PARALINGUISTICS CUES USED AND MISCOMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA: CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCE PROGRAM UNIVERSITAS PADJADJARAN

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Abstract

Computer-Mediated Communication supports verbal and nonverbal communication in online reality same with face-to-face communication. Verbal elements in communication include words spoken while nonverbal elements include paralinguistic. Paralinguistic cues used in social media might help the receiver in the delivery process but also might cause miscommunication. This study aims to investigate the use of paralinguistic cues by students of Program Study Communication Sciences Universitas Padjadjaran and how is miscommunication on social media. This is a qualitative study based on case study method. Primary data collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the students of Program Study Communication Sciences Universitas Padjadjaran class A and B of class 2015. Triangulation was done by theories triangulation. The results show Paralinguistic cues used by students of Program Study Communication Sciences Universitas Padjadjaran include orthography, vocabularies, and graphic paralinguistic, while grammar and content and text are seldom used. Meanwhile, the common miscommunication usually done is lurking. This study might give contribution to the nonverbal communication feature developers on social media.

Keywords: Computer mediated communication, human computer interaction, paralinguistic cues, common miscommunication, netiquette

1. INTRODUCTION

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) has reflected different communication configuration, especially in interpersonal communication and mass communication (Mahmoud & Auter, 2009). This configuration changes include velocity, interactivity, synchronization, scope, etc. Some scholars argue that CMC cannot replace face-to-face communication. Social Presence Theory accounts that communication media has different capacity in transmitting verbal and nonverbal communication (Walther, 2011), but The Social Influence Theory argues that media selection is not only based on the media characteristics alone but also depends on the individual's characteristics and the social context when the individual communicating (Fulk & Steinfield, 1990).

Basically, CMC is a process where people create, exchange, and percept information using network communication system (December, 2013). In other words, CMC is a communication between two or more people using various apps platform. CMC is not about the interaction among computer system but about how two people or more communicate using the computer programs. CMC also supports verbal and nonverbal communication in online reality same with face-to-face communication. Verbal elements in communication include words spoken while nonverbal elements include paralinguistic. Paralinguistic is a study regards symbols both vocal and non-vocal, besides verbal message, including body language, facial expression and speaking tone.

Paralinguistic usually used to complement verbal message delivery. Nonverbal communication through paralinguistic cues such as punctuation mark and emoticons are one of the mechanisms in building interpersonal relationship in text-based interaction (Liebman & Gergle, 2016).

Students of Communication Sciences Program Universitas Padjadjaran use paralinguistic cues when communicating on social media. There are various paralinguistic cues used in the social media interaction. Paralinguistic cues used in social media might help the receiver in the delivery process but also might cause miscommunication. This study aims to investigate the use of paralinguistic cues by students of Program Study Communication Sciences Universitas Padjadjaran and how miscommunication on social media. Research questions include student's understanding regards paralinguistic cues, types of social media used, examples of paralinguistic cues used, student's understanding regards miscommunication and common mistake, and student's experiences of miscommunication and common mistake on social media. This study might give contribution to the nonverbal communication feature developers on social media.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This is a qualitative study based on case study method. Logically, research design of case study is connecting the research questions with data and data analysis result to generate research conclusion (Baškarada, 2014). Primary data collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the students of Communication Sciences Program Universitas Padjadjaran class A and B of class 2015. After the FGD session, the students were asked to write down their personal experiences of using paralinguistic cues on social media and miscommunication events they have had on social media. Other data collected through observation and literature study. This study was an integrated part of the subject Mass Communication and Media in the period of August to December 2016. Triangulation was done by theories triangulation. Data analysis incorporated several stages that is describing experiences stage, describing meaning, and focus on the analysis (Zucker, 2009).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Students' Understanding of Paralinguistic Cues

This study was integrated with the subject of Mass Communication and Media, which one of the themes is CMC. At the beginning of the subject, students were introduced to the basic concept of CMC, paralinguistic cues and common mistake on social media. In the discussion session, students were asked regarding paralinguistic and they could explain the definition of it along with types of paralinguistic in accordance to the materials given before. Their understanding regards paralinguistic is significant to further analyze their experiences in using paralinguistic cues when communication on social media.

3.2. Social Media used by the Students

Data showed that most of the informants have more than three social media accounts. Social media used includes Line, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, WhatsApp, Path, Twitter, Telegram, and BBM. Informants admitted using paralinguistic cues when communication on social media.

3.3. Paralinguistic Cues used by the Students

Paralinguistic is a study of both vocal and non-vocal symbols, besides verbal message, that used to complement verbal and non-verbal message delivery. Paralinguistic includes body gestures,

facial expression, speaking tone, etc. In the context of CMC, there are five types of paralinguistic that is orthography, vocabularies, grammar, contents and texts, also paralinguistic and graphics (Department of Linguistics and English Language, n.d). Out of those five types of paralinguistic, only three types are mostly used by the informant that is orthography, vocabulary and graphics paralinguistic.

