The Analysis of Person Reference Used by Police Investigators in Interviewing a Suspect in a General Crime Case

Dhion Meitreya Vidhias*, R. Dian Dia-an Muniroh, Wawan Gunawan Eri Kurniawan, Budi Hermawan, Yanti Wirza, and Teni Hadiyani

CONAPLIN 15
27-28 September 2022
INTRODUCTION

Person reference in police interviews is important:

• to establish one’s or another’s position within a given dialogue
• to provide context for one’s or another’s social standing (Ewing, 2015; Ewing & Djenar, 2019)
• to humanize or to mark guilty (Chaemsaithong, 2019)
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This research examines how two Indonesian police investigators addressed a suspect.

METHOD

Qualitative approach
Mock crime paradigm
THREE FEATURES OF FORMALITY
(Trudgill, 2000)

Person Reference

Vocabulary

Discourse Particles

Person reference in a sentence can either increase or decrease the significance of the meaning attached to the person being referred.
By considering the three dimensions of formality (i.e., respectfulness, professionalism, and friendliness), we can say that the reference of *Bapak/Ibu/Pak/Nyonya*, for example, meets the quality of the respectfulness.
In Indonesia, the interlocutor’s age plays an essential role in determining the variety of language used in conversation. It means that *Bapak/Ibu/Pak/Nyonya* is sensitive to age and social status, which in turn indicates that it is a respectful pronoun.

Aziz, 2000; Aziz, 2003b
Van Leeuwen (2008) gives a helpful theoretical framework for thinking about the power of names and the ideologies they represent.
METHOD

01 Qualitative Approach
Recorded conversations

02 Mock-Crime Paradigm
To obtain a corpus of investigative records

03 Content Analysis
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Nomination
Pak Asep, Bapak, Pak, Asep Supriyatna, Saudara

Categorization
Manajer, muslim

Impersonalization
Jambaknya, mendorongnya, mendorong
Penyidik A : *Selamat sore pak Asep, kumaha damang?*
Investigator A : Good afternoon, **Pak Asep**, how are you??
Penyidik A : *Terima kasih pak Asep nyak sudah datang sudah memenuhi surat panggilan ya.*
Investigator A : Thank you, **Pak Asep**, for coming and already fulfilling the summons.

Example (1) above shows the use of the semi-formal greeting “Pak Asep” as a form of the principle of politeness. If we look more closely at the interview data, investigators often change the choice of person reference. The most frequent change is the use of greeting words that fall into the semi-formal category to become formal, as seen in data (2)
Penyidik A : Terima kasih pak asep nyak sudah datang sudah memenuhi surat panggilan ya. .hhh ... Tidak usah pak asep nutup nutupi atau berbelit-belit itulah salah satunya bentuk kerjasama yang saya inginkan dari bapak .hhh toh ini juga nanti untuk memperlancar proses dari bapak sendiri ya pak ya, oke. ... Boleh saya mintakan identitas bapak, nanti bapak sampaikan secara jelas, ehh bapak==nama asep siapa pak?

Example (2) shows that the investigator changed the semi-formal greeting “Pak Asep” to the formal greeting “Bapak” and “Pak”. In this example, it appears that investigators are experiencing confusion in using the correct address for a suspect. Semi-formal greetings allow investigators to get interview conditions that are quite relaxed and not stressful. However, the suspect’s status attached to the interlocutor made investigators feel that the interview process did not need to be too relaxed. Investigators tried to appear to have a distant relationship with the suspect by using the greeting words “Bapak” or “Pak” without mentioning the name of the person concerned.
Data (6) shows that investigators seem increasingly confused and inconsistent in using person reference. In one long speech, the investigator changed the greeting from “bapak” to “saudara” and then to “pak”. The use of the “saudara” was also found quite often until the end of the interview process was completed. This happened because there was an assumption from investigators that the suspect was younger than the investigator. The word “saudara” is also considered acceptable because the word “bapak” functions as a protector, not doing violence as the suspect did.
Penyidik A : Huuh. (.) Apakah selama saudara berumah tangga dengan Novi, Ibu Novi (.) saudara memperlakukan Ibu Novi sebagaimana mestinya sebagai seorang istri? Jelaskan

Penyidik A : Ndak? Ndak bilang? (0.13) Agar saudara jelaskan secara detail luka akibat kekerasan fisik yang saudara lakukan kepada novi.
In this study, the second police investigator used a consistent person reference from the beginning to the end of the interview process. The second investigator used the person reference “Bapak” and “Pak”, which showed the principle of politeness and a friendly atmosphere.

However, the first investigator used a fairly diverse person reference when compared to the second police investigator. At the beginning of the interview, the first police investigator still used a person reference “Bapak” and “Pak” that still showed the principle of politeness and created a friendly atmosphere.
The nuances of “inappropriate”, “impolite”, to “mark guilty”, were felt when the first investigator said “saudara (metaphorical brother/sister)” to the suspect. Muniroh (2019) said that the person reference “saudara (metaphorical brother/sister)” was considered inappropriate by participants because it did not convey politeness and created distance.

Wittermans (1967) also argues that in some ways, “saudara (metaphorical brother/sister)” could mean 'comrades'; however, it is generally used ‘to address a stranger of unknown name and rank, who is not old enough to be addressed as “father” or “mother”’. 
A similar opinion was expressed by Flannery (2013) who said that you also function as a title equivalent to 'Mr'. Therefore, if a police interviewer addressed a suspect as brother 'metaphorical brother/sister', it would suggest that the interviewer did not consider the suspect a friend or associate whose name, rank and age was known.

With several statements regarding the use of the word “saudara (metaphorical brother/sister)”, it can be said that the first investigator did not act humanely by prioritizing the principle of decency but instead seemed to blame. This is because the first investigator chose to distance himself from the suspect.
Investigative interviews are a series of investigative activities carried out by the police. This is done to seek in-depth and comprehensive information about an ongoing criminal case. In this study, the research team found that police investigators used person reference that was included in the nomination category, especially those with formal nuances.

The use of person reference who have a formal feel is following the procedures of the police. It aims to uphold the principle of politeness. However, in this study, although the investigators also used a semi-formal tone of reference, the research team found that investigators still tried to show a considerable social distance between the investigator and the suspect. The status of the suspect plays a significant role in the investigator’s selection of the word indicating a person.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

West Java Regional Police

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
Our Team

Dhion Meitreya Vidhiasi

R. Dian Dia-an Muniroh, M.Hum., Ph.D.
Our Team

Wawan Gunawan, M.Ed., Ph.D

Eri Kurniawan, M.A., Ph.D
Our Team

Dr. Budi Hermawan, M.Pc

Yanti Wirza, M.Pd., M.A., Ph.D
Our Team

Teni Hadiyani
THANK YOU