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The Norm Establishment in WhatsApp Group Conversations

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Abstract

This linguistics study aims to observe the development of norms in WhatsApp Groups (WAGs). Over the years, linguists have devoted their time to theorizing norms of im/politeness evaluations and linguistic interactions in computer-mediated communication (CMC). However, the norms of virtual interactions have not gained adequate attention. This study systematically documented and examined the conversations of 539 members of three WAGs to describe the norms of virtual group communication. The data indicated four sources of WAGs norms: the aims of creating the group, framing unmarked behaviors, and framing positive or negative evaluations of members' utterances or actions. The members' alignments toward non-virtual individual and social norms also significantly affect their negotiating WAG norms. In the stages of the norming process, WAGs tend to experience conflicts due to interpersonal differences. These disputes are likely to disrupt the group's performance or predispose some members. Theoretically, group development is comprised of formation, conflicts, norming, and performance. Depending on the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the member's background, WAGs do not necessarily experience conflicts in the norming process. However, some of them tend to leap the stages from formation to performance.

***Keywords**: im/politeness evaluations; norms; virtual communication; WhatsApp Group conversations*

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Introduction

The studies of social media dialogues have greatly interested many linguists, particularly in Pragmatics (e.g. Bolander & Locher, 2015; Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2014a, 2014b; Theodoropoulou, 2015; Zhang & Kramarae, 2014, etc.). Pragmatics studies of post-2000 have focused on micro norms of im/politeness evaluations (Locher & Watts, 2005). However, the study related to im/politeness in *WhatsApp* conversations is treated with negligence. Even though Waterloo, Baumgartner, Peter, and

Valkenburg (2018) compared users' behaviors on WhatsApp to the other three platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, they studied positive and negative emotions. Therefore, this linguistics study examines the emergence of micro-norms in *WhatsApp* group (WAG) conversation and the interference of social norms of traditional (non-virtual) interactions. Micro-norms refer to norms negotiated and established at the micro-level, e.g. in a particular interaction or discourse. (Locher & Watts, 2005)

This study expands the Bettenhausen and Murnighans' study (1985), which focused on the patterns of norms in a new group which has not yet gained "pre-established habits" (Terkourafi, 2005). Bettenhausen and Murnighan argued that the uncertainty about proper behavior causes the group members to refer to similar past experiences; in the early stages of interaction, the group members depend on "societal rationality" (Terkourafi, 2005, p. 250) to decide on appropriate behavior in a new context by consulting similar past experiences. Furthermore, Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985) indicated three patterns of behavior, such as (1) changing their belief openly, (2) implicitly agreeing to the group's moral evaluation (evaluation of member(s) toward other members' utterances or actions, e.g., polite/ disrespectful, appropriate/ inappropriate, etc. which is based on group norms, e.g., polite/ disrespectful, appropriate/ inappropriate, etc.), or (3) imposing individual interpretations on the group. Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985) collected conservative (non-virtual) interaction data of a newly formed group of 19 decision-makers. In contrast to their study, this research aims to observe virtual group conversations to determine the micro norms of WAGs' conversations.

Group development involves four general stages: forming, storming, norming, and performing (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985, p. 350; Tuckman, 1965, p. 396). Furthermore, Tuckman stated that forming the group constitutes orientation, identifying the boundaries of members' behaviors or testing, and creating dependency rapports with leaders, pre-existing standards, and other group members. The second process may generate "conflicts and polarization around interpersonal issues." When the group overcomes the resistance, it reaches the third stage of norming. The fourth Tuckman's stage is when the group resolves the structural issues and supports task implementation.

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)

Linguistics studies on *WhatsApp* are an integral part of the rapid development of CMC. The prototype e-mail exchange recorded at the beginning of 1960 indicated the earlier use of CMC (Thurlow, Lengel, & Tomic, 2004 p. 15). Herring (2013, p. 13) stated that some pioneering studies on CMC were published in the 1980s, such as Baron (1984) studying the effects of communication medium on language production. Since the 1990s, linguists have begun studying CMC seriously, and, presently, it has "grown dramatically" (Herring, 2013, p. 3). Murray (1990) indicated the features of CMC conversations, i.e., "speech-like native," having no greeting and pre-closing (e.g., O.K, bye), and omission to reduce typing time. Ferrara, Brunner, and Whittemore (1991) suggested that "Interactive Written Discourse" is hybrid and shows both written and spoken language characteristics. During this period, the familiar form of CMC was e-mail and electronic messages (Murray, 1990, p. 42).