3.3.1. Orthography

Orthography is art and language science related to letter writing and spelling, represents voice language with written or printed symbols (Meriam Webster, 2017). In the context of CMC, orthography includes informal spelling (phonetic), fast writing and the absence of capital letter at the beginning of sentences or name writing.

Examples of informal spelling used by the students are luv, wuff (love), lucyu (love you), dunno (don't know), u (you), thx/tq (thank you), kay (okay), urwell (you're welcome), homey (home), plis (please), W (gue), coz (because), etc. While examples of fast writing are the word "thanks" becomes "thx" or "tq", the word "jadi" (so) becomes "jd", the word "nggak" (no) becomes "ga", "makan" (eat) becomes "mkn", "Sorry baru balas" (sorry late respon) becomes "sbb", etc. Then, there is word combining and letters elimination in a sentence, such as: cya soon (see you soon), gewd fo u (good for you), luv u 2 (love you too), B4 (before), km (kamu/you), etc. While the absence of capital letter in writing sentences (ignoring the use of capital letter) such as no capital letter in writing places' name, at the beginning of a sentence, people's name on social media, such as "i am at lottemart right now" or "alya, where are you?", etc. The reasons of orthography uses include faster responds needed, lessening effort in typing messages, time save, space save since there is social media with limited characters allowed such as Twitter, and to give shorter-simple message impression to the receiver.

3.3.2. Vocabularies

Including informal vocabularies, exclamation mark, and acronym.

Examples of informal vocabularies are "googling" indicates browsing using google, snapgram and "twittyland" indicates Twitter world. Examples of exclamation marks are "fast, now!" or "she is just leaving!". While examples of acronym used are imy (i miss you), brb (be right back), lol (laughing out loud), ftw (for the world), asap (as soon as possible), btw (by the way), otw (on the way), sbb (sorry baru balas/sorry late respon), tbh (to be honest), fyi (for your information), aka (also known as), asap (as soon as possible), oot (out of topic), ootd (outfit of the day), tgif (thanks God it's Friday), and many more. The reasons of exclamation mark and informal vocabularies use are to create more relax interaction and to cover some rude words in the sentences. One of the informants even admit that writing message using formal words feel like writing a paper, thus he used more relax language to communicate with his families and friends.

3.3.3. Paralinguistic and Graphic

Graphic paralinguistic includes letters with space, multi letters, alternative signs, exaggerating punctuation marks, and emoticon symbols. Example of letters and space is "M E R D E K A". Examples of multi letters are okeeee (oke), iyaaaaa (yes), ayoooo (common), tidaaaakk (no), kapaaaaan (when), dimanaaaa (where), makasih yaaaa (thank you), boleeeeeeh (can), yuuuuuk (common), nantiiiiii (letter) or at the beginning of sentences, such as 'agiiiiiiii, lagi dimana?' (where are you) or "iiiihhhh, kok gitu sih?" (whats?). Alternative signs usually used to correct typo or emphasize on something, and then there is punctuation mark exaggeration, such as "hah???!".

Serius???" (are you serious???) or "tidak boleh!!!"(No!!!). Meanwhile, emoticons and combining punctuation marks used to express feeling, such as "^^" to express smiley face, " :* " to kiss, " :(" to express sadness, " <3 " to express love, "☺" or "☹" or " :)" (smile), " :))))))" to express laughing out loud.

The reason of using paralinguistic graphic is because there are expressions cannot be expressed in words. The use of paralinguistic graphic gives more polite, friendlier impression, more convincing, emphasizing messages, gives impression of face-to-face communication, give relax impression to the new persons we communicate with, to express sweetness and likeness, to express one's thought and feeling, emphasize feeling, to get the other person's empathy, to be simple, to express current mood, such as sad, happy, or so-so. Informants admitted that when they write "yes" and "yeessss" would result in different respond for the other person. A short respond such as "yes" would be interpreted as we are angry or not in a good mood. A student admitted that he seldom uses graphic paralinguistic in order to avoid message misperception because of those acronyms, and that is how he speaks through texts. Furthermore, he explained that graphic paralinguistic does not reduce the meaning of the words, thus it could minimalize misunderstanding in interpreting the words typed. In other words, graphic paralinguistic emphasizes on each word thus it will be easier to comprehend and more communicative.

Paralinguistic communication means using manner in speaking to deliver message. Communication attitude defined as one's expression in communicating both oral and written. Paralinguistic interpretation depends on the social context, and in the context of CMC, paralinguistic evaluated differently by communicators based on the group or individual identity (Lea & Spears, 1992). In the context of CMC, paralinguistic cues such as spelling or typing errors and punctuation marks are part of the message associated with the emphasize of personal attributes of the sender (Lea & Spears, 1992).

3.4. Miscommunication on Social Media

In this study, students already have the main idea of miscommunication on social media thus they understand fully the concept of miscommunication in the context of CMC.

