

SOCIAL FACTORS AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS IN EXPRESSING ANGER

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ABSTRACT

Anger is the most tempted expression among other emotions. For this reason, expressing anger is possibly uttered by almost every person at least once in a lifetime, without any boundaries or limitations, to anyone as they wish. There are so many aspects of anger that we can analyze deeper by using some points of view: psychology, biology and even linguistics. In linguistics itself, the existence of anger in fact cannot be separated from the relation of language with other aspects. People will not be possibly angry for themselves without any trigger, interlocutor and other social environments. Hence, it is interesting to discuss the influences of social environments in expressing anger. The data were gathered from university students in Yogyakarta by using questionnaire as data collecting method. The gathered data were then analyzed and presented in order to make a qualitative result as data analyzing method. The result shows that social distance (intimacy) and participant (gender and age) of the respondents play significant role in deciding and determining their anger expression.

Keywords: emotion, expressing anger, social dimensions, social factors, sociolinguistics

A. Background of the Study

It is assumed that everybody has ever got angry or mad once in their life at least. There are so many reasons why people experience this kind of emotional condition. Different reasons in different situations will produce different responds. As a universal emotion, different people could express their feeling in different ways: road rage, bullying, domestic violence, terrorism. It is important to note that anger is not always expressed orally. Anger can be expressed via television broadcast, online media, newspaper, radio or even behavior (Baruch, 2008:2). There are so many responds to anger-triggering situation, such as speaking bad language, insulting others, shouting, screaming, or even hitting something. Those responds are used to compensate towards certain displeasure situation (Tejparkhiji, 2008:105).

Related to the anger-triggered situation, understanding the root of anger is very important. Zillman (via Goleman, 2005:83) found that in general the root of anger is the feeling of being threatened or of being in danger. It needs to be emphasized that the threat is not always in the form of direct physical threat. Threats towards our self-esteem, such as injustice, profanity, or frustration, are some example of symbolical threat, though it is not in accordance for every person, especially those who come from different culture. Though not everyone easily gets angry on certain situation, but the choice of being angry has some consequences that are to be compromised (Ellis, 1998:3-17). The first grim cost of being angry is that anger destroys our personal relationships and perhaps this is the worst, especially to those who live very close in our daily life, such as spouse, children and family. Beside personal relationship, the second, anger also disrupts the relationship in working environment. Working adults for example, the triggering factors in working place, such as the managers, coworkers or the tasks are able to test their patience, especially in coping the stress and frustration. The third, getting mad at something means that we are ready to make the situation getting worse. For almost all of the time, we cannot think properly when we get angry, hence we say or act that even make the situation worse and it does not solve the situation. The fourth, acting out to express anger emotion, in fact, besides making the situation worse, can easily lead to an aggression. Family

violence, violent crime, youth crime, murder, etc. are mostly triggered by anger which then is acted out. Those four costs have something to do with other people. Anger itself, biologically, is connected to the development of heart disease. The physical changes of angry people are increases in muscle tension, heart rate, breathing, and metabolism. Those changes help our body ready for an action. From the above grim costs of anger, we can see that anger has so many negative impacts, not only for ourselves but also for others.

One thing that needs to be emphasized is that anger is a humanly process involving some components. There are three components of anger showing the process of anger as a whole, i.e. physiological/body, cognitive/thoughts, behavior/action (Baruch, 2008:4). Physiological relates to how the body reacts to angry feeling, such as heart rate, breathing or perspiration. This component differs from one person to another due to different physical conditions for each. Cognitive component has some to do with how the brain reacts towards the anger-triggering situation or the automatic thoughts, such as “It is not fair” or “Everything goes wrong for me”. It is possible that people will only react on those two components, physiological and cognitive. For other people, however, they need to express their feeling as a means of releasing tension. This is what do we call as behavioral or what actions or inactions are taken when we are angry. Hit the door, slap the spouse, swearing, yelling, those are the types of actions behavior, while sulking or getting depressed are categorized as inaction. In this case, making verbal retort as the use of language for emotional purpose is categorized as behavioral anger components. This is the main point of this study, which is the use of language in expressing anger by relating to social aspects, i.e. social factors and social dimensions.

