

Emphatic Language in Instagram

Alfina Gustiany Siregar*

Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan,
Universitas Quality Berastagi, Indonesia

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*Corresponding Email: viennarmya@gmail.com

Abstract

This article aims to find out the components of empathy contained in Instagram. Problems with two components and four aspects of empathy contained in Instagram account comments. The theory used is Davis' empathy theory, namely 2 components of empathy, the first is the affective component which has two aspects, namely empathic concern and personal distress. The second is the cognitive component, namely perspective taking and fantasy empathy. The data was collected through the Instagram comments of the @ataliapr account. The method used is descriptive qualitative. This study concludes that there are two components that are most widely used, namely the affective component, empathic concern by 42% and personal distress by 39%. Then followed by the cognitive component, namely perspective taking by 13% and fantasy empathy by 6%. This is because the caption on @ataliapr's post touches the hearts of the readers.

Keywords: Emphaty; Social Media; Instagram.

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INTRODUCTION

Empathy is a person's ability to understand and feel, take a point of view and try to solve other people's problems. Bullmer (2015) argues that empathy is a process that occurs when a person can feel the feelings of others and capture the meaning of those feelings, then communicated with such sensitivity that shows that the person really understands the feelings of others. In harmony with Bullmer, Goleman (2001) states emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize the feelings of self and others to motivate oneself and manage emotions well in oneself and relationships. Empathy refers to sensitivity, understanding one's feelings or psychological state (Smith, 2006). Empathy according to Herbert in Eisenberg (2005) is a form of capacity to take the role of others and adopt the perspectives that others have and connect them with oneself. There is also a cognitive component or ability to understand, with an emphasis on an individual's ability to understand how one perceives the world through the roles of others.

Meanwhile, according to Baron and Byrne (2005), empathy is an ability that a person has to feel the emotional state of others, feel sympathetic, try to solve problems by taking the perspective of others. Feeling empathy can be a way to change yourself for the better. Hasyim & Farid (2012) argue that empathy is a deep psychological state, a person puts one's own thoughts and feelings into the thoughts and feelings of others known as well as unknown people. Based on the description, it can be concluded that empathy is a person's ability to understand the mental and emotional state of others, in another sense also able to recognize, feel, give perception to the mind and emotions of others.

In Davis' opinion (1980) in Taufik (2012) empathy is multidimensional, consisting of: (a) fantasy empathy, which is a person's tendency to change themselves into the feelings and actions of imaginary characters found in books, movies, or games; (b) perspective taking, which is behavior that is not oriented to self-interest but to the interests of others. This ability is positively related to emotional reactions and prosocial behavior; (c) emphatic concern is an orientation that reflects warmth, feelings of sympathy and care for others who are in distress / afflicted by misfortune; (d) Personal distress, is self-oriented personal anxiety and anxiety in dealing with unpleasant situations experienced by others. Based on these four aspects, it can be divided into two components. First is the cognitive component. This component focuses on the intellectual ability of an individual who can understand the perspective (point of view) of others precisely. Individuals can see differences in various emotions (one of which is empathy) experienced by others and accept the perspective of others. The cognitive components are fantasy empathy and perspective taking.

Fantasy empathy is the ability of individuals to imaginatively transform themselves into the thoughts, actions and feelings experienced by characters found in fiction books, games, movies, and so on. This refers to the ability of an individual as if experiencing an imagined imaginary state of character. Perspective taking is an individual's ability to take another person's psychological perspective spontaneously. Individuals can understand the perspectives and views of others in their daily lives. This ability focuses on the interests of others, not oneself. Setiawati, et al. (2007) explained that the cognitive component in empathy includes a person's ability to be able to know, recognize, understand and understand what happens to others.

The second is the affective component. This component is the ability to understand and respond appropriately to the emotions of others. Individuals feel concerned about the well-being of others or can feel a feeling of pressure from seeing the difficulties experienced by others. The affective component is emphatic concern and personal distress.

Emphatic concern is the ability of individuals who are oriented towards others in the form of feelings of pity and care for the situation of others who are in difficulty. This ability also makes the individual motivate others to reduce the difficulty. Personal distress is a condition in which individuals focus on feelings of worry, annoyance, distress, anger and anxiety caused by the attention and emotions experienced by others. In another sense, personal anxiety results from reactions to difficult circumstances or suffering that others are experiencing. Mercer and Clayton (2012) identify the affective component in empathy as feeling of suffering that is also felt when



others suffer, share in feeling sympathy, and care for the person concerned, in such a way that there is a desire to try to help alleviate their suffering.