Hereby some of the students' personal experiences on miscommunication: 1) When they deliver ambiguous sentences and forget to insert punctuation marks such as coma or dot thus the receivers cannot understand their message; 2) when they are unable to send non-verbal message such as facial expressions, body language, and gestures; 3) when they are not thorough in reading messages; 4) when the messages are ambiguous; 5) when using wrong emoticons; 6) when not replying to some messages considered as being arrogant; 7) egocentrism, a tendency to not care of the other person's condition, want to be heard and understood without understanding others. In this case, a student told a story when she needed her best friend to answer her question as soon as possible but then her best friend replied to her hours later and not even answered the question and it happened to influence their friendship in the future.

Next, there is common miscommunication and there are four common miscommunications usually occur to social media users that is flaming, lurking, spamming, bombing and identity deception. Below are the students' experiences of it.

3.4.1. Flaming

In the context of CMC, flaming defined as an inappropriate action (Thompson & Ahn, 1992) causing conflict acceleration (Rice, 1990). There are several action types considered inappropriate

in CMC that is ethical violations, inappropriate language, violation of news group conventions, violation of Usenet conventions, factual errors, bandwidth piggery, and incorrect or novice use of technology (McLaughlin, Osborne, & Smith, 1995)

Most of the students never done flaming but some of them have seen and followed some flaming cases on social media. For instance, when they play online video games usually there are gamers who cursing and swearing. Only some students admitted to do flaming that is:

- a. Ethical violations by posting personal information of someone online without asking for permission. For example, a student recorded his friend sleeping, eating while in the class, then uploaded it on snapchat without that person's permission. And there is informant who posted screenshot of chatting conversation with the other on snapgram without permission. Although it was for fun but they admitted that it was categorized as flaming.
- b. Factual errors, usually because of typo or wrong vocabularies used, and then there is short respond, which result in the other person feels wronged or even offended.
- c. Inappropriate language, an informant admitted using fake account to critic and mock an Indonesian politician on social media.

3.4.2. Lurking

Lurking happens when we get in to a discussion forum but seldom or even never participates in the forum. This action includes seldom or even never read the message in the forum or group, never write or respond to the discussions in the forum (Marvin, 1995). Lurking can also be considered as spy action where someone only hears or reads without the others know his/her existence (silent reader). There are a lot of students admitted lurking with various reasons, among others are the topic in the group is not important, discomfort condition of the group, choose to not jump in to discussion without any clue or knowledge regarding it, happened to participate once but there was no respond from the others, there is more important matter than the group, focusing on work, and no opinions needed to deliver. Some informants admitted that although they are only lurking but anytime their name mentioned, or the group needs their participation, or when there is something they want to tell, they will eventually participate and exist in the group. Furthermore, when they are comfortable within the group, they will be more active participate in it.

3.4.3. Spamming and Bombing

Spamming is an action of sending message continuously that unwanted by the receiver (Marvin, 1995). Bombing is one of spamming type. There are two categorizes of bombing that is mass mail bombing, which is a scripted or fake email sent to hundreds even thousands of email address, and mailing list bombing, which is an email sent to all subscribers (mailing list members) and receivers have to unsubscribe from the mailing list to stop getting emails from this group (RIVA, 2001). The informants admitted done spamming and bombing on social media by sending wrong contents continuously and create chaos within the group. One of the informants admitted that spamming done to attract people attention to read and respond the message he sent. The other informant even admitted that he done spamming only to get his friend to chat with him and this kind of attitude results in being kicked out of the group or being unfriended. This case taught them to be more careful on social media.

3.4.4. Identity Deception

CMC enables the parties involved in the communication using fake identity. The use of fake identity depends on the communication motive, security support, faith, etc. Identity deception includes hiding real identity, faking gender, and identity imitation (Mabry, 1997).

There are some informants admitted doing identity deception, as below:

- a. Hiding real identity by creating two different accounts on the same social media platform. One account is for the real identity while the other one is for the hidden one. The reason creating other account with hidden identity is because it is used to follow online shop accounts, to stalk some private accounts, and to critic or mock the others.
- b. Faking age, when an informant was still underage and want to create a social media account. The informant then submitted his personal data by faking the age in order to be able to have a social media account.

4. CONCLUSION

Paralinguistic cues used by students of Communication Sciences Program Universitas Padjadjaran include orthography, vocabularies, and graphic paralinguistic, while grammar and content and text are seldom used. The reason of using paralinguistic cues is in order to express their messages clearer, to emphasize important messages, saving more time and effort in typing messages. Meanwhile, the common miscommunication usually done is lurking. Some of the students do some actions, which meant to be for fun, but categorized into flaming. Students do spamming in order to get group members' attention, to get their message responded. Identity deception was done to enable them stalking and following online shop accounts freely. Only one informant admitted to hide his identity to enable him deliver critic to a politician and only one informant admitted to fake his age in order to be able to have a social media account on his own. These results indicate that most of the students of Communication Sciences Program Universitas Padjadjaran have understood the whole benefit of verbal and nonverbal communication features on social media and fully understand communication ethics on social media (netiquette).

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