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**FASHION PRODUCT IS HUMAN: Structural  
Metaphor as a Linguistic Strategy for Second  
Hand Fashion Products on Live Commerce in  
Indonesia**

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**Abstract**

**Keywords:**

Structural  
metaphors;  
Linguistic strategy;  
Live  
commerce.

This study aims to describe the structural metaphors employed by second-hand fashion product shop hosts on live commerce. The qualitative research was carried out by collecting data through the free-participation listening technique on live commerce activities, then continuing with semi-structured interviews with live commerce shop hosts. Live commerce used as a place to collect data was Shopee Live. The collected data was checked for data validity through language expert validation. The present study employed data analysis techniques from the cognitive semantics perspective. The findings indicated that cross-medium communication during the procurement and disposition of secondhand fashion products in live commerce fosters a distinct personification tendency in the conceptualization of "FASHION PRODUCT IS HUMAN." This conceptualization enables sellers of second-hand fashion products to employ human attributes, including body parts, physical condition, and socioeconomic status, as metaphors to portray the state of the product or to create a favorable impression. This study provides novel insights for individuals or entities engaged in the sale of second-hand fashion products through live streaming. It demonstrates that the utilization of metaphors is not only crucial for articulating product condition, but also for fostering character development, nurturing relationships, and sustaining the engagement of online shoppers.

**Abstrak**

**Kata Kunci:**

Metafora struktural;  
Strategi linguistik;  
Live commerce.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi metafora struktural yang digunakan oleh penjual produk *fashion* bekas dalam *platform live commerce*. Penelitian kualitatif ini dilakukan dengan mengumpulkan data melalui teknik simak bebas libat cakap pada aktivitas *live commerce*, dilanjutkan dengan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan penjual *live commerce*. *Live commerce* yang digunakan sebagai tempat pengumpulan data adalah *Shopee Live*. Data yang dikumpulkan diperiksa validitasnya melalui validasi oleh ahli bahasa. Penelitian ini menggunakan teknik analisis data dari perspektif semantik kognitif. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi lintas media selama proses pembelian dan penjualan produk *fashion* bekas dalam *live commerce* memicu kecenderungan personifikasi yang khas dalam konseptualisasi "PRODUK FASHION ADALAH MANUSIA." Konseptualisasi ini memungkinkan penjual produk *fashion* bekas untuk menggunakan atribut manusia, termasuk bagian tubuh, kondisi fisik, dan status sosial-ekonomi,

sebagai metafora untuk menggambarkan kondisi produk atau menciptakan kesan yang menguntungkan. Studi ini memberikan wawasan baru bagi individu atau entitas yang terlibat dalam penjualan produk *fashion* bekas melalui siaran langsung. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan metafora tidak hanya penting untuk menggambarkan kondisi produk, tetapi juga untuk mengembangkan karakter, membangun hubungan, dan mempertahankan keterlibatan pembeli *online*.

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## INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the practice of thrift shopping, or "thrifting," has emerged as a prevalent trend among young individuals in recent years (Fadila, Alifah, Faristiana, Puspita Jaya, & Timur, 2023). In one of the cities in Indonesia, Bogor, a thrifting event has emerged, known as the *Bogor Thrift Market*. Teenagers in Bogor perceive thrifting as a process of procuring used goods that has evolved into a pastime or lifestyle (Ghilmansyah, Nursanti, & Utamidewi, 2022). In the online context, thrifting is not solely confined to specialized buying and selling applications, such as Marketplace, but is also pervasive across various social media platforms, including Facebook, Tiktok, and Instagram. For instance, on Facebook, groups using the name *Thrift* or *Thrifting* followed by the name of the city are very common, such as *Thrifting Tulungagung*, which has more than 54 thousand members, *Thrifting Online Jabodetabek*, which has more than 37 thousand members, *Thrifting Kediri* with more than 90 thousand members, and so on. Furthermore, a group identified as *Thrifting Indonesia* boasts a membership of over 260 thousand individuals.

In the United States, the thrifting phenomenon, as previously examined by Bardhi & Arnould (2005), is driven by economic and hedonic motivations. This practice is economically motivated, as it enables consumers to acquire goods at a fraction of the cost of new items. This practice is considered hedonic, given that consumers can acquire a greater number of branded items with the same expenditure. This phenomenon enables consumers to offer these goods as gifts, reflecting a cultural preference for and acknowledgment of the value of thrifting.

However, in various communities across Indonesia, the dynamics of thrifting behavior are distinct. Despite the lower prices of second-hand goods compared to their new counterparts of the same brand, low prices do not necessarily translate into increased popularity of thrifting activities, as evidenced by Firdaus, Shidiqy, & Cahya (2023). In Tulungagung Regency, consumers' confidence in second-hand products is directly proportional to the price of the product (Ramadani, Syaichoni, & Handri, 2022).

In the context of climate change, many individuals express support for thrifting. Frahm et al. (2024) posit that the consumption of second-hand goods contributes to the success of the circular economy. The circular economy business model posits that reusing clothing is a viable solution to climate change (Hellström & Olsson, 2024). In addition, Park, Kwon, Zaman, & Song (2020) have noted that the popularity of thrift shopping for clothing is not only driven by personal needs but also by a commitment to the greater good, underpinned by environmental awareness, socially conscious consumption behaviors, and responsible citizenship.

The phenomenon of thrift shopping has been shown to have positive effects in some cases, but there are also potential drawbacks. For instance, there is a risk of contracting diseases from previous clothing users (Maulida, Ni'mah, & Aini, 2020) or the illegal process of importing used clothing for resale in Indonesia. Additionally, the practice of thrift shopping has the potential to diminish the value of newly produced goods, thereby exerting a negative influence on the domestic textile and fashion industry (Sharky, 2023).

The thrifting phenomenon elicits a spectrum of impressions, both positive and negative. An intriguing aspect pertains to the buyer's trust in secondhand fashion products. Research by Ramadani et al. (2022) indicates that consumer trust in used goods poses a significant challenge for sellers. The findings of this study indicate that targeted promotions have a substantial impact on customer trust in the second-hand sector.

One factor that has the potential to influence buyer confidence is the host language. Language enables hosts to convey valuable messages about their products and services to shop visitors. If hosts wish to create a strong presence with consumers, it is essential that they utilize linguistic features that can make them stand out among the thousands of messages that shop visitors are exposed to every day (Onyiego & Millambo, 2022).

