buyer-seller conversations. These included the use of Bahasa Indonesia, Besemah, Javanese, Palembang Malay, Minangkabau (Padang), and Lintang. This linguistic diversity creates a unique sociolinguistic landscape that deserves in-depth exploration.

This study focuses specifically on speaker-based language variations, including:

1. Idiolect, or personal language style in terms of voice quality, vocabulary choice, sentence structure, and speech style;
2. Dialect, or language variation particular to certain regional communities;
3. Chronolect, or temporal variations used by specific age groups or time periods;
4. Sociolect, or language influenced by social class, status, or group affiliation.

These types of variation can be observed in the natural interactions between sellers and buyers at Dempo Permai Market.

This research is supported by earlier studies. One was conducted by Ayu Puspita Indah Sari and Adelia Ningsih (2023) from Universitas Bina Darma, titled "Language Variation in Buying and Selling Interactions at Pasar Pagi Lemabang." They identified 87 data points reflecting speaker-based, usage-based, formality-based, and medium-based variations. Another study by M. Helki Agusti et al. (2023) at Universitas Mulawarman, titled "Language Variation in Buying and Selling Interactions at the Samarinda Port Market," focused on dominant local languages like Javanese, Banjarese, and Kutai, shaped by age, gender, geography, and time.

While these studies offer valuable insights, they have not explicitly examined how language variation contributes to communication strategies in economic transactions or market dynamics. Moreover, the linguistic characteristics of the Pagaram region—especially the interplay of

Besemah and other regional languages—remain underexplored in existing literature. This constitutes the research gap that this study seeks to address.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the forms and functions of language variation in transactional conversations at Dempo Permai Market and explore its implications for economic communication strategies in traditional markets. The findings are expected to contribute not only to the field of sociolinguistics but also to managerial insights regarding customer engagement and communication effectiveness in traditional trading environments.

## **Method**

### **A. Research Methodology**

#### **1.1 Research Method**

According to Mahsun (2019:376), a research method refers to the procedure used to classify and distinguish data in a structured investigation. This study employs a qualitative research method. Mahsun (2019:284) defines qualitative research as an approach aimed at understanding social and linguistic phenomena, in which data are typically presented in the form of words rather than numbers. Based on this approach, the qualitative method was selected to describe speaker-based language variations observed in buying and selling interactions at Dempo Permai Market in Pagar Alam City.

#### **1.2 Data and Data Sources**

##### **1.2.1 Data**

The data in this study consist of spoken utterances or conversations that demonstrate speaker-based language variations—specifically idiolect, dialect, chronolect, and sociolect—during transactional interactions in the market.

##### **1.2.2 Data Sources**

The data sources are informants involved in direct buying and selling conversations at Dempo Permai Market. The research was conducted between March 6 and May 8, 2025, involving 37 informants from various age groups, occupations, and social backgrounds. Each transaction-based conversation lasted approximately one minute. The informants comprised both sellers and buyers, as shown in the following sample list:

NoNameAgeStatus

1Yanto37Seller

2Marlina42Buyer

3Lisa24Seller

4Wati26Buyer

5Masna61Seller

6Ujang65Buyer

.....

37Yulman56Seller

### **1.3 Data Collection Techniques**

The techniques used to collect data include recording, observation, and note-taking, as outlined by Mahsun (2019:91-93). The process included the following steps:

1. Conducting field observations at Dempo Permai Market.
2. Using a Realme 7i smartphone equipped with a 48MP primary camera and high-sensitivity microphone to record audio and video of live conversations.
3. Replaying the recordings multiple times to ensure accuracy.
4. Transcribing the recorded conversations.
5. Translating utterances in local or regional languages (e.g., Besemah, Palembang Malay) into standard Indonesian.
6. Classifying data based on speaker-related language variations (idiolect, dialect, chronolect, sociolect).

To enhance data reliability, the researcher used an observation and interview guideline designed to identify speaker background, language choice, tone, and speech style during each transactional exchange.

### **1.4 Data Analysis Technique**

According to Mahsun (2019:374), data analysis involves classifying and organizing data to identify linguistic patterns and relationships. This study applies intralingual comparison, as defined by Mahsun (2019:120), which refers to comparing linguistic elements within the same language or across language varieties used by different speakers.

The steps in the data analysis are as follows:

1. Identifying types of language variation (idiolect, dialect, chronolect, sociolect) used during transactions.
2. Categorizing utterances based on speaker-related factors.
3. Describing each variation in linguistic and sociocultural terms.
4. Drawing conclusions based on the patterns that emerge.

### **1.5 Validity and Reliability**

To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, the researcher employed triangulation techniques, including:

- a. Member checking: Selected informants were asked to verify the transcription and interpretation of their conversations.
- b. Expert consultation: Two linguistics lecturers reviewed the categorized data and provided feedback to refine the analysis.

