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## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN BUSINESS REGISTERS USED BY LIVE STREAMERS ON TIKTOK AND SHOPEE LIVE

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### Abstract

This research aims to investigate the differences in the business registers used by men and women streamers on TikTok and Shopee. The approach of this research is qualitative, and the data are collected through random sampling and non-participant observation of live streams on TikTok and Shopee, featuring five men and five women streamers, with durations ranging from 10 to 15 minutes. The analysis began with the identification of registers using Martin Joos's theory, which classifies registers into frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate. Then, elaborating on the reason why different genders use different registers, utilizing the theory from Holmes about language and gender. This study showed that there are three forms of register: Consultative (70%) by men and Consultative (52%), Casual (16%), and Intimate Style (32%) by women. Those are mainly influenced by the purpose of the communication and by women's tendency to use more affective language than men. In conclusion, the registers used by men and women live streamers on TikTok and Shopee are quite similar.

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### Keywords

Gender, live streaming, register, Shopee, TikTok.



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## INTRODUCTION

Technology has been growing rapidly and affects almost all sectors of life, to the point that it enables the buying and selling process to be done online, anywhere, anytime. There are plenty of platforms originally built as marketplaces, such as Shopee, Tokopedia, BliBli, and many others. Nevertheless, nowadays, not only online marketplaces, as mentioned before, but also social media have followed the same path. Social media platforms, such as TikTok and Instagram, offer features similar to marketplaces that enable users to buy and sell items. The shift in social media's function brings notable changes in users' behaviour and in how they use language in the apps. As mentioned by Clarke (2022) The interaction between users on social media is varied, providing researchers with an opportunity to study language in digital society.

TikTok is a social media platform that emerged in 2018 in China, a rebranding of the preceding apps, musical.ly and Douyin. Unlike regular social media, TikTok offers users a wide range of content, from dancing and singing to memetic content, political videos, cat and dog videos, and makeup tutorials (Kanthawala et al., 2022). Despite still being considered a 'new' social media app, TikTok has become more popular by the day. A compatible competitor for giant social media such as Facebook and X. One notable feature of TikTok is providing live streaming for users. However, it has evolved into live-streaming commercials (Luo et al., 2023) with the emergence of the TikTok shop feature. TikTok shop allows users to open a digital store and promote their products through TikTok live. Later, it gives rise to new language styles used in live-streaming for digital business. In this research, TikTok is chosen because it is the most downloaded social media app and serves as an online shop, resembling other e-commerce platforms.

Unlike TikTok, Shopee is a pure online shopping and selling app. It was founded by Chris Feng in 2015 and first established itself in Singapore before expanding into other Asian countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Taiwan. 4 years after its release, in 2019, Shopee launched a new feature: live streaming for sellers. Live streaming works the same way on both TikTok and Shopee, enabling sellers to interact with prospective customers in real time, engage them virtually, and promote their products until the transaction closes, thereby enhancing the online shopping experience. (Luo et al., 2023). Those functions presumably evoke live streamers' creativity in creating language registers in online digital business. For example, in the Indonesian region, TikTok and Shopee live streamers often repeat the same words or sentences that both sellers and buyers understand.

Register is a language variation used in a particular setting, depending on the function of the communication (Biber & Conrad, Register, Genre, and Style, 2019). Moreover, Wardhaugh (in Riadil, 2025) defines register as a language variation used by members of a specific community in a specific context. In other words, register is a language variation used by members of a community to communicate with one another in a particular context. Subsequently, as technology advances, registers are increasingly found in digital communities. (Goulart et al., 2019). Therefore, in Shopee and TikTok live, where live streamers attempt to sell the products from the online store by engaging with the customers, in this context, the viewers, both the streamers and the viewers, are expected to have the same knowledge of the language used in Shopee and TikTok live that makes them members of the digital community.