The subsequent linguistics studies of post-2000 have brought new interests (i.e., im/politeness) in the development of CMC studies. Haugh (2008) analyzed linguistic CMC data to theorize misunderstanding in communication. Davies (2018) used online comments relating to the Soto Court hearing to propose "classification, assessment, and argumentatively" in evaluating im/politeness utterances. Davies found three categories of metapragmatic behavior, namely classification, assessment, and argumentativity. In 2010, Locher and seven other linguists started to address im/politeness in CMC (2010, p. 4). They collected the data from conversations in e-mails (Haugh, 2010b), online newspapers (Upadhyay, 2010), interactive websites (Planchenault, 2010), bulletin board systems (Nishimura, 2010), online fora (Angouri & Tseliga, 2010), and chat (Darics, 2010). Haugh

found two factors that affect the discursivity of the evaluation of impoliteness: different perceptions of norms and the position of commentators vis-à-vis these evaluations. Upadhyay shows that linguistic impoliteness can be used to "communicate disagreement", "argue against out-group's ideological views", and "discredit ideological opponents". In virtual communication, while Planchenault found that a new member must consider the norms of the group, Nishimura showed that violation of "unmarked norm of linguistic practices" (e.g. the use of honorifics) could cause "community dissolution". This study is different from the findings. While the last two studies analyzed the possible effects of aligning with or violating group norms, it focuses on establishing virtual group norms.

The rapid development of information technology has brought new members to CMC, e.g., *Facebook, WhatsApp*, etc. In 2015, a special issue addressed the im/politeness on Facebook and discussion boards (Locher, Bolander, & Höhn, 2015). Theodoropoulou (2015) did a frame analysis of politeness used in Greek birthday wishes. The other two papers explained the relationship between politeness and identity (Bolander & Locher, 2015; Haugh, Chang, & Kádár, 2015). Regarding *WhatsApp*, Waterloo et al. (2018) researched contrast expressions of emotion on *Facebook, Twitter, Instagram,* and *WhatsApp*.

Concerning the definition of CMC, it involves four sides, namely people engaging in the process of communication, computers as the media of human interaction, contexts, and purposes (J. December, 1997, p. 15; Thurlow et al., 2004). Those involved in an interaction mediated by technology are meta-participants (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 84). Furthermore, the computer in CMC has broader functions, including calculation and typing tools, and "a platform for the operating system and software applications to support network data transmission and user applications" (J. December, 1996, pp. 20-21). The second function of the computer makes it possible to include other gadgets for the same tasks in Linguistics CMC studies. Locher (2010, p. 1) uses 'computer' to refer to all means of mediation in communication, e.g., computers/internet, mobile phones, video conferencing, etc.

The latest development in CMC is communication applications. One famous exchange information application is *WhatsApp*, with approximately two billion users in 2020 (Pertiwi, 2020). In Indonesia, 83 per cent of internet users (171 million) or more than 141 million people are using *WhatsApp* (Barokah, 2019). It provides text-based messages (e.g., private conversation between two people and group discussion or WAG exchanges), data sharing, voice and video calls. The data indicated the massive influence of CMC, particularly *WhatsApp*, in social interactions.

Norms

The discussion of human behaviors, including linguistic interactions, apart from norms, only takes place in imagination (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985, p. 350). Studies indicate that the norms exist in group development (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985, p. 350; Tuckman, 1965, p. 396).

Technology development has brought human beings to live in two social realities: traditional and virtual societies. The second social group have emerged "from a surprising intersection of human needs and technology" (Shayo, Olfman, Iriberri, & Igbaria, 2007, p. 206). WAGs are members of cybernetic organizations of virtual societies. Virtual has become a term for defining a society in which members do not have to live, meet, or work together directly ("face to face") in order to produce goods, services, or maintain social relationships (Shayo et al., 2007, p. 187). As a virtual organization, *WhatsApp* enables WAG's members to efficiently and effectively communicate resources and achieve organizational goals.