These validation steps were conducted to ensure that interpretations accurately reflected the context and meaning of the utterances.

### **1.6 Research Ethics**

This research was carried out with ethical considerations in mind. Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained verbal consent from all informants. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, and their anonymity was preserved by using pseudonyms or general labels (e.g., "Seller A", "Buyer B") in the final documentation. Audio and video recordings were used solely for academic purposes and stored securely to protect participant privacy. Additionally, the research activity was conducted in accordance with institutional guidelines on ethical research conduct.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **A. RESULT**

This section presents the results of the analysis of language variations used in buying and selling conversations at Dempo Permai Market in Pagar Alam City. The analysis focuses on four types of language variation based on the speakers: idiolect, dialect, chronolect, and sociolect. The data were obtained from 37 informants through observation, recordings, and transcription of real-life transactions.

#### **1.1 Idiolect Variation**

Idiolect refers to the unique linguistic style of an individual. The findings show that each seller and buyer used different lexical choices, sentence structures, and intonation patterns. For example, one seller preferred using persuasive and expressive language ("Ayo kak, murah meriah, ambil dua gratis satu") while another used more direct, transactional speech ("Tiga ribu satu bungkus, mau berapa?"). These differences are influenced by personal habits, personality, and communication style.

#### **1.2 Dialect Variation**

Dialect variation was found in the use of local languages. The dominant dialects observed include Besemah, Javanese, Palembang Malay, Minangkabau (Padang), and Lintang. For example, a seller from the Besemah ethnic group used phrases like "kage lah, dek?" (Have you eaten?), while a buyer from Java said "regone piro?" (How much is it?). These dialectal differences reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the marketplace.

#### **1.3 Chronolect (Temporal Dialect) Variation**

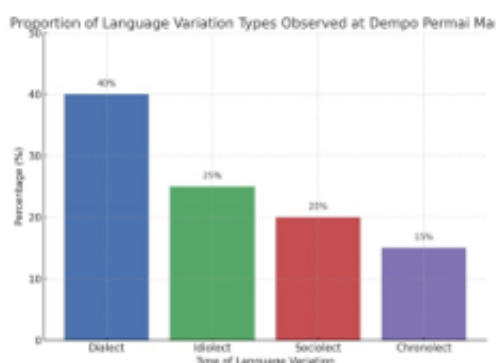
Chronolect refers to variations based on generational language use. Older informants (aged 50 and above) tend to use more formal and structured language or traditional expressions, while younger speakers (aged 20–30) often incorporate slang, abbreviations, and even modern terms borrowed from social media. For instance, younger buyers might say "Fix ambil, Kak, gaskeun!" while older sellers respond more conservatively with "Kalau cocok, ambil saja, nak."

#### **1.4 Sociolect (Social Dialect) Variation**

Sociolect variation is related to the social status and background of the speakers. Sellers who have higher education levels tended to use more standard Indonesian and polite forms, while others with more informal backgrounds used casual or mixed-code speech. For example, one seller used "Ibu mau beli berapa kilo?" while another said "Mau brapo, Buk?" This reflects the influence of education, occupation, and social interactions on language use.

No	Type of Variation	Example Utterance (Original)	Translation (English)	Speaker Info	Notes
1	Idiolect	Ayo kak, murah meriah! Ambil dua!	"Come on sis, it's super cheap! Take two!"	Seller (Yanto, 37)	Personal style, persuasive tone
2	Dialect (Besemah)	Kage lah, dek?	"Have you eaten, little brother?"	Seller (Masna, 61)	Local Besemah dialect
3	Dialect (Javanese)	Regone piro?	"How much is the price?"	Buyer (Clara, 25)	Javanese language usage
4	Chronolect (Young)	Fix ambil, Kak. Gaskeun!	"I'm definitely buying, sis. Let's go!"	Buyer (Ayu, 24)	Youth slang, informal
5	Chronolect (Old)	Kalau cocok, ambil saja, nak.	"If the price fits, just take it, dear."	Seller (Helda, 40)	Traditional phrasing, polite
6	Sociolect	Ibu mau beli berapa kilo?	"Ma'am, how many kilos would you like?"	Seller (Lisa, 24)	Formal style, higher education level
7	Sociolect	Mau brapo, Buk?	"How many do you want, ma'am?"	Seller (Toni, 39)	Informal, local influence

**Table 1.** *Types of Language Variation in Transactional Conversations at Dempo Permai Market*



**Figure 1.** *Proportion of Language Variation Types Observed*

Dialect: 40%, Idiolect: 25%, Sociolect: 20%, Chronolect: 15%

## B. Discussion

The findings confirm that marketplace conversations are rich in linguistic diversity. Language variation is not only shaped by the linguistic repertoire of the speakers but also by contextual factors such as the nature of the transaction, the relationship between buyer and seller, and the need for negotiation. Similar to the findings of Sari and Ningsih (2023), as well as Agusti et al. (2023), this study demonstrates that markets are microcosms of sociolinguistic interaction where language functions beyond its communicative purpose—it also signifies identity, solidarity, and strategy.