In Indonesia, the practice of thrift shopping has gained prominence on marketplaces that offer live-streaming functionalities, such as Shopee and Tiktok. A study by Annur (2022) revealed that Shopee is the most widely used marketplace, with an 83.4% market share. According to Yolanda et al. (2024), hosts in Shopee Live, a live-streaming feature of the Shopee Marketplace, utilize metaphorical language extensively in their sales pitches. Furthermore, research by Zhang et al. (2022) revealed that consumer trust in live-streaming commerce can be augmented through live interactivity (active control, two-way communication, and synchronicity) and technical support (visibility and personalization), which in turn impacts the intention to persist in interaction. The findings of Zhang et al.'s research suggest that interaction between sellers and buyers (viewers)

must occur on a large scale for consumer confidence to increase. Consequently, the more proficient the seller's language, the more trust the consumer will place in them. A notable manifestation of the linguistic prowess exhibited by live-streaming commerce hosts is the employment of metaphors.

Annur (2022) observed that the most prevalent product categories during live shopping sessions are fashion products (82.6%), beauty products (47.2%), household appliances (39.3%), food (30.7%), plants (9.8%), and miscellaneous items (4.9%). This data suggests that fashion products are the most popular. Consequently, conducting research on the use of metaphors by hosts of secondhand fashion product stores in live-streaming commerce is imperative.

Metaphors have been a subject of study within the discipline of rhetoric since its inception (Evans & Green, 2018). Metaphors have proven to be an effective rhetorical device for capturing attention and creating an impression in language. Metaphors are frequently linked with poetic and rhetorical language styles. However, with the advent of the discipline of Cognitive Semantics, metaphors have also been associated with the human cognitive system (Yolanda, 2022).

A plethora of studies have previously examined the language employed in live-streaming commerce. Broadly speaking, these studies indicate that the language used by the host exerts a significant influence on consumer inclination to remain on the platform or to proceed with the acquisition of goods. Liu et al. (2023) investigated the impact of three distinct speech acts (assertive, expressive, and directive) on sales performance in the context of B2B live streaming. By integrating deep learning with econometric analysis on a livestreaming dataset, the study's findings revealed that assertive and directive speech acts exert a positive influence on sales performance, while expressive speech acts exhibit a negative effect.

Luo et al. (2021) investigated the impact of live streaming hosts' linguistic style on consumer purchasing intentions and sales volume. This study posits that persuasive language styles of hosts can influence consumer behavior, thereby impacting sales performance in live broadcasts. The study's findings indicate that persuasive linguistic styles that appeal to personality have a significant positive impact on the sales volume of live broadcast products, while linguistic styles that appeal to logic have a negative impact. Notably, the impact of the same language style varies across different product types: language styles that appeal to exaggeration have a negative effect on the sales volume of apparel products, but a positive effect on the sales volume of digital electrical products.

Furthermore, J. Chen's research on the antecedents of consumer impulsive buying intentions in live commerce specifically states that the metaphors employed by live-streaming commerce sellers can influence the emotional appeal of buyers. Previous research has found that there has been no research that specifically traces how the metaphors used by live commerce hosts take shape, thus making the exploration of metaphors in the context of live commerce an interesting endeavor. The Cognitive Semantics theoretical framework can be used in this exploration. According to Evans & Green (2018), the theoretical framework of Cognitive Semantics regards language as a pivotal methodological instrument for unveiling and systematizing human conceptual structures. This theoretical framework can be utilized as an approach to comprehend the functionality of metaphors and their potential to influence consumer perceptions and behaviors.

Within the domain of Cognitive Semantics, the theory of Conceptual Metaphor plays a pivotal role. According to Lakoff & Johnson (2003) language, including metaphors, is a product of thought that is equivalent to action. Accordingly, prior to the production of language (spoken or written), a sophisticated process occurs within an individual's cognitive system. This process is referred to as conceptualization, which involves the use of familiar entities as a model for understanding new experiences (Brouwer in Yolanda, 2022). Metaphor can be interpreted as the borrowing of more familiar concepts to explain unfamiliar concepts. To illustrate, consider the expression "*ilmunya dangkal* (his knowledge is shallow)". The term "*dangkal* (shallow)" in this context functions as a metaphor. The term "*dangkal* (shallow)" is a nonmetaphorical reference to a place that has a low quantity of water (Yolanda, 2020). In the expression *ilmunya dangkal* (his knowledge is shallow), the word "dangkal" is employed to characterize the state of one's knowledge. Consequently, in the cognitive realm, expressions such as "*mendalami ilmu* (deepening knowledge)," "*ilmunya dalam* (his knowledge is deep)," "*tenggelam dalam ilmu* (drowning in knowledge)," "*berenang dalam lautan ilmu* (wading in the sea of knowledge)," "*meneguk segelas ilmu* (sipping a glass of knowledge)," "*tetesan ilmu* (drops of knowledge)," "*samudera ilmu* (oceans of knowledge)," and others, are widely accepted. If traced back to the earliest form of metaphor in the Age of Aristotle, namely "A is B," the conceptual foundation of these expressions can be traced back to the idea that WATER IS KNOWLEDGE.

According to the conceptualization of WATER IS KNOWLEDGE, the cognitive system of society conceptualizes knowledge as water. Consequently, the concepts contained in the domain of water can be utilized to describe concepts in the domain of

knowledge. In this context, the term "domain" is employed to denote a cognitive entity, encompassing mental experience, representational space, or conceptual complexes of varying levels of complexity and organization (Evans & Green, 2018; Langacker, 1989).

Given that language is a product of thought and that complex processes occur in the cognitive system, it can be posited that the production of metaphorical language necessitates more extensive processes in the cognitive system than the production of nonmetaphorical language. In essence, the generation of metaphorical expressions demands greater cognitive effort compared to nonmetaphorical ones. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the context of seller-to-buyer communication. The seller's creativity in language use has been shown to correlate with intelligence and to influence buyer interest in making a purchase. This phenomenon assumes particular significance in the context of live-streaming commerce, where the absence of a physical interaction between the seller and the buyer is a hallmark of the transaction.

In recent years, live commerce has emerged as a predominant trend within the broader e-commerce landscape. In the context of social e-commerce, Liu et al. (2023) classified the host's persuasive style into five categories: personal appealing, logical appealing, emotional appealing, reward appealing, and exaggerated appealing. The study found that the personally appealing persuasive linguistic style had the greatest positive impact on the sales volume of live products.

