



Digital Ethnography of Students' Communication on WhatsApp: An Empirical Study of Native Bantenese

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Abstract

This study delves into understanding the distinctive communication behavior within a specific speech community established on WhatsApp. Employing communication ethnography and utilizing Dell Hymes' Speaking Model for analysis, the research employs observation techniques and in-depth interviews for data collection. Findings reveal that speech events primarily unfold within designated group accounts, centering on common topics. Notably, not all community members actively engage, and communication encompasses both textual and visual formats, in line with the application's features. Despite adherence to the application's conversational structure, community members demonstrate a robust comprehension of diverse speech forms exchanged within the group. The abstract concludes by underscoring the pedagogical implications of the results, offering insights for comprehending and potentially enhancing communication behaviors in chat applications, contributing to the broader discourse on digital communication

Keywords: Speaking Dell Hymes, Speech Events, WhatsApp.

1. Introduction

Digital ethnography appears to be a benefit of cyber research since it uses ethnographic approaches to explore social and cultural contexts produced through computer-mediated social interaction. (Addeo & Paoli, 2019). Digital ethnography opens up new avenues for researching various cultures and communities. Alternatively, traditional ethnography may incorporate videos or photos, but digital ethnography is more rigorous (Ritter, 2021). Digital ethnographers, for example, would investigate people's interactions and behaviors on social media platforms such as Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Recent advances in computational technology are in the collection of ethnographic data using multimedia, as well as computational analysis that uses algorithms to validate multiple data sources to produce enhanced outputs. the use of recorded audio in smart device is an advanced use of the technology (Rodriguez & Storer, 2019).

Among various online media, WhatsApp considered as the smart device, popular and effective tool that can be occupied by students and lecturers in communication (Kheryadi, 2018). This application's widespread use is shown by Ashiyan & Salehi, (2016) WhatsApp increases in popularity with over 250 million users (Kurniasih & Riyadhshyah,

2017). Furthermore, according to Al-Johali, (2019), the majority of users prefer and utilize this application because it facilitates users to communicate directly to one another at barely any expense. In addition to texting, users are able to share social media posts that include pictures, videos, and audio files, as well as their position utilizing built-in mapping capabilities. Therefore, such attributes present a fantastic chance for individuals, especially kids, to communicate more effectively and readily about their feelings, thoughts, ideas, and events that occurred. (Kheryadi, 2018; Muslimin & Harintama, 2020). With its complex features and ease of use, this application may assist students in interacting with people in a variety of settings, both with and without the assistance of their teachers. It can also motivate students to take part in group conversations in order to further develop their social skills. While there is no denying WhatsApp's advantages, in order to guarantee that learning is successful, this sophisticated media must be utilized sensibly and constructively. As a result, it is critical to consider how WhatsApp is used, particularly in learners' communication.

Likewise, Communication basically the process of transferring information, include emotions and cultures (Carragee & Frey, 2016). The norms of the conversation are important to understand the culture in which people communication (Beament & Mercer, 2016; Lawrence & Tar, 2018; Rehn et al., 2016).

The rule Norms of interaction and norm of interpretation is closely related to the participant's behavioral norms. It is essential to comprehend the norms for necessary, appropriate conversation within a culture, group, or speech community, and it is critical to respect and adhere to these norms in order to effectively engage with people within that group, speech community, country, or culture. To connect effectively with someone from one speech community, it is necessary to understand that speech community, as well as the rules that govern their social interaction and what is suitable.

Several studies have been conducted to identify the various speech events that occur in a certain speech community. For instance (Dooney & Kim, 2017) This study discussed logistical and ethical issues associated with virtual ethnography in the context of a research project that examined interactions between a group of newly admitted students at a private university within a university-operated Facebook group. The study begins with a description of virtual ethnography, followed by a brief analysis of its origins and use in the current literature. It then examines technique implementation, with an emphasis on methodological challenges in higher education research.