Empathy is closely related to the language of its users. In addition to communicating in oral speech, empathy can also be used in written form. Communication is very important to interact with others, one of the goals is to provide information (Siregar, 2012). Communication can be through any tool, as long as the communicator uses the same language, or they know the message being conveyed. Media communication involves various ways of public interaction, including daily activities of written and oral discourse, its linguistic and extralinguistic special characteristics, impact on the recipient and dissemination of media discourse messages through alternative understandings provided by the recipient individual (Rasuzova in Nurfarida, 2016).

Sociolinguistics is the study of language related to social conditions. According to Nababan in Chinita (2020), sociolinguistics is a science that studies aspects of community language, in which it examines the differences in variations contained in the language according to the factors or causes of the language in society. Sociolinguistics does not focus on the structure of a language but focuses on how the language is used in the context of its society and culture. One of the sociolinguistic studies is language variation. Chaer and Agustina in Chinita (2020) divide language variations into four, namely: in terms of speakers, aspects of use, aspects of formality and aspects of facilities. Facilities include spoken and written language.

Media in communication is a tool to express what the author experiences or feels. One of the means of communicating is through social media. Social media is a media that accommodates cooperation among users who produce content (Mandibergh, 2012). While Meike and Young (2012), define social media as a convergence between personal communication in the sense of sharing among individuals (to be shared one to one) and public media to share with anyone without any individual specificity. In this era, social media has an important role in communicating, in addition to the use of telephones or meeting in person, because social media makes it easier for individuals to connect with others and find information. According to Tenia (2017) social media has the following functions: 1) Looking for news, information and knowledge; 2) Seeking entertainment; 3) Online communication; 4) Mobilizing people; 5) A means of sharing. Media users can share their feelings through social media.

One of the means of communicating is social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, and so on. Instagram is one of those social media that has many users. According to Kaplan & Haelin (2014), Instagram is a group of applications using the internet base and web.2.0 technologies that allow the exchange and creation of user generated content. In line with that, Instagram is a social media application that allows users to take photos and videos, apply digital filters (giving effects to photos) and share them to various social media including Instagram itself (Wifalin, 2016).

Instagram is an application that contains photos and videos uploaded by users. In addition, Instagram also provides an instant way to share daily activities called Stories. In Stories there are also photo and video features. Instagram provides users an instant way to capture and share their life moments with friends through a series (manipulation of filters) of photos and videos (Hu, et al., 2014). In addition to displaying daily activities and creating images, Instagram also displays ads and work businesses. In Instagram photos or videos, comments can be given on the "comment" button and show expressions about the post through the "like" button. Currently, many public figures use Instagram to communicate with others, such as artists, politicians to presidents. Other users who comment on someone's Instagram account are categorized under written verbal communication due to indirect use of language. There are various Instagram features, such as Post, Stories, Reels, Live, Shop and so on. In this study, researchers will examine one of Instagram's features, namely the comment feature that can be used by other users to comment on posted photos.

There are several other studies regarding Instagram. One of them is Yulianti (2018) who analyzed the use of language on @lambeturah Instagram account and found that linguistic aspects in the form of diction, the use of sentences, and the selection of sources in direct quotes used by @lambeturah accounts put characters in the content of their news as negative representations. In terms of discourse aspects, accounts that have many followers and are close to various circles, have



access to raise news that if it requires a lot of response from the community to be handled immediately. From the aspect of social practice, it plays a role in influencing the opinion of the Indonesian people. Examining different things, Martha (2021) found that self-disclosure through Instagram stories depends on mood (mood) and tends to be due to the dyadic effect and depends on the personality of an individual. Self-disclosure is done with the aim of expressing feelings and self-development to gain self-awareness as social control, as well as to increase the familiarity of a relationship.

Another study on the relationship between addiction to accessing Instagram and social skills of Padang State University students (Sari and Rinaldi, 2019). A total of 50 psychology students were studied. The results showed that student addiction was high, social skills were moderate and there was a significant negative relationship between addiction to accessing Instagram and social skills at Padang State University. The higher the addiction to accessing the Instagram social network in psychology students, the lower their social skills.