The persuasive language style is a common language style that is synonymous with the realms of commerce and rental properties. Metaphor is a particularly salient device in persuasive writing, as evidenced by the work of (To et al., 2020).. Ottati and Renstrom (2010) further elucidate that metaphors play an instrumental role in persuasive communication, with the impact of metaphors on persuasion potentially being mediated by a range of psychological mechanisms. Antika et al. (2023) observed that vocabulary development exhibited a marked increase in the context of buying and selling on Shopee Live. Of the 219 words formed, 131 of them are word formation by borrowing. In the framework of Conceptual Metaphor theory, borrowing is a form of metaphor (Kovecses, 2010). As demonstrated above through the expression "his knowledge is shallow" (illustrating the borrowing of a concept from the WATER domain, specifically the quality of being shallow, to explain KNOWLEDGE).

## METHODS

The present research employs a qualitative design. The research commences with the process of data collection, specifically the metaphors articulated by live commerce



hosts. The data collection process utilizes Shopee Live, a feature offered by the Shopee marketplace. The rationale behind this selection is that Shopee Live stands as the preeminent live commerce platform in Indonesia, with a market share of 83.4%, as reported by Annur (2022). The data set is constrained to metaphors employed by secondhand fashion product sellers, specifically garments (e.g., shirts, jackets, pants) and footwear (e.g., sandals) and bags. The selection of fashion products was informed by the observation that on Shopee Live, clothing products consistently garner the most views, accounting for 82.6% of all content viewed (Annur, 2022). The selection of stores utilized as data sources was conducted purposively. The criteria for the selected stores include an average audience of 100 viewers per live broadcast and a following of at least 10,000. The selected stores were further restricted to those specializing in the sale of a singular used fashion product.

The data collection techniques employed in this study included free listening and interviews. Specifically, the free-participation listening technique (Sudaryanto, 2015) involved the observation of live commerce impressions on the Shopee Live feature, collected from February to April 2024. Concurrently, interviews were conducted using semi-structured techniques. Interviews were conducted after the data collection process with the free listening technique was completed, namely in the May-August 2024 timeframe. The collected data were then subjected to a rigorous validation process to ensure their validity. This validation was conducted by a team of linguists, who meticulously reviewed the data to ascertain its relevance and accuracy.

Data previously identified as metaphors are then subjected to interactive analysis (Miles & Huberman, 2004). This analytical technique enables researchers to return to the data collection stage if additional data is required during the analysis. Given the cognitive semantic perspective of this research, data analysis is conducted to explore the conceptual organization (structure and process) that occurs in the cognition system of live commerce sellers. The data will be described using the image-schema and conceptual metaphor theoretical framework (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003)

Image-schema will serve as a medium for researchers to comprehend the significance of abstract words. Image-schemas are defined as mental images, which are pictorial concepts acquired through experience or interaction with the world (Siregar, 2014). Within the human cognitive system, images are stored and arranged in a methodical and systematic manner (Wahab, Imran, Mis, & Salehuddin, 2016). These organized and systematic images are then employed systematically through metaphors

as the source domain to facilitate understanding and explanation of novel concepts (Wahab et al., 2016).

In this study, the theoretical framework of conceptual metaphor is utilized as a reference point for the categorization of the data obtained. According to this theory, the data, manifesting as words or groups of words, are regarded as entities within the domain of origin, or source domain, utilized as metaphors to elucidate entities within another domain, designated as the target domain. Utilizing this theoretical framework, sellers' speech can be systematically categorized based on its underlying cognitive function (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Phenomenon of Cross-Medium Communication: Oral-Written in Live-Streaming Commerce**

In the context of live commerce, distinctive interaction patterns emerge during the processes of buying and selling. A comparative analysis of the interactions observed in live-streaming stores with those observed in physical and digital stores can facilitate the identification of these unique characteristics. The subsequent discussion will delineate the distinguishing characteristics of these three store types.

#### ***Communication in a physical store***

Physical stores are frequently designated as traditional channels (Riki, 2022). As the name suggests, physical stores are establishments that exist in a tangible form. These entities manifest as physical edifices wherein sellers and buyers execute transactions in a direct manner. In such establishments, buyers have the opportunity to engage with products through sensory experiences such as sight, touch, and smell, thereby acquiring an empirical understanding of the items they intend to purchase. This interaction fosters a direct communication channel between the sellers and the buyers, thereby facilitating an effective exchange of information.

#### ***Communication in a Digital Store***

Digital stores have emerged as a strategy to broaden consumer reach. It has been asserted that physical stores that do not engage in the establishment of digital storefronts encounter challenges in competing with their digital counterparts (Fani & Safira, 2024). This phenomenon can be interpreted as a manifestation of modernization and a strategic adaptation by business entities to prevailing market trends.

At present, a considerable number of stores are classified as digital stores. In general, these digital stores utilize services offered by prominent marketplaces in



Indonesia. While prominent marketplaces such as Shopee (<https://shopee.co.id>), Tokopedia (<https://www.tokopedia.com>), Lazada (<https://www.lazada.co.id>), and Blibli (<https://www.blibli.com>) have incorporated live-streaming features into their services, not all stores within these marketplaces have adopted these tools and have maintained their status as digital stores.

Digital storefronts allow sellers to present their products to potential buyers through the use of visual media, such as photographs and brief video recordings, in addition to textual descriptions. Visitors who are interested in the store's products can purchase the goods immediately, without even having to communicate with the seller. Moreover, should further elucidation be required, the purchaser has the option of posing inquiries through the chat functionality integrated within the designated marketplace. It is noteworthy that certain marketplaces facilitate transactions between buyers and sellers that occur outside the confines of the marketplace itself. For instance, a meeting can be arranged to inspect the products being traded or to facilitate the exchange of money and goods.

In the context of digital marketplaces, some platforms, including the aforementioned four, do not permit off-market transactions. Consequently, communication via written language is the sole viable option. As a result, language transfer between sellers and buyers occurs in written form.

### ***Communication in Live Commerce***

In the contemporary technological landscape, marked by its increasing sophistication, both physical and digital stores exhibit distinct advantages and disadvantages. However, the prevailing trend indicates an integration of these two store concepts into a unified digital model.

The term "phygital" is an acronym for "physical" and "digital." According to State of Phygital 2021 by LETA Capital (n.d.), the term can be interpreted as a philosophy of a new world order, where Phygital essentially enables the tight integration of virtual (digital) environments into the physicality of real human life. The Phygital era is an era that causes a strong integration between the physical and digital worlds (Hazmin & Wijayanti, 2022).