Kurniasih & Riyadhshyah, (2017) analyzed the communication happened in FDMN (Forum Dosen Muda Nusantara) WhatsApp group conversation by completing the following research questions about issues: What are the goals of young academics joining the FDMN WhatsApp group, and how do they join the WhatsApp group? How do the members of the FDMN WhatsApp group communicate? The FDMN WhatsApp group has been utilized among young academics as an information and communication method. Group interaction has been classified into five types of social interaction: exchange, competition, cooperation, conflict, and coercion. The FDMN WhatsApp group has cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects on its members.

Al-Johali, (2019); Motteram, (2020); Prasojo et al., (2017); Taghizadeh & Hajhosseini, (2021) investigated how digital ethnographic data enriches insight by asking two groups of rising professionals to introspect using the recorded material to describe their routines to each other. They contrast the digital information gathered by their two groups of participants before expanding on the insights gained from participant-led reflection. The argument situates research within the area of digital ethnography, which necessitates a focus on the social component of introspection that occurs when the first-person viewpoint collected by SenseCams is negotiated within a group.

From the forgoing review on the empirical studies of digital ethnography based on a series of relevant components which are mnemonically summarized under the letters of the word “SPEAKING”: *setting and scene, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms of interaction and interpretation and genre.*, none of the works examine ethical Communications that are made by students through WhatsApp media. This research is going to concentrate to examines the communication behavior of guidance students when communicating using the WhatsApp application. In other way, the questions of the research are What are the speaking events that occur in Native Bantenese' Students? What is the general description of the Native Bantenese' Students' communication behavior?

2. Method

This study employs a content analysis design. Content analysis is a research approach used to provide results that can be repeated and valid data with context (Neuendorf, 2017). A total of 30 students at the English language education study program at Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Participants in this research were to come from various parts of the province of Banten. This study collected qualitative data which are the clauses from WhatsApp Chat. The Data are collected by following procedures; (a) find the chat that indicates norms in interactive communication done by native Bantenese students, (b) convert the chat into Microsoft word (c) specify the clauses from the WhatsApp chat as the basic unit analysis (d) identify the conversation using S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G Dell Hymes analysis (e) Include the clauses in an analysis table. Furthermore, this study's data analysis approach employs textual/document analysis, with clauses utilized in certain areas of the articles evaluated and interpreted using SPEAKING Dell Hymes analysis. This framework is designed to be used to examine any naturally occurring speech in order to find speaking norms such as styles of speaking, subjects, and message formats within certain locations and activities.

Furthermore, it examines the settings, cultural influences, and aspects that shape a certain speech occurrence. In the domain of communication ethnography, where communication events are synonymous with speech events, a comprehensive understanding of the involved communication participants can be elucidated through the following table:

Table 1. Participant Profile

| No | Initial Name | Age | Sex Gender | Tribe | Residence address |
|----|--------------|-----|------------|-------|-------------------|
|----|--------------|-----|------------|-------|-------------------|

| | | | | | |
|-----|----------|----|--------|--------------------|--|
| 1. | K | 23 | Female | Javanese | Kp. Pabuaran Gudang, Ds. Cimaung rt/rw 01/01 kec. Cikeusal, kab. Serang, Banten |
| 2. | I. P. S | 21 | Female | Sundanese | Kp. Padurung, Desa: tejamari, RT/rw 10/04, no. 27, kec. Baros, kab. Serang, prov. Banten. kode pos 42173 |
| 3. | S. A | 22 | Female | Sundanese | Taman Krakatau blok E 13 no.19 Kec. Waringin Kurung Kab. Serang Banten |
| 4. | K. C. K | 22 | Female | Javanese | Jln Ciruas Walantaka Kp. Pipitan Rt 05 Rw 02 Kec. Walantaka Serang Banten |
| 5. | S. I. M | 22 | Female | Javanese | Link baru Rt 01 Rw 03 Jalan persatuan Kelurahan Kebondalem Kecamatan Purwakarta |
| 6. | R. A. Z | 21 | Female | Javanese | Puri angkasa 1 Blok K2/18 Kedaung Barat Kec. Sepatan Timur Kab. Tangerang Banten |
| 7. | Y. M | 24 | Female | Sundanese | Kp. Guha (rt/rw.005/002), kab.serang, ciomas, banten |
| 8. | S. | 25 | Female | Javanese | Ciruas Serang Banten |
| 9. | N. E. A. | 23 | Male | Java and sundanese | Jl. Raya Serang-Pamarayan KM.25, Dahu, Cikeusal, Dahu, Kec. Cikeusal, Kabupaten Serang, Banten 42175 |
| 10. | S.R | 22 | Female | Sundanese | Pagadungan, karangtanjung, kab. Pandeglang |

| | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|------|-----------|--|
| 11. | M | 22 | Male | Sundanese | Kp. Pakem rt/rw 02/01 ds. Petir kec. Petir kab.serang |
|-----|---|----|------|-----------|--|

3. Results

In the results section, the study presents the average number of clauses utilized in WhatsApp chats. This data provides valuable insights into the communication patterns within the observed speech community on the WhatsApp platform. The findings shed light on the frequency and nature of interactions, offering a quantitative perspective on the participants' communicative behaviors. The presentation of these results serves as a foundation for a more in-depth understanding of the communication dynamics and contributes to the overall comprehensive analysis of speech events within the studied context.

3.1. Findings

Based on the cultural profile of the participants above. participant manifestations indicate that the majority of participants have the same geographical proximity despite different cultural backgrounds. Students whose backgrounds are Bantenese still uphold the value of politeness or ethics in communicating with their lecturers, as in the example in the conversation below:

- Student (087881868xxx) : *Assalamualaikum wr wb sir*, sorry to disturb your time sir, I wanted to ask when you are not busy? I ask for your time to guide my thesis, sir. Thank you very much sir 🙏🙏 *Wassalamu'alaikum*
- Lecturer : *Wasslm.* hopefully it can be next week on Tuesday. I'll look at my agenda first.
- Student (087881868xxx) : Ok sir.
- Students (085770673xxx) : *Assalamualaikum wr wb 🙏* sir, sorry to disturb your time, sir. I want to ask you tomorrow, are you busy, sir? I want to consult with tomorrow's thesis guidance, sir, can you not, sir. Thank you very much, sir, sorry in advance 🙏
- Lecturer : yes please.
- Student (085770673xxx) : *Masyaallah* Thanks very much *bapak* 🙏😊

The characteristics of speech events for students and lecturer can be seen as follows:

- Communication activities are carried out using the WhatsApp chat application in the group account which discusses information on the development of thesis guidance.
- Not all group members are involved in every speech event
- Messages are delivered in two formats, namely text and visual. Text messages are messages that use words and visuals are messages that use photos or emoticons.

Emoticon is a form of typography that represents facial expressions and emotions. These two formats are unique in communication behavior because they underlie their overall communication behavior. The text messages communicated are delivered in Indonesian and English, but the delivery is in accordance with the communication habits that are often carried out by the people of Banten

- d. All speech events take place in the WhatsApp conversation box which is viewable by the 23 accounts registered in the group. All accounts have the same opportunity to be involved in the conversation, they can choose to be involved directly or not. Involved directly means sending a message during a conversation situation, while being involved indirectly means not sending a message when a conversation situation occurs. This can be caused by several things, including the absence of an internet connection so that messages experience delays in sending, or it can also be caused by a lack of interest in the topic of conversation.
- e. Speech events show a relaxed impression with often interspersed with emoticons that represent expressions.

Based on the Dell Hymes S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G Model, the communication components in this event can be described as follows:

- a. Setting and scene

The conversation took place on the WhatsApp group account in April 12-15 2022. The main display of this application consists of a conversation box with a blue background that displays the conversations of community members one by one in order of time. The conversation box also shows the number of community members at the top, a sign that directs you to search, community members who read each message sent, the time of sending the message, and a box to write a message at the bottom with message instructions in text and/or multimedia format. (in the form of images, emoticons, files, sounds and videos).