Nevertheless, live on Shopee and TikTok, especially TikTok Shop, are specifically built for businesses, and the registers used are mainly for product and business selling. For example, both TikTok and Shopee live streamers often use the word *etalase*, which literally means 'display window,' but also refers to the list of products in the store, numbered by the sellers. Furthermore, male and female streamers seem to have distinctive preferences in the language they use when streaming online. Women dominate live streamers on Shopee and TikTok, but there are also men—the products they sell generally align with their gender. For instance, men streamers are commonly seen selling electronics such as computers, smartphones, laptops, and others.

However, men can livestream products for women, such as beauty products, perfumes, clothing, and household goods. The products they promote in live streaming also influence the language they use when interacting with consumers or viewers, regardless of gender. The division of gender is basically in binary opposition, feminine and masculine (Coates, 2016). Furthermore, Coates (2016) and Holmes & Wilson (2022) accounted that the difference between masculine and feminine language choice by women and men is not merely based on how their brains work differently, but rather is shaped by the values and beliefs growing in the society they are in. Thus, it is expected to affect the language choices of live-streaming women and men in digital business as well.

This study adopts Martin Joos's theory (as cited in Shofiyanti et al., 2021), which classifies registers into five types. First, the Frozen or Oratorical register is used in ceremonial contexts and involves one-way communication, such as speeches. Second, the Formal or Deliberative register appears in official settings, such as academic or governmental contexts. Third, the Consultative

register is used in transactional or discussion-based interactions and allows two-way communication. Fourth, the Casual register is found in informal situations among friends or family. Finally, the Intimate register reflects very close relationships, such as between romantic partners. Among these, the Consultative register is expected to be the most dominant in TikTok and Shopee live streams, as it relates to buying and selling interactions.

To explain the question of why women and men employ different language choices, it is assisted by the theory of language and gender by Holmes (2022). Holmes & Wilson (2022) reported that biological factors do not determine language choice among women and men. It aligns with what Coates (2016) notes: women's and men's language choices are rooted in social roles, cultural norms, and communicative purposes. Further, women tend to use language with an eye to politeness, solidarity, and interpersonal harmony (Holmes & Wilson, *Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 2022). On the other hand, men are likely to communicate and use language with an orientation such as status, authority, and information. However, language choice, including register, must be understood as a socially constructed and functional phenomenon whose rationale is flexible, depending on the communication context.

Several studies were conducted to explore the register used in an online shop (Putri E. A., *An Analysis of Register Used by Online Shop Seller on TikTok Live*, 2024; Rosdiana et al., 2025; Khotimah, 2021) Moreover, they have concluded that the registers used are meant to make the process of buying and selling easier. Other than registering in an online business, there is a of register and an application for English language teaching conducted by Riadil (2025). His study showed that linguistic features such as register can be integrated into English language teaching in an attempt to familiarize students with authentic materials (Riadil, 2025). A study from Putri & Wagut (2024) Analysed the registers used by Olivia Rodrigo on *The Tonight Show*, which clearly has a different focus from other research mentioned, and this study only identified the form of the registers used by Olivia Rodrigo.

Those studies merely examined the registers used in various contexts, primarily in business and digital media. None of those studies seeks to examine the role of gender in the use of register in digital communities, including online businesses. Subsequently, to address a gap in previous studies, this study aims to explore the differences in the registers used by men and women live streamers on Shopee and TikTok. The analysis of the register form is carried out through the theory of register forms offered by Martin Joos, followed by an explanation of the phenomena of language

choice across different genders, specifically men and women live streamers in digital business. This study also contributes to a deeper understanding of how gender influences communicative strategies in online commercial interactions.