The advent of the phygital age has given rise to a new paradigm of commerce, namely live commerce, which has emerged as a significant consequence of this transformation. This phenomenon facilitates a novel mode of communication between physical and digital stores, characterized as oral-written or "cross-medium." The seller initiates the message verbally, the buyer listens, then responds in written form, and the

seller responds orally. This sequence of interactions unfolds in real time, underscoring the dynamic and immediate nature of contemporary commerce.

In order to increase consumer trust, live interactivity in the form of active control, two-way communication, and synchronicity is necessary (M. Zhang et al., 2022). The interactivity opportunity inherent in live-streaming commerce is capitalized upon by live-streaming commerce hosts to cultivate consumer trust.

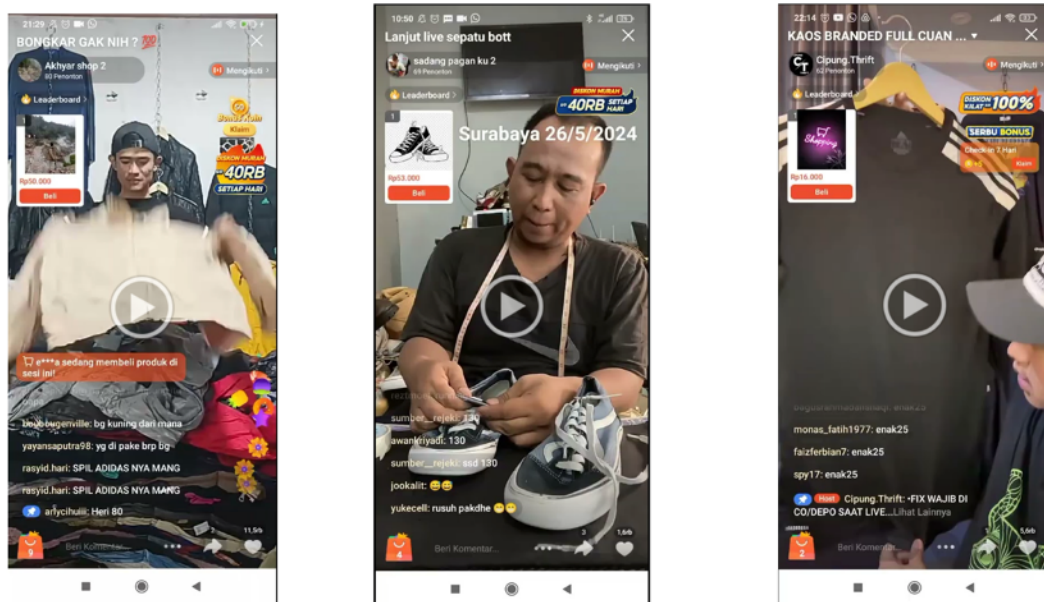


Figure 1 Screenshot of live commerce on Shopee Live

The available technology is employed by the host. These hosts leverage the available technology to deliver persuasive language to store visitors, which is a capability not possible in a digital store. This persuasive language can be used to introduce products, describe products, ask and answer questions, or convey other information that can influence store visitors' interest in the products sold.

In the context of live-streaming on Shopee Live, the host is afforded a certain degree of freedom, as interlocutors (i.e., store visitors) are limited to written interactions, thereby preventing interruptions to the host's oral discourse. **Figure 1** is a screenshot illustrating the atmosphere of live-streaming on Shopee Live, wherein the host speaks orally and the visitor is write-only.

In the contemporary landscape of online commerce, the phenomenon of cross-medium communication has become a prevalent occurrence. This phenomenon is not exclusive to live commerce; it also permeates various other domains. On various social media platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Twitch, and X, live-streaming has become a cultural norm, particularly among younger and older generations

(Higueras, Pérez-Rufí, Martín, Camacho, & Moyano, 2022). This phenomenon extends beyond the realm of commercial transactions, encompassing a diverse array of activities, including social interaction and communication. This practice is predominantly undertaken by prominent individuals or those who leverage live streaming as a medium to engage with their followers (Chen & Lin, 2018). Furthermore, live-streaming has gained popularity as a medium for broadcasting diverse activities, including games by professionals (see Cabeza-Ramírez, Fuentes-García, & Muñoz-Fernandez, 2021; Li, Wang, & Liu, 2020). Wang & Chou (2020) identified four primary motivations for engaging with live streaming: leisure, celebrity infatuation, social connection, and voyeurism. The four categories can be further subdivided into eight motives, which include the use of live streaming for the purpose of passing the time, entertainment, relaxation, identifying celebrities, vicarious participation, fostering friendship, social interaction, and voyeurism.

Consequently, cross-medium communication has become a prevalent phenomenon in contemporary society. In the context of live commerce, Indonesians have become well-accustomed to utilizing this technology, as evidenced by the substantial number of users. Furthermore, a considerable segment of the population has become accustomed to assuming the role of host during live-streaming sessions for the purpose of conducting commercial activities. This practice has given rise to the development of innovative metaphors, which have been shown to enhance the appeal of buying and selling activities, thereby positively impacting product sales.

### **Conceptualization: FASHION PRODUCT IS HUMAN**

According to the official Shopee instructions, which can be found on the seller.shopee.co.id website, active interaction is a crucial factor in attracting attention and increasing the number of visitors to a store's account. In essence, the Shopee system is designed to enhance a store's visibility level on user accounts by increasing the host's verbal engagement.

Furthermore, it is imperative to engage in extensive discourse. The constraints experienced by store visitors in terms of obtaining a physical experience of the product necessitate that hosts devise innovative methods to explain the product or respond to inquiries and welcome visitors to the store. For instance, when describing a product with a discernible imperfection, store visitors cannot directly hold or feel the imperfection. Moreover, the imperfection may not be readily apparent on the visitor's device, thereby underscoring the importance of effective communication. In such instances, language

serves as the optimal conduit for the host to provide visitors with a tangible experience of the product.

Yolanda et al. (2024) posited that the host can employ the metaphor "*butuh mandi* (needs a shower)" to denote the cleanliness of the jacket being sold. It should be noted that the degree of dirt on a jacket can vary significantly, ranging from highly soiled to moderately clean. In this context, the host employs the metaphor "*mandinya juga bukan mandi junub, mandi biasa aja* (the shower is not a junub shower either, just a normal shower)" to denote a moderate level of cleanliness. In the context of jackets in a very dirty condition, the host may employ the metaphor "*butuh mandi junub* (it's need a junub bath)," while for lightly soiled jackets, the metaphor "*butuh mandi biasa saja* (it's just need a normal bath)" may be more appropriate. Additionally, the host may employ lighter expressions related to the wetting of the body, such as "*butuh mandi biasa saja* (just need to wash its hands)," to convey a state of minimal dirtiness. Conversely, if the jacket is in a highly clean state, the host may express this by saying "*sudah cakep, tidak perlu mandi* (it's already handsome, no need to shower)."