B. Theoretical Review and Methodology

The study of language in social life is categorized as sociolinguistics. In analyzing anger expression, beside paralinguistic, language produced by speaker sometimes differs one from another based on certain circumstances. The differences then are called as language variation. This variation can be investigated from the social factors and social dimensions under the sociolinguistics study, since it should be noted that anger is triggered by and is expressed to other person. Investigation on social factors and social dimensions are laid on the explanation of Holmes (2013:8-11).

Social factors mostly discuss the basic elements of an utterance in conversation. The social factors are divided into relations: to the users of language and to its uses of language (Holmes, 2013:8). The users of language are absolutely the persons engaged in conversation, or the participants, while the uses of language are the social setting and function of interaction. In anger expression, someone who delivers the feeling to others is categorized in this element: who is talking to whom. The setting or social context plays a significant role; private or public area influences someone whether they want to say rude or mild utterance. The purpose of interaction perhaps has clearly stated that expressing anger means the speaker is in an emotionally angry condition. The topic or what is being talked about may differ one from another, especially the reason why someone gets angry. Though not all together can be found in every anger expressions, but at least some of them are still acceptable. However, there is another view on social factors. Fought (2011:238) argues that compared to social factors, in fact, ethnicity can have a stronger relationship to language because ethnicity might provide a gift of an entirely different language from one another.

Coupland (2002:189) defines social dimensions as features which are diagnostic of social (usually status-related) differentiation in communities. The social differentiations influence the production of utterance of the speaker. Some concerns of social dimensions are social class, age, sex, style, and network (Romaine, 2000:67). The existence of social dimensions is implicit in a conversation so that it needs deeper analysis. Holmes (2013:9-11) proposes the four social dimensions differ from previous linguist, namely social distance, status scale, formality scale, and two functional scales. Social distance scale concerns with participant relationship: how well we know someone, whether in intimate or distant scale. Status scale which consists of superior (high status) and subordinate (low status) talks about relative social status hierarchically in a

certain geographical society. Formality scale relates to the social setting or type of interaction on language choice in which it consists of formal (high formality) and informal (low formality). Sometimes the degrees of formality are mostly influenced by solidarity and status relationship. While functional scales have something to do with the purposes or topic of interaction. Language may contain objective information (referential), but it also can also express how someone is feeling.

In order to answer the research question above, language research method is absolutely needed. This paper is conducted by using a survey research, that is by collecting information from the respondents through interviewing a small size of population. The quality mostly depends on the sample size, the representativeness, and the reliance level of its information (Nasution, 2001:25-26). The data were gathered through questionnaire which is spread out in probability random sampling method. The questionnaire consists of two parts: the personal information of the respondents and the simulated anger situations. It should be noted that the simulated anger situations were made by considering the social factors and social dimensions. The respondents are the university students of faculty of Cultural Sciences UGM academic year 2006. The collected data then were analyzed by using qualitative and quantitative methods.

C. Findings and Discussion

From the survey, there are 55 respondents who answered the questionnaire. From the 9 departments in that faculty, the respondents came from 6 of them in which 10 respondents were picked up from each department, consisting of 5 men and 5 women. Because there are 5 simulated anger situation in every questionnaire, this research found 232 responses. For each response, it ranges from a single utterance up to eight utterances. Hence, over all there are 637 total utterances. Mostly the respondents, by ignoring the gender, produced two utterances (66 responses), one utterance (58 responses) and three utterances (52 responses). The responses produced by the respondents differ from each other because it mainly depends on the social factor and social dimensions available.

In situation 1, the respondents unintentionally saw his/her lover was hugging each other with an affair around the campus street. The scene is in intense jealousy. They share almost the same age, different gender, and they must have a high intimacy. It is interesting to note that female respondents produced more responses in four to eight utterances categories than male, meaning that women speaks much in quantity. In expressing anger, the use of terms of swearing is high, meaning that the social distance does not work here. They should share high solidarity due to their intimacy, but the respondents are willing to share low solidarity. Since their relationship is a lover, it logically means they are intimate. Female respondents are able to position themselves as an intimate because they use less number of terms of swearing but more in pause fillers (*Ahaahh....kurang ajar...*). Male respondents are perhaps more honest in expressing their feeling because they are willing to downgrade their face by uttering more terms of swearing (*Asu, Kurang ajar....bajingan!!!*) and statement of negative feeling (*Teganya....teganya dirimu*).