## **METHOD**

This study utilized a qualitative research approach that analyzes the phenomena using a descriptive analysis (Creswell, 2014; Dawson, 2009). Qualitative approach uninvolved number processing or statistical data in analysing the data, rather describing the phenomena that goes from the question 'why'. Nevertheless, numbers are used merely to note the frequency and percentage of data occurrences. This research attempts to describe the differences in the business registers used by men and women in the selling and buying process through live streaming on TikTok and Shopee. Describing the form of the registers and interpreting the differences of registers employed by men and women live streamers on Shopee and TikTok are considered qualitative (Dawson, 2009). This approach enables a deeper understanding of language use within its natural social and communicative context.

The source of the data regarding the aim of this research is the registers used by men and women live streamers on TikTok and Shopee Live. The researchers used a random sampling method to select the data sample. Random sampling is chosen under the assumption that live streamers on TikTok and Shopee have the same knowledge of what they are doing and what they say when streaming. The researcher randomly selected 10 lives on Shopee (five men, five women) and 10 on TikTok (five men, five women), and observed that the streaming for each session ranged from 10 to 15 minutes. The identities or accounts of TikTok and Shopee were not revealed to protect anonymity. This sampling strategy is intended to ensure balanced, unbiased representation of both genders across platforms.

The data collection technique is non-participant observation, conducted from 15th December to 18th December 2025, and note-taking of utterances, expected as registers. Non-participant observation is selected because the researcher wants the data to be natural and real. The researcher acted as an observer, without interrupting communication between the live streamers and viewers or prospective buyers. Data collection started by watching live streams on TikTok and Shopee, without taking notes on words or phrases that were suspected to be registered. Then, sorting out the data and removing those that are not considered as register. This systematic process ensures the

validity and relevance of the data selected for analysis.

Subsequently, the next step is analysing the data. This research began by grouping the registers used by men and women live streamers on Shopee and TikTok. Then, classifying the registers used by men and women live streamers into five register types, employing Martin Joos's theory. Those five register forms are frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate (Shofiyanti et al., 2021; Putri & Wagut, 2024). The researcher also calculated the percentage of each register type used by both men and women live streamers on Shopee and TikTok. The percentages for each register form used serve as a supporting tool to present the tendency in language choice by gender. Lastly, discussing the difference of the registers used by men and women live streamers using the theory from Holmes (2022) In explaining the question 'why' men and women live streamers use language differently on Shopee and TikTok live.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

The findings revealed a notable difference in the registers used by men and women streamers. Despite the differences, there is still a similarity in the registers used by live streamers on both platforms. Business profiles on TikTok and Shopee are mainly focused on the buying and selling process and include interactive elements to attract viewers and describe the products they sell.

### Registers Found

The table below shows the registers used by men and women streamers on Shopee and TikTok.

**Table 1.** Registers Used by Men and Women Live Streamers on TikTok and Shopee

Gender	Registers
<b>Men</b>	<i>temen-temen, om, harga ambyar, ges, ambil, checkout, ambyarin, payment, aktifkan, aktif, koko, tante-tanteku, PO, COD, mehong, tebus murah, etalase, spill, kakak, sematkan, gercepin, CO, bang, pis, picis, bunda, keranjang, eta, gas-gasin, bestie, item, cek-cek, bundling, gacor, min</i>
<b>Women</b>	<i>sayangku, payment, etalase, sepill, sayang, murce, cinta, checkout, mimin, cintaku, best friend, try on, CO, bunda, kakak sayang, beb, bebku, gercepin, spill spill, ambil, kakak, abang, sematin, gaskeun, neng, minci, stok, picis, testi, COD</i>

Source: Observation on TikTok and Shopee Live

Both men and women live streamers on TikTok and Shopee used registers that seem similar to those used in businesses. Here are some examples of registers used by men and women live

streamers on TikTok and Shopee.

1) 'PO'

In online business, PO stands for Pre-Order, which is its literal meaning. The use of this acronym indicates that the product requested by the customer or buyer is not ready to ship right away, but the seller needs some days to prepare it.