According to the tenets of conceptual metaphor theory (Kovecses, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003), the aforementioned example is deemed to be a constituent of the structural metaphor category. The domain that serves as the source of the metaphor furnishes intricate knowledge of the target concept. The source domain is HUMAN, while the target concept is a jacket. The target concept is inherently situated within a larger context, which can be conceptualized as the target domain. In this case, the target domain is FASHION PRODUCT.

In structural metaphors, the conceptualization of "A is B" is evident. In this paradigm, A represents the target domain, while B signifies the source domain (Kovecses, 2010). Accordingly, it can be posited that expressions of live-streaming commerce hosts have a conceptualization of FASHION PRODUCT IS HUMAN.

This suggests that human beings possess a sophisticated understanding of fashion products. The properties and characteristics of human beings become concrete or familiar concepts to describe things in the domain of fashion products.

In conceptual metaphor theory, concepts in the source domain are more concrete than concepts in the target domain. This makes it easier for concepts in the source domain to describe concepts in the target domain (which are more abstract).

In the theoretical framework of The Great Chain of Being, humans are distinguished by a high degree of complexity in their features when compared to other entities, including inanimate objects, plants, and animals, as illustrated in **Figure 2**. These features

encompass physical, biological, instinctual, and human-specific characteristics. Consequently, it is more prevalent to depict inanimate objects, plants, and animals using human features, rather than the other way around (personification). In contrast, Krikmann (1996) asserts that the use of human features to describe non-humans is exceedingly rare, a practice he refers to as "depersonalization."

			Human-specific features
		Instinct	Instinct
	Biological features	Biological features	Biological features
Physical features	Physical features	Physical features	Physical features
<b>Inanimate objects</b>	<b>Plants</b>	<b>Animals</b>	<b>Human</b>

**Figure 2**The Great Chain of Being Hierarchy  
Source: (Krikmann, 1996, p. 5)

In the context of live commerce, personification manifests in a structural manner. This phenomenon occurs because the concreteness of concepts in the domain of fashion products appears lower than that of humans. That is to say, fashion products exhibit a greater degree of abstractness, and consequently, a lesser degree of sensory appeal, in comparison to humans. This phenomenon can be attributed to the limited physical experience of consumers, who are only able to observe the products.

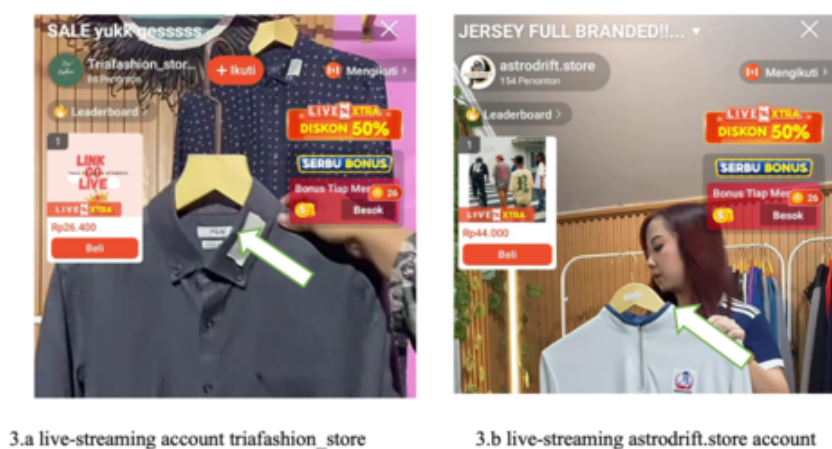
The conceptual framework employed to interpret phenomena within the domain of fashion products encompasses the following human-centric concepts: (1) human body parts, (2) human physical conditions, (3) social status, (4) emotions, and (5) human abilities. The subsequent discussion will elaborate on each of these domains.

### ***Human Body Parts as Metaphors for Body Parts of Fashion Products***

The conceptualization of FASHION PRODUCT IS HUMAN leads to the idea that FASHION PRODUCT has body parts, just like HUMAN. Given the concrete nature of human body parts, they serve as readily identifiable and accessible points for describing the various components of fashion products. Lexemes denoting human body parts, such as "*leher* (neck)," "*ketiak* (armpits)," "*perut* (stomach)," "*mulut* (mouth)," "*bibir* (lips)," and "*lidah* (tongue)" are employed in this regard. It is noteworthy that while some of these lexemes apply universally to all fashion products, others are specific to particular product types.

The term "*leher* (neck)" is employed to denote the specific component of the product, as illustrated by the white arrow in **Figure 3a**. The concept of the "*leher* (neck)" in this context is readily comprehensible due to the notable resemblance between the human neck and the neck of the clothing product. The nexus between the two can be seen in the location of the former. The component illustrated by the white arrow in **Figure 3b** corresponds to the collar of a t-shirt, shirt, jacket, or analogous upper garment.

When the host expresses "*Leher aman, tidak ada kikis* (Neck is safe, no scrapes)," the intention is not to inform that the host's neck is in a safe condition, but to inform that the collar part of the product has no flaws or is in good condition.



**Figure 3** Neck metaphor in top clothing products

The same thing happens when the host uses the *armpit* metaphor through the phrase "in the **armpit** there is a little loose stitching" to convey the intention that the product being shown has a minus condition, namely loose stitching on the part pointed to by the white arrow in **Figure 4.a**. The similarity in location characteristics between the human armpit and the part pointed to by the arrow in **Figure 4.a** makes it easier for people to understand. This is also because there is no specific term to refer to this part of the garment

The same phenomenon occurs when the host utilizes the armpit metaphor, employing the phrase "*di ketiak ada lepas jahitan sedikit ya* (in the armpit there is a little loose stitching)" to convey the notion that the product under consideration exhibits a minus condition, specifically loose stitching on the area indicated by the white arrow in **Figure 4.a**. The congruence in location characteristics between the human armpit and the area delineated by the arrow in **Figure 4.a** facilitates comprehension for observers. This is further facilitated by the absence of a specific term to refer to this component of the garment.