In this study, researchers wanted to examine posts on Atalia Praratya's Instagram account. She is the wife of Ridwan Kamil, the governor of West Java. In a photo and caption post @ataliapr June 2, 2022, he let go of his eldest son, Emmeril Kamil, who was washed away in the Aare river, Switzerland. In the post, there are many comments from thousands of people that contain empathy. With this background, researchers wanted to analyze the language of empathy in Atalia Praratya's Instagram comments.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used qualitative descriptive method. The descriptive method in this study was used to describe the form or type of language that means empathy in the user's comment column on Instagram. The data in this study are words, phrases, and expressions that show empathy in @ataliapr Instagram account posts. This research uses data sources in the form of documents, namely 100 comments from users on Instagram @ataliapr on June 2, 2022, that contain empathy. Data collection is carried out by means of documentation. The documentation used in this study was copy-pasting user comments on Instagram @ataliapr.

The steps used to analyze the data are a) reading user comments, then collecting comments that are included in empathic communication, b) identifying sentences containing empathy based on criteria of cognitive components and affective components, c) classifying sentences that use fantasy empathy, perspective taking, emphatic concern and personal distress , d) analyze and describe sentence forms using fantasy empathy, perspective taking, emphatic concern and personal distress find the most empathy component used by Instagram users in comments of @ataliapr account posts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data was obtained from @ataliapr's Instagram account on June 2, 2022.



Gambar 1. Foto pada akun instagram @ataliapr

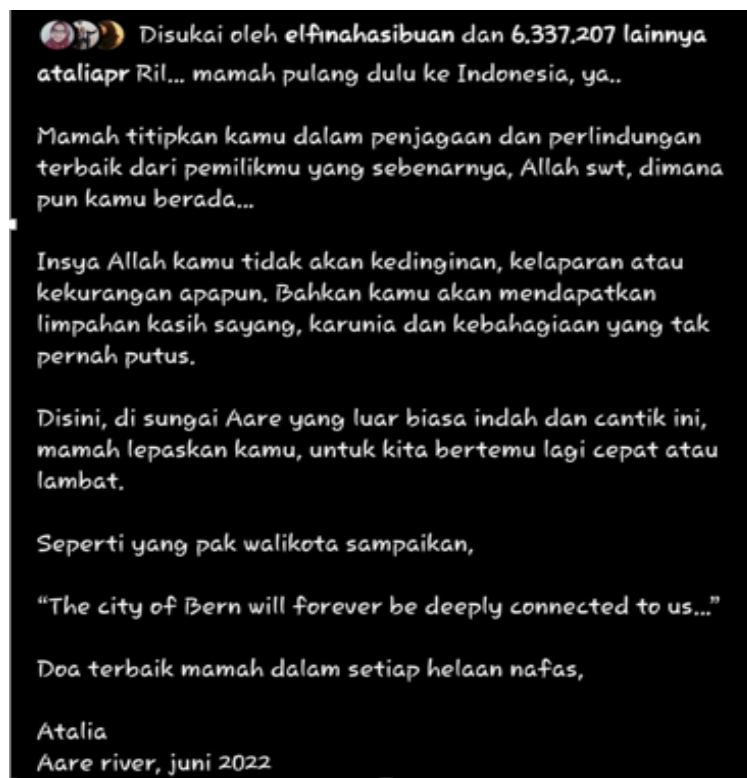


Figure 2. Instagram account caption @ataliapr

In picture 1, @ataliapr uploaded a photo with Mr. Ridwan Kamil's husband and daughter Zara facing the Aare River where her son drowned and had not been found at the time. Meanwhile, picture 2 shows a caption about Mrs. Atalia's feelings. The post received 6,337,207 likes and 151,342 comments. Many netizens' comments convey condolences, enthusiasm, motivation, sadness, anxiety, and so on. In this case, researchers only focused on comments that contained empathy. The analyzed comments were 100 comments containing an empathy component.

From the data analyzed, it was found that comments containing the most empathy components were affective components, namely emphatic concern reached 42% and personal distress 39%. Then the cognitive component, namely perspective taking 13% and fantasy empathy by 6%.

The emphatic concern component is found in the comments:

“Ummigaaaaasgalery: Lahaula wala quwata ilabillah. Tiada daya upaya kecuali dari Allah. Semoga Allah memberikan kesabaran, kekuatan, keikhlasan bagi ibu dan juga bapak serta keluarga yg di tinggal pergi. Not knowing is hard semoga Allah memberikan jawabanNya dalam hening malam ketika terlelap tidur. Do’a yang terbaik menyertai ibu dan bapak sekeluarga.”