2) 'Gercepin'

This word derives from *gercep*, which means *gerak cepat* in Indonesian, a popular acronym that literally means 'moving fast'. The word *gercepin* is usually used by live streamers on TikTok and Shopee when they offer a big discount for a limited time, lasting only a minute or less. It indicates that the live streamer is appealing to viewers or buyers to buy the item quickly before the discount period ends.

3) 'Etalase'

The word *etalase* literally means display window, but in the context of online business on TikTok and Shopee, it does not refer to a physical object. This is a general term on TikTok and Shopee that denotes the list of products they are selling during live streaming. The list of products is numbered, making it easy for viewers or buyers to point out which product they want to know more about. This register helps both the seller and the buyer to communicate in live streaming.

4) 'Picis'

The register *picis* originally adopted from the word 'pieces', but pronounced in an Indonesian way. It has a similar meaning to the original word, noting the amount of the products.

5) 'Spill'

*Spill* is a register that means 'give me information about the product' in the context of an online shop. Both TikTok and Shopee live streamers utilize this word regardless of their gender. It simplifies the communication and is mutually understood by the seller and the buyer.

Those are examples of registers that men and women use live streamers on TikTok and Shopee. In other words, they are considered genderless or general register in business digital. They help simplify communication between the seller and the buyer. Those registers appear to be repeated by the live streamers, indicating a feature of live streaming in which the streamer needs to repeat what they said because viewers are dynamically changing.

### The Form of the Register

As mentioned earlier, there are five types of register forms proposed by Martin Joos: Frozen, Formal, Consultative, Casual, and Intimate Style (Martin Joos in Shofiyanti et al., 2021). In this research, only three types of register forms were discovered. There are no Frozen and Formal registers. It is reasonable, since the communication of live streamers on TikTok and Shopee is not in a formal setting, but rather a business process and engagement with consumers (Shofiyanti et al., 2021; Putri E. A., An Analysis of Register Used by Online Shop Seller on TikTok Live, 2024). Here are the types of registers used by women and men live streamers on TikTok and Shopee, as presented below.

**Table 2.** The Form of Registers Used

Register's forms by Martin Joos	Registers		Percentage	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Frozen</b>	-	-	0	0
<b>Formal</b>	-	-	0	0
<b>Consultative</b>	<i>harga ambyar, mehong, tebus murah, sematkan, gercepin, ambil, checkout, ambyarin, payment, aktifkan, aktif, etalase, spill, CO, pis, picis, keranjang, eta, gas-gasin, item, cek-cek, bundling, gacor</i>	<i>payment, etalase, sepill, murce, checkout, try on, CO, gercepin, spall spill, ambil, sematin, gaskeun, stok, picis, testi, COD</i>	70	52
<b>Casual</b>	<i>temen-temen, om, ges, kakak, koko, tante-tanteku, bang, bestie, min</i>	<i>kakak, mimin, abang, neng, minci</i>	27	16
<b>Intimate Style</b>	<i>Bunda</i>	<i>sayangku, sayang, cinta, cintaku, bestie, bunda, kakak sayang, beb, bebku</i>	3	32

Source: Observation on TikTok and Shopee Live

In business communication, both men and women using live streams on TikTok and Shopee most often use the consultative register. This aligns with the description of the consultative register, which is intended for use in a business setting (Martin Joos in Shofiyanti et al., 2021). It is also notable that the intimate style register is used only once among men live streamers. At the same time, women use it 9 times, or 32% of all registers, a significant number compared to men live streamers, who use

it only 3%.

1) Consultative register

This is a register form that is usually used in business and persuasive contexts using two-way communication (Martin Joos in Shofiyanti et al., 2021). In live streaming, communication is two-way, even though viewers respond or ask questions through the comment section. From the table above, it can be seen that the largest percentage of register forms is consultative. This is because the purpose of live streaming itself is business. Both women and men live streamers used this register the most. However, male live streamers used the consultative register more than women. Men tend to be more active in persuading buyers through platforms such as ambyarin, gercepin, aktifin, and gacor, which enliven the streaming and encourage customers to be more engaged.