Given the conceptualization that "FASHION PRODUCT IS HUMAN," it is evident that concepts such as the *dada* (chest), *perut* (stomach), *punggung* (back), *perut bawah* (lower stomach), *perut atas* (upper stomach), *punggung bawah* (lower back), and *punggung atas* (upper back) also apply in the domain of live commerce. The data gathered during live-streaming transactions reveals that hosts are tasked with the responsibility of accurately describing product conditions by noting the presence of physical characteristics such as "Ada **patch** di *dada* (There is a patch on the chest)," "Ada *noda samar* di *bagian punggung*, ya (There is a faint stain on the back," and "sedikit ada *transfer warna* di *bagian perut* nih (There is a little color transfer on the stomach)."

As illustrated in **Figure 4.b**, the lexeme "*ketiak* (armpit)" is employed to denote the specific portion of the backpack, which is delineated by the arrow. The term "*ketiak* (armpit)" is employed by the host to elucidate the component of the backpack that exhibits characteristics analogous to human armpits, specifically the angle formed by the connection between the strap and the primary section of the bag, akin to the angle that connects the arm to the human body. Additionally, the host can employ the hand lexeme to denote the strap component of the backpack. While components of the bag are indeed described with lexemes of human body parts, the depiction of bag products exhibits a less structural nature compared to the depiction of top clothes.



**Figure 4**Armpit metaphors in Fashion Products

In the case of shoes, however, things are slightly different. Shoes are defined as "a footcloth or wrapper, usually made of leather (or rubber and so on), the sole and heel of which are thick and hard" (KBBI VI Online). Shoes fulfil the function of protecting the feet from dirt, sharp objects, extreme weather, and contamination. The parts of shoes are described using lexemes of human body parts from head to toe. The metaphors employed are visualised in **Figure 5**.

The following are some excerpts of language data conveyed by the host of Used Shoe Shop on Live Commerce:

*Lidahnya tebal, bibirnya monyong.*  
(*Thick tongue, pouty lips.*)

This expression conveys the idea that the part of the shoe that covers the instep (which is under the laces or spellcro shoes) is still in good condition (not thinning), as well as the collar of the shoe.

*Dehidrasi, belum sariawan.*  
(*Dehydrated, not yet thrush.*)

The expression signifies that the shoes are exhibiting signs of deterioration, characterised by the erosion of the mouths, which are the openings in the shoe walls. This condition is not yet characterised by the perforation of the shoe walls, but rather by the erosion of the material. The term "*dehidrasi, belum sariawan* (dehydration, not yet thrush)" is a human disease, and it is important to note that dehydration and thrush are related diseases. According to the article published on [siloamhospitals.com](http://siloamhospitals.com), one of the causes of canker sores is dehydration. Dehydration, a condition characterised by dry mouth, has been identified as a trigger for canker sores. In the context of live-streaming commerce, the utilisation of the term "dehydration" to describe the condition of a product suggests a less severe level of damage, not as severe as "*sariawan* (thrush)" or diseases that are, in quotes, more severe.

Although dehydration and thrush are not lexemes of human body parts, both occur in the mouth area, illustrating that there is a metaphorical use of human body parts.

*Rambut sudah keriting*  
(*Hair is already curly.*)

Shoelaces in live commerce can be referred to as hair. Similarly, when describing laces in less than optimal condition, characterized by their deviation from a straight shape, the presence of scrapes, and a curly appearance, the host can employ the metaphorical expression "*rambut sudah keriting* (hair is already curly)." Conversely, when the laces are in good or normal condition, the host can use the metaphorical expression "*rambut masih lurus* (hair is still straight)." An illustrative example of a shoelace that has curled is presented in **Figure 5**.



**Figure 5** Description of Shoe Parts (Image Source: <https://review.bukalapak.com/>)

While the majority of metaphors employed to denote the components of the shoe are anatomical, one component of the shoe is designated as the *tapak* (tread). *Tapak* (tread), in its literal sense, signifies "the lower part of the foot, typically employed for treading; the component of the hand utilized for receiving and similar functions; the sole" (KBBI VI, 2024). The outsole of the shoe, therefore, employs the lexeme *tapak* (tread) due to its position at the shoe's base, akin to the literal tread's role as the lowest part of the human body.

### ***Human Physical Condition as Metaphor for the Physical Condition of Fashion Products***

The condition of the products that consumers wish to purchase is, naturally, the primary subject of discussion between the host and shop visitors. The visitors' limited physical experience necessitates verbal presentation of the products by the host, particularly with regard to the products' physical condition. In the context of purchasing and selling pre-owned merchandise, the discussion encompasses not only the merits (i.e., the product's good condition) of the product, as in the case of purchasing new goods, but also its deficiencies (i.e., the product's poor condition).

In the context of live streaming, hosts are expected to adhere to a stringent standard of honesty when articulating the features and benefits of their products. This is primarily due to the fact that the platform does not provide them with the opportunity to engage in deceptive practices during the product demonstration. For instance, if a product is found to have a defect, the host must disclose this information to the viewer, as failure to do so could result in the viewer filing a complaint and returning the product to the seller. Upon the buyer's shipment of the product to the designated courier or shipping point as specified by the e-commerce platform, the system initiates a refund for the previously paid amount. The conditions prevalent on most e-commerce platforms mandate that the buyer's payment be retained by the platform until the product is delivered to the seller.

The seller will receive the purchase money only after the buyer confirms that the product has been received and is satisfactory. In the Shopee platform, the buyer's confirmation is indicated by clicking "Pesanan Selesai (Order Completed)." In this case, the shopping platform functions as a "rekber" (acronym for "*rekening bersama* (joint account)," as defined by Ersaningtyas & Susanti (2019).

It is posited that sellers are compelled to provide an honest description of the condition of their products, both positive and negative. Lexemes in the human domain materialize as metaphors to explain concepts of the physical condition of fashion products. For example, the lexemes "*cakep* (cute)" and "*ganteng* (handsome)," as expressed by the host of the Royalstuff shop below.

*Cakep banget ya. Gantengnya minta ampun.*  
(It's really cute. so incredibly handsome).

The host employs these two words to describe the condition of the product being offered to shoppers, and these two words are actually synonymous. Although not identified in the KBBI, *cakep* is commonly used to describe human condition, appearance, or stature. The word *cakep* is more general (can be affiliated to both men and women), while the word *ganteng* (handsome) is more specific to men.

By featuring these two synonymous words, the host is able to emphasize the condition of the product being described. By employing a lexically beautiful word, the host conveys the impression that the product being jembreng is in a state of "*elok* (good looking)" or "*sangat baik* (excellent)" condition.