There are also comments from:

“Rahmawati.ritonga: Bismillah ibuk pasti kuat buk setiap yang ebrnyawa pasti akan pulang ke asalnya tapi dengan cara yang berbeda beda mungkin ini sudah jalan kak eril seperti ini buk kita doakan supaya kak eril segera ditemukan amiin”.

Then comments from:

Silvianiafhh: Bu @ataliapr tetap sabar dan tawakal dan harus selalu yakin keajaiban Allah itu selalu ada. Saya masih yakin kalo bang eril masih hidup bu itu skdar insting saya. Tapi tetap harus berserah diri kepada allah. Semoga keluarga diberi ketabahan dan sehat selalu.

The above comments are some examples of the *emphatic concern* components found.

The second most common component of *personal distress* (39%), can be found in the following comments:

Juwitamapata: 😭 ibu syng...anak adalah titipan Allah, sy juga pernah Allah titipkan pd thn 1981,,kemudian Allah ambil kembali titipanNYA.di thn 2005.ank ku wafat di usia 24 thn. 😭Sy sudah merasakan apa yg ibu rasakan kini.hanya dgn sabar dan ikhlas.yakin Allah berikan yg terbaik..Bismillah biidznillah..insyaAllah ibu sekeluarga kuat.

aninda.kalin: Setiap membaca berita tentang keluarga bapak RK.. air mata tak henti menetes.. sampe terisak Isak di manapun saya berada.. yang kuat ya ibu dan bapak RK 😭 semoga ananda Husnul khatimah.

ntan_3o: Sumpah mewek baget malem² dari dlu pengen ngerasain kasih sayang seorang ibu liat postingan ini tambah mewek ap lagi liat story' ny 😭😭

The third component is *perspective taking* at 13%. Comments containing *perspective taking* can be seen in the comments as follows:

Silvianiafhh: Bu @ataliapr tetap sabar dan tawakal dan harus selalu yakin keajaiban Allah itu selalu ada. Saya masih yakin kalo bang eril masih hidup bu itu skdar insting saya . Tapi tetap harus berserah diri kepada allah . Semoga keluarga diberi ketabahan dan sehat selalu.

Mardayantihusyeyin: Ya Allah...sgt terharu sekali membaca tulisan seorang ibu yg kuat bathinnya dalam menerima cobaan hidup dg kehilangan seorang anak yg sgt disayangi... Tp Allah lbh menyayanginya... Insha Allah anak yg Soleh akan mndaoatkn yg terbaik disisiNya. Aamiin ya rabbal allamiin.

Pyrotigero: Ibu dan bapak telah melakukan tugas paling berat di dunia ini, yaitu mendidik anak. Tidak semua orang tua mampu melakukannya. Namun ibu dan bapak telah menunjukkan hal itu. Dan surga yang abadi merindukan salah satu malaikatnya dan tak mau menanti lebih lama lagi untuk memanggilnya, kerelaan dan keikhlasan bpk @ridwankamil dan ibu @ataliapr akan melapangkan jalan aa Eril. Mes plus grandes condoléances pour votre famille.

The last component that has the least empathy component is *fantasy empathy*, which is 6%. Comments containing these components can be seen from the comments as follows:

intanayu_a09: Penglihatan saya itu sungai are memakan tumbal soalnya yang tenggelam kebanyakan cwo semoga cepet ketemu jasad eril apapun kondisinya semoga segera d temukan Amin ya rabbal Al-Amin.

intanalnsn03: Mungkin ga sih eril diselamatkan sama orang² pedalaman yang ga punya sosmed ataupun media² berita?

revinaldi7: @ataliapr Walaupun tubuh jasadnya sudah tidak ada, namun Rohnya masih hidup yang selalu ada di antara keluarga dan berbicara dengan kalian, walaupun keluarga tidak bisa melihat dan mendengarnya .. begitulah yang saya lihat.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the study, it can be concluded that as many as 100 Instagram post comments @ataliapr there is a cognitive empathy component and an affective empathy



component. The most components are affective components, namely emphatic concern by 42% and personal distress by 39%. Then followed by the cognitive component, namely perspective taking at 13% and fantasy empathy at 6%. This is because the caption on the post @ataliapr that touches the hearts of the reader. The conclusion of this study is that many Instagram users use empathetic language when commenting on the account of someone who is grieving.

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