2) Casual register

As the name suggests, the casual register is usually found in informal settings and is used between people who are quite close to each other (Martin Joos in Shofiyanti et al., 2021). Live streamers on TikTok and Shopee, both men and women, used this form of address to refer to their viewers. Greetings them with registers such as *kakak*, *temen-temen*, *om*, *abang*, *koko*, *neng*, etc., to build engagement by using those registers. They also try to approach the buyer and make them feel close, as if they had known each other before. Men live streamers appear to use a higher percentage of casual register than women live streamers, but only one intimate-style register.

3) Intimate style register

Intimate style register is a register form generally used in a very close relationship, such as with a romantic partner or family (Martin Joos in Shofiyanti et al., 2021). However, surprisingly, women live streamers on TikTok and Shopee employed this register form more than the casual register. Viewers of live streams tend to use words such as *sayang*, *kakak sayang*, *bunda*, *beb*, *bestie*, etc. The function of this register in doing live streaming is similar to the casual register, in which they try to reach the viewers by being close to them.

Overall, the use of registers in live streaming on TikTok and Shopee is mainly intended to attract buyers and sell products online (Thurlow & Brown, 2005). The casual and intimate style register also functions the same as the consultative register, but in an interpersonal context. Both men and women live streamers on TikTok and Shopee attempt to engage with viewers or buyers by making them feel close.

## Discussion

### The Difference between Men and Women Live Streamers in Using Business Registers on TikTok and Shopee

The main difference between the registers used by men and women live streamers on TikTok and Shopee lies in the usage of the intimate register. Men live streamers, both on TikTok and Shopee, rarely used intimate register; they only use the word *bunda*, which means 'mother', because the live streamer is selling household goods and the viewers or prospective buyers are assumed to be married women. Meanwhile, women live streamers on TikTok and Shopee often address viewers as *sayang* or *kakak sayang*, which means 'honey' during the stream. Further, men live streamers never use those words in addressing or building engagement with the viewers. According to Holmes (2022), this is because women tend to use registers that emphasize on interpersonal harmony. Women appear to be more overt in expressing intimate words in public than men. Moreover, men are more direct and assertive in communicating, which influences their language choice (Holmes & Wilson, Introduction to Sociolinguistics, 2022).

The percentage of men live streamers who use the consultative register form appears to be higher than that of women live streamers. Men live streamers on both TikTok and Shopee used more words and varied their persuasive strategies to persuade buyers better. They employed more words related to promotion or limited offers, such as *gercepin*, *ambil*, *aktifin*, *sematkan*, *gas-gasin*, *bundling*, that may attract buyers. Those words enhance their authority and give information about the products that are being sold, which is the main reason why men use register (Holmes & Wilson, Introduction to Sociolinguistics, 2022). Meanwhile, women live streamers used the consultative register less than men did, and they attracted buyers in different ways.

Questioning why women and men use language differently means also questioning the context of the communication. In this research, in addition to live streamers on TikTok and Shopee who engage in the selling and buying process, it is important to consider the place and background of the live streamers. This research is conducted in Indonesia, where social norms and values strongly influence how people communicate. It affects the behaviour of men avoiding intimate style register indirectly, since Indonesia still holds the patriarchal idea that men are not supposed to show intimacy publicly.

## CONCLUSION

The findings and discussion of this research indicate that there is a distinctive preference between women and men live streamers on TikTok and Shopee in using registers. Of the five types of register, only three are found: Consultative (70% by men; 52% by women), Casual (27% by men; 16% by women), and Intimate Style (3% by men; 32% by women). The difference mainly stems from the fact that men and women have different purposes in choosing language (Holmes & Wilson, *Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 2022). Even though men and women live streamers on TikTok and Shopee have one main purpose, business, they approach the viewers or prospective buyers differently. In conclusion, the difference between the registers used by men and women live streamers on TikTok and Shopee is slight.

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