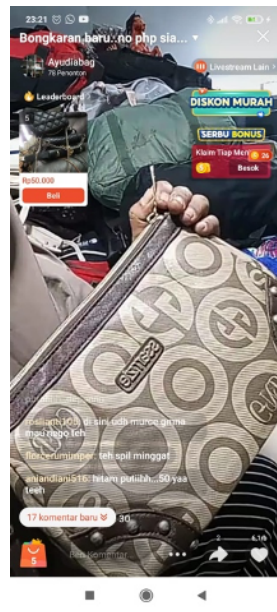
Furthermore, it is evident that the host of the Royalstuff store utilizes the terms "*cakep* (cute)" and "*ganteng* (handsome)" in the sale of jackets intended for male consumers. The employment of the term "*ganteng*" is indicative of the host's strategic use of language, leveraging the metaphorical framework of beauty and attractiveness. It is noteworthy that the host employs this linguistic technique within the context of a business transaction, signifying a deliberate and calculated approach to marketing. Consequently, it is plausible to interpret the host's employment of the term "*cantik* (beautiful)" as a strategic marketing tool, particularly in the context of products designed for and consumed by women.

The following are illustrative examples of data utilized by Ayudiabag shop hosts that employ the lexeme "*cantik* (beautiful).

*Sayang, Bebeb, ini mah cantik banget.*  
(Baby, this is so beautiful.)

The product under discussion, which is described by the host, is a sling-type bag intended for female consumers. Therefore, whether consciously or unconsciously, the

association between bag type and gender serves as a determining factor in the selection of lexemes by the host.



**Figure 6**Live-streaming of Ayudiabag store with women's handbag products

As previously mentioned, the host is expected to provide an honest description of the product. In the event that the product is in good condition, the host is obligated to disclose this information. Conversely, if the product is in poor condition, the host must also convey this information. An example of the utilization of lexemes in the HUMAN domain to express the physical condition of the product can be observed in the sentence articulated by the host of the Gantioutfit store, as follows:

*Terluka tapi tidak berdarah.*  
(Wounded but not bleeding.)

Lexically, *wounded* means 'to suffer a wound; to have been wounded; to have been accidentally wounded' (KBBI VI, 2023) so it can be said that *wounded* is a lexeme in the HUMAN domain, although it can also be used on animals. *Wounded* lexically refers to the condition of a person who has a wound on his body. In the context of using the expression “*Terluka tapi tidak berdarah* (wounded but not bleeding).”, the host associates the physical condition of the jacket product that has *defects*, but the defects are not severe. Halvini is associated with the expression *not bleeding*. In other words, structurally, the host can say “*terluka sampai berdarah* (wounded until bleeding)” or “*terluka berdarah-darah* (wounded bleeding profusely)” to express the physical condition of the product that has many minuses or shortcomings.

The description of the physical state of an item can be used to convey a humorous or entertaining impression to the intended audience. In a particular instance, the host of a used shoe store, known as *cees\_lamo*, employed a humorous approach when

describing footwear in excellent condition. Specifically, the host employed a metaphorical description, stating that the shoes were in "very good condition in some parts."

*Lidahnya tebal, bibirnya monyong.*  
(*Its tongue is thick, its lips are pouty.*)

In the preceding section, it was posited that the lexemes "*lidah* (tongue)" and "*bibir* (lips)" serve as a form of personification, representing components of the human anatomy employed to characterize the body parts of fashion products. Conceptually, it is understood that human body parts are subject to conditions. Given that the metaphor employed is structural, the host opted to utilize the lexemes *tebel* (thick) and *monyong* (pouty). When interpreted literally, *tebel* (standard form: *tebal*) and *monyong* can be used not only to refer to humans—*tebel* can be used for inanimate objects, plants, and animals, while *monyong* can be used for animals—but in this context, *tebel* and *monyong* can be said to be in the HUMAN DOMAIN because they collocate with tongue and lips.

The selection of particular lexemes, such as "*tebel* (thick)" and "*monyong* (pouty)," exemplifies a creative approach employed by the host, thereby conferring a distinctive quality to the text. This is regarded as a form of creativity because, for a given meaning, numerous alternative lexemes can be employed; however, not all lexemes (even though they are very close synonyms) exert the same effect on shop visitors. To illustrate this point, consider the substitution of the lexeme "*monyong* (pouty)" with "*bagus* (good)." In this context, the two lexemes bear a similar meaning. The expression resulting from this substitution is "*bibirnya masih bagus* (Its lips are (still) good)." This variation in expression undoubtedly elicits a divergent impression from shop visitors.

Furthermore, the condition of a second-hand fashion product is evaluated based on the presence and completeness of specific features. These features may include the presence of a large number of wash tags or the absence of wear or thinning on the outsole of a shoe, indicating its age. The term *gondrong*, which is utilized by shop hosts, is employed to represent this attribute. The term "*gondrong* (thick and long hair)" is typically used to denote an abundance of hair, particularly in terms of its length and quantity. This characteristic is employed by the following shop hosts: *cees\_lamo* (1) and *Royalstuff* (2).

(1) *Tapak masih gondrong, ya, Kak. (Tread is still thick and long, yes, brother.)*

(2) *Lihat nih, tag-nya gondrong abis. (Look here, the tag is really thick and long.)*

It has been observed that hosts of live streaming stores appear to demonstrate a discernible interest in the popularity of terms employed as metaphors to describe their products. For instance, in 2024, a prominent term in Indonesia was "*gemoy*." This term's popularity can be attributed to its usage as a campaign slogan during the 2024 election, specifically the phrase "*Prabowo gemoy*" (Mubarrod & Syarwi, 2024). The term *gemoy* emerged as a slang form of '*gemas*'. In the context of livestreaming sales, the host of the



Sadang\_Paganku shop employs the term *gemoy* to represent a substantial shoe size. This term's inclusion in the metaphor can be attributed to its association with a physical condition (human body size), that is large.

In essence, the utilization of lexemes that allude to the human physical condition as a metaphor for the product's physical condition serves to translate physical experience into a comprehensible form for shop visitors. This approach can also be regarded as a form of product concretization. The employment of lexemes related to the human physical condition facilitates the comprehension of the host's description of the product's condition by shop visitors. Moreover, the host's creativity in employing these terms renders the process engaging and enjoyable. The efficacy of this interaction hinges on the host's ability to select appropriate lexemes, taking into account prevailing societal phenomena. The popularity of the lexemes employed directly correlates with the relevance and effectiveness of the interaction.