- b. Participants

There are eight participants, where one person is the conversation starter (greeter) and seven other people are responders (greeter). The number of conversations involving participants was 12 (twelve).

- c. Ends

The conversation or speech begins with sending a message sent by the thesis supervisor to the student at 12.15 PM, which in that event is the greeter or the person who started the conversation or conversation. Messages sent by the greeter which then involves other participants or the greeting to have a conversation by discussing the thesis guidance process

- d. Act Sequence

Conversations use words in several language variations, namely Indonesian, English, Indonesian with a Banten accent, and use a combination of words with emoticons, or only in the form of pictures or emoticons. The content of the conversation is a response of interest to the information sent by the greeter.

- e. Key

Messages sent by participants have two forms or formats, namely text and multimedia. Messages in the form of words are delivered one to seven words. The content of the conversation shows the closeness between participants which is

indicated by several messages in the form of words or emoticons with meaning of jokes and understanding of the language understood by the participants which is indicated by the presence of every response or reply to each message sent.

f. Instruments

The conversation takes place in a WhatsApp chat application. The contents of the conversation can only be seen by community members who are registered in the WhatsApp group.

g. Norms

Group members can choose to be involved or not in speech events or communication events that take place through chat applications. 22 members in the group, eleven people who were directly involved in the conversation were then referred to as participants. The number of members who were directly involved and not directly involved by just reading every message sent by the participants were 11 people. So, there are 23 group members who are not involved at all. In the conversation that lasted for 5 hours 38 minutes, there was a pause or no interaction four times and from that pause the interaction was then restarted when someone continued the previous discussion topic and was answered or replied to by the greeter or greeting. In this conversation, all participants asked questions freely and randomly.

h. Genre

Conversation only involves participants showing interest in the topic of conversation by sending comments.

3. Discussion

In the realm of digital communication, a comprehensive exploration through communication ethnography provides a nuanced perspective, particularly within the context of Digital Communication. While both investigations share a common focus on communication events, defined as speech events in communication ethnography, they diverge in terms of participants and contextual intricacies. The study on digital communication emphasizes the significance of diverse online platforms, technological interfaces, and the influence of digitalization on communication patterns. In contrast, the communication ethnography perspective intricately delves into face-to-face interactions, cultural subtleties, and the establishment of distinct speech communities within digital realms. Through the comparative juxtaposition of these methodologies, researchers can extract insights into the multifaceted nature of communication in both conventional and digital contexts. This approach contributes to a more holistic comprehension of the actors and dynamics involved, fostering an enriched scholarly discourse on the continually evolving landscape of communication practices in the digital era.

The findings from the cultural profile of participants further underscore a shared geographical proximity among individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds. Notably, Bantenese students exhibit a commitment to politeness and ethical communication values when interacting with their lecturers, as exemplified in the provided conversations.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides a detailed exploration of distinctive communication behaviours within a specific speech community established on WhatsApp. Utilizing communication ethnography and Dell Hymes' Speaking Model for

analysis, the research employs observation techniques and in-depth interviews for data collection. The findings reveal that speech events predominantly unfold within designated group accounts, focusing on common topics. It is noteworthy that not all community members actively engage, and communication encompasses both textual and visual formats, aligning with the application's features. Despite adhering to the application's conversational structure, community members demonstrate a robust comprehension of diverse speech forms exchanged within the group. The study underscores the pedagogical implications of the results, offering insights for understanding and potentially enhancing communication behaviours in chat applications. These findings contribute to the broader discourse on digital communication, emphasizing the need to consider cultural and geographical factors in analysing communication patterns. The study recommends further research to delve deeper into the nuances of communication within specific speech communities on digital platforms.

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