Furthermore, the choice of language or dialect is often strategic. For example, sellers may switch to a buyer's regional dialect to create a sense of familiarity and trust, increasing the likelihood of a sale. This practice, known as accommodation, shows how language is used not only for communication but also as a tool for social connection and persuasion. Such strategic shifts can reduce social distance and foster a more relaxed, cooperative atmosphere during the transaction process.

In addition, the presence of multiple dialects within a single transaction environment like Dempo

Permai Market highlights the phenomenon of code-switching and code-mixing. Speakers alternate between different languages or dialects depending on the listener, topic, or emotional context. This reflects a high level of linguistic competence and social awareness among the participants. Code-switching in this context is not a sign of confusion but rather a flexible adaptation to the sociolinguistic demands of the moment.

The generational aspect of language variation also illustrates a shift in linguistic norms. Younger speakers tend to adopt more innovative, informal expressions influenced by digital culture and youth communities. Their speech often includes slang and abbreviations, which may not be easily understood by older generations. This generational language gap does not hinder communication but instead reflects the evolution of language across time and its responsiveness to social change.

Moreover, sociolectal differences underscore how education level, economic background, and social roles shape language use. Sellers with higher educational attainment generally employ more standardized Indonesian, reflecting their formal exposure to language norms. On the other hand, informal traders or those from rural areas are more likely to use regional dialects or colloquial expressions. These differences contribute to the richness of the linguistic landscape in the market and demonstrate that social identity is deeply embedded in language.

In conclusion, language variation in transactional conversations at Dempo Permai Market not only facilitates the exchange of goods but also functions as a means of expressing social relationships, cultural identity, and community belonging. The marketplace, therefore, stands as a vital site for sociolinguistic study, offering insights into how language operates dynamically in everyday economic and social interactions.

The findings of this study carry several practical implications. First, market managers or trade associations can develop communication training programs for sellers, emphasizing effective multilingual and persuasive strategies to enhance transactional interactions. Second, an understanding of dialect variation and its role in communication can be leveraged to strengthen customer engagement, as using familiar or local language helps build trust and loyalty—particularly in culturally diverse market settings. Lastly, policymakers are encouraged to view local language as a form of economic capital. By recognizing and supporting the use of regional dialects in traditional markets, they not only preserve cultural identity but also contribute to improved quality of service and sustainable market development.

## **Conclusion**

This study concludes that transactional conversations at Dempo Permai Market in Pagar Alam City exhibit a rich and dynamic variety of language shaped by speaker-related factors such as idiolect, dialect, sociolect, and chronolect. The linguistic data collected demonstrate that language in traditional markets functions not merely as a tool for facilitating economic exchange, but also as a vehicle for expressing cultural identity, social relationships, and communicative strategies. The coexistence of multiple regional languages—such as Besemah, Javanese, Palembang Malay, Minangkabau, and Lintang—alongside informal Indonesian and youth slang confirms the multilingual and multicultural nature of traditional markets as sociolinguistic spaces.

This research successfully achieves its objective of identifying and analyzing the forms and functions of speaker-based language variation in marketplace interactions. However, further exploration is needed to examine how such linguistic practices influence the effectiveness of sales communication and impact buyer behavior. These aspects present opportunities for more integrative, interdisciplinary studies that bridge sociolinguistics and marketing communication.

From an educational standpoint, the findings emphasize the need for sociolinguistic integration in language teaching, especially within local contexts. Teachers and curriculum developers are encouraged to incorporate regional dialects and real-world language samples into learning

materials to foster students' linguistic tolerance and cultural awareness.

In terms of language preservation, this study underscores the importance of safeguarding regional dialects that remain actively spoken in community spaces like markets. Stakeholders such as language planners, cultural institutions, and local governments should collaborate on initiatives such as community-based language documentation, oral history projects, and curriculum enrichment with local languages, to protect Indonesia's linguistic diversity from erosion.

For traditional market policymakers, these findings also offer practical recommendations: training sellers in adaptive, multilingual communication strategies can improve customer satisfaction and transaction success. Moreover, acknowledging the communicative value of local dialects can enhance market inclusivity, foster buyer-seller trust, and preserve the social identity embedded in local trading practices.

This study is not without limitations. It focuses on a single market within a limited time frame, with a relatively small number of informants. Future research could adopt a comparative approach across multiple markets or regions, explore gendered language use, or analyze the digital extension of marketplace language in social media-based commerce. These directions would help enrich our understanding of language variation in broader economic and technological contexts.

In conclusion, the linguistic practices observed in Dempo Permai Market are not only functional but also symbolically rich. They reflect the living interplay of economy, culture, and communication—a reality that deserves continued attention in both academic discourse and policy design.

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