### ***Socioeconomic Status as Fashion Product Classification***

One of the inherent characteristics of humans is their socioeconomic status, defined as the position occupied by an individual or family based on generally accepted normative standards regarding cultural ownership, effective income, ownership of goods, and participation in group activities within their community (Sastrawati, 2020). In the study by Soekanto & Sulistyowati (2013), the researchers identified that socioeconomic status is frequently associated with factors such as employment, education, income, number of dependents, ownership, and type of residence.

The concept of socioeconomic status is a fundamental aspect of human behavior that is often employed as a metaphor in live commerce. Hosts utilize metaphorical language, such as "*miskin* (poor)," "*sultan* (king)," "*aman* (safe living)," "*maling* (thief)," "*orang kaya* (rich)," and others, to categorize fashion products.

The classification of fashion products is typically based on factors such as price, target market, exclusivity, value, or design style (Mrad, Majdalani, Cui, & El Khansa, 2020; Young, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010; L. Zhang, Zhao, & Cude, 2021). However, the findings of this study demonstrate that, in the context of the purchase and sale of second-hand fashion products through live streaming, product classification is predominantly influenced by price. While considerations of exclusivity, design quality, and style are evident, they are found to be directly proportional to price. In essence, the higher the exclusivity and quality of the product design, the higher the price.

Socioeconomic status is most commonly represented by the terms "*kaya* (rich)" and "*miskin* (poor)." These two synonymous terms are employed by the proprietors of second-

hand fashion stores to distinguish between products based on their price. In accordance with the proprietor's understanding of the classification or categorization of fashion products, there exist groups of brands that are metaphorically characterized as "rich" and groups of brands that are metaphorically characterized as "poor."

The term "kaya (rich)" is employed by the host to denote that the product under discussion is a branded commodity. In the context of classifying fashion products, namely luxury, premium, fast fashion, and value brands (see Okonkwo, 2007), the term "*brand kaya* (rich brand)" or "*brand orang kaya* (rich person's brand)," as employed by the host, corresponds to the concept of a luxury brand. However, the definition of luxury in this context is subject to variation. It is determined by the host store's proprietary definition or by consensus within the Indonesian second-hand fashion community participating in live commerce.

In addition to the lexeme "kaya (rich)" used to refer to products in the luxury category, hosts of second-hand fashion stores also utilize the term "sultan." The term "sultan" is a title bestowed upon individuals who lead a country or kingdom. It can also be referred to as "king" (KBBI VI, 2023).

It is evident that, due to its structural nature, the market is segmented into distinct categories of products and brands, with the term "*miskin* (poor)" serving to categorize those products positioned as fast fashion, value brands, or items available at low prices. In addition to the term "*miskin* (poor)," the term "runkad" is employed to denote products sold at low prices. While it does not directly reference socioeconomic status, "runkad" is synonymous with the socioeconomic condition of an individual or family, which equates to a lower-class socioeconomic status. The term "runkad" or "dirunkadkan" is frequently employed by fashion shop hosts to denote inexpensive products.

Furthermore, the term "*maling* (thief)" is employed to denote an individual engaged in the surreptitious and clandestine acquisition of others' belongings. This lexeme is utilized not solely to describe products based on price or product exclusivity, but also to elucidate the types of fashion products. Within the Indonesian societal context, a prevailing stereotype associates the practice of thievery with individuals who possess oversized pockets, as illustrated in **Figure 7**.



**Figure 7.a.** The stereotype of the maling bag in Indonesia  
(Source: depositphotos.com)



**Figure 7.b.** Duffel bag (Source: consina.com)

#### Figure 7 Stereotypes of thieves in Indonesia (Source: depositphotos.com)

The lexeme "*maling* (thief)," which is defined as a large bag, particularly a duffel, is frequently used in live commerce interactions at second-hand bag shops. The phrase "*tas maling* (thief bag)" is not considered unusual in the context of buying and selling bags on live streaming platforms. The continued and accepted use of *maling* in this setting can be attributed to the shared cultural knowledge between the host and the buyer. This phenomenon can be illustrated by the prevalence of the stereotype of the thief character in animation films broadcast in Indonesia.

In addition to its literal meaning, the lexeme "*copet* (pickpocket)" is frequently employed metaphorically to describe a specific type of headgear: flat caps. The term "*topi copet* (pickpocket hat)" has gained acceptance among shop visitors, likely due to its association, through cinematic depictions, with the hats worn by pickpockets in some films. **Figure 7a** and **8a** illustrate the stereotypical manifestation of the type of hat worn by pickpockets.



**Figure 8.a.** stereotypical pickpocket hat (source: poskota.co.id)



**Figure 8.b.** screenshot of a second-hand hat shop host explaining the pickpocket hat (Source: purishop44 shopee account)

#### Figure 8 Stereotypes of pickpockets in Indonesia

**Figure 8.b** presents the actual form of the hat in question. The host, donning the hat, offers it to shop visitors by saying, "Topi copet nih, topi copet. Ada yang mau? (It is pickpocket hat, pickpocket hat. Anyone want one?)" The host then mentions the condition, size (head circumference), and price. No customers inquired about the etymology of the hat's name. This phenomenon can be attributed to the shared world knowledge between the host and the shop visitor, which facilitates seamless interactions.

## CONCLUSION

In the context of live commerce platforms in Indonesia, metaphors have experienced a notable surge in creativity, particularly in the domain of secondhand fashion products. The technological infrastructure that enables hosts to communicate verbally with shop visitors, while shop visitors are limited to written communication, has transformed live commerce into a novel form of interaction, known as cross-medium communication. This evolution has placed a considerable emphasis on the creativity of hosts, who must employ detailed and vivid language to describe the condition of the fashion products they offer. The introduction of metaphors represents a particular manifestation of this creativity. Of these metaphors, the personification metaphor is particularly salient. This metaphor involves the use of human attributes to describe the attributes of the fashion products being sold. Personification is not merely ontological but also structural in nature. The conceptualization of this structural metaphor is as follows: FASHION PRODUCT IS HUMAN. This conceptualization enables the host of second-hand fashion products to employ human features, including body parts, physical condition, and socioeconomic status, as metaphors to elucidate the product's condition or to create a favorable impression, thereby attracting and retaining shop visitors. This study offers novel insights for individuals or entities engaged in the sale of second-hand fashion products through live streaming. It posits that the employment of metaphorical language is not only essential for articulating the condition of the product, but also for fostering character development, cultivating relationships, and sustaining the engagement of online shoppers.

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