In situation 2, the participants are the respondent, a friend, and a friend's younger brother/sister. It means that they are not intimate, having different age and perhaps the gender. The setting is in the respondent's lodging room which was messed up by that younger sister/brother. It shows that the respondent has power on his/her belonging. The presence of a friend also becomes a note for this simulated situation. The data shows that both male and female respondents produce the number of responses, mostly in one utterance to four utterances, hence totally; there are 54 utterances for male and 62 utterances for female. Just the same like situation 1, the use of terms of swearing is still high, almost in every utterance (*Dancok'i*). Interestingly, most of terms of swearing appear in single utterance and in the first part of two or three utterance. Social distance does not have a quit important influence in this situation, but the status scale does. Because of possessing the bedroom, the respondent is considered as superior compared to other participants. The choice of being angry and swearing is acceptable for the above reasons. Besides, we can also find pause filler and statement of negative feeling

(*Uh...nakal banget ni anak!!!*). The use of terms of swearing is successful in positioning the respondents as non-intimate.

The participants in situation 3 are the respondent and his/her boardinghouse friend. They share the same gender, age and intimacy. Unfortunately, the respondent's motorcycle was broken down by this friend and he/she did not want to take any responsibility. For this reason, the ending of this situation is asking for responsibility of the doer. The status scale and social distance perhaps govern the use of anger expressions. It is interesting to pay much attention in this situation because, compared to two previous situations, male respondents made higher utterances than female respondents. Most respondents produced three utterances for their response, showing that releasing tension of anger verbally is very tempted such as (*We anjing...ganti rugi motornya....sekarang juga!!!*). Female respondent producing the following response (*Ya Allah, paringono arto ben iso tuku motor anyar...!!! Kowe kii marmos tenan!!*) shows that the first terms of swearing functioned as exclamation while the second terms of swearing functioned as associating the interlocutor with certain personal characteristic. We may see that the superiority and the intimacy of the respondent toward his/her friend enable them to swear and impose the hearer's face. For female, they produce less severe terms of swearing and less statement of warning due to being intimate and having a shared feeling of togetherness.

Situation 4 differs from the three previous situations because, basically, the respondents has lower status scale, located in a public place, and in hurry condition. It happened when a middle-aged woman who rode a motorcycle suddenly hit the respondent at a rush hour in the morning. They have far different age, different gender perhaps, and not intimate. The ending of the conversation is to look for responsibility of the woman rider, and the key may be in high emotional tension. We may assume that the respondents will not produce rude words due to norm of society. The data shows that mostly respondents produce two utterances, one utterance and three utterances respectively. In two utterances, there are statements of regret such as (*Maaf, seharusnya Anda berhati-hati*), terms of address and statement of negative feeling (*Bu, kalo nyetir nggak pake mata ya?*). By only finding few terms of swearing and much of statement of regret, pause fillers, etc. show that the respondents do not want to make interlocutor feels embarrassed in front of public and the respondents want to solve the problem quickly. Besides, female respondents show more polite in reacting in this situation because perhaps they share the same gender. Terms of address is also occupied by some respondents for showing respect to interlocutor.

In situation one to four, the respondents have to give different responses because they speak to different person, in different place, different topic, but perhaps they have the same function of interaction. Talking about the social dimensions, high solidarity and low solidarity influence the use anger expression. Even though they are in love relationship, anger will trigger low solidarity on it. The existence of status scale in this research is mostly governed by the power of possession on their belongings. In situation 4, angry to an older person, in fact, made the respondents maintain their norm of social and norm of local interaction. It can be proven by the use of terms of address, pause fillers and statement of negative feeling.

D. Conclusions

Anger is the basic emotion of human, and is the most tempted feeling to be expressed out. The choice of being angry or not is influenced by the grim costs of anger that the respondents want to accept it, and one of them is language expression. The oral language of anger expression cannot be separated from the existence of the relation among human or the need of being socialized. Based on the discussion above, this paper shows that social distance (intimate-distance relation) and status scale (superior-subordinate) influence the choice of words and the structure of anger expression. Besides, social factors of participant (who speaks to whom), especially the gender and the age, also influences the anger expression of the respondents. Perhaps in the near future, there will be a research of anger expression focusing on the deep structure and the meaning beyond anger.

E. References

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