WAGs, like other community groups, commonly have moral orders to maintain proper social behaviors. Garfinkel (1964, p. 225; 1967, p. 33) stated that moral orders in society are "natural facts of life" for determining right and wrong. Moral orders are rules that regulate the daily activities of certain members of society. The members are

sometimes not aware of their presence, "perceivably natural normal courses of action," which are accepted together as they are (take it for granted) (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 225). Social actions and meanings that members of the society recognized form the moral orders of the society, which enables the members to evaluate social practices (e.g. utterances or actions) as good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate, polite, less polite, over-polite, impolite, etc. (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 94).

Moral orders consist of three layers of norms: individuals, groups/ organizations/ communities, and society/ culture (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 95). Furthermore, Kadar and Haugh stated that the history of interactions between individuals forms the first norms. On the second level, this norm is a set of expectations recognized by members of a particular community and organizational culture. Finally, the third norm is the expectations represented in social conventions to evaluate social actions and meanings.

Haugh (2003, pp. 399-400) shows two types of norms, namely "norms about what one *should* do, and norms about what one is *likely* to do" (Terkourafi, 2005, p. 244). While traditional theories (e.g. Lakoff and Leech) tend to approach politeness studies using the former, which tend to be prescriptive or theoretical, other studies (e.g. frame-based view, relational work, etc.) "seek to establish empirical regularities in a bottom-up fashion" (Terkourafi, 2005, p. 244).

Methodology

This qualitative research analyzed linguistic data of CMC in the form of virtual conversations. Locher (2010, pp. 3-4) stated that CMC tends to develop its norms. Thus, CMC has become an essential source of data for linguists to develop im/politeness theories (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 53).

This research data were words, phrases, clauses, and sentences of natural conversations from three WAGs in Indonesia. The first group was a community that was interested in Pragmatics. This group had 257 members in December 2020. The second group was an association of employees and their families of an educational institution having 255 participants. The third WAG was a communication medium between a lecturer and 27 students.

The three WAGs had different characteristics. This study was able to document the conversations of the first and the third WAGs from the groups' creation. They were helpful in scrutinizing the initial development of group norms. While the third WAG was categorized as a non-conflictive group, the first and the second group were dynamic WAGs having conflictive and non-conflictive conversations.

In the process of data collection, the WAGs' conversations were copied and pasted on Microsoft Word. To maintain the originality, the researchers screenshot the WAGs' conversations. Before collecting the data, research consent was sent to the three WAGs requesting permission to analyze the conversations, store them and publish the study results. This study then removed the utterances which did not get consent from the members. This study analyzed 11030 words of the third WAG's conversation, 658 words of the second WAG's dialogue, and two months' conversation of the first WAG relating to the chat of group creation and advertisement.

Concerning the data analysis, this study enhanced the theories of the non-virtual establishment of organizations and group norms, i.e., Tuckman (1965) and Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985), respectively. It also refers to the definition of im/politeness by Locher and Watts (2005). During the analysis process, data were classified into conflictive and non-conflictive conversations. Conflict reflected the "storming" process (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1985, p. 350; Tuckman, 1965, p. 396). The next step was coding; each participant in WAG's conversation was distinguished using four-digit numbers. Each selected sentence then was analyzed to see the process of norm establishment.

Results and Discussion

Observation of WAGs interactions indicates the four stages, even though they do not always experience the whole process, and the sequence is probably the inverted reverse. The characteristics of WAGs influence the course of these stages. WAGs are potentially created as (1) independent virtual organizations or (2) instruments for reaching the purpose of established organizations. While the second group participants are commonly workmates or colleagues, the members of the first WAGs are heterogeneous. They either do or do not affiliate with a particular institution. However, they share similar interests. The first type of WAGs experiences interpersonal conflict periodically, which is the root of the gradual emergence of norms. The second group potentially only undergoes forming and performing. These WAGs' members share common knowledge of the groups' structure and functions, and hence they potentially experience fewer conflicts and leap into performing.

This study applies Tuckman's organization development process while searching for the sources of WAGs' norms. The previous study shows the foundations of group norms: "explicit statements by supervisor or co-workers; critical events in the group's history; primacy; and carry-over behaviors from past situations [e.g. other organizations]" (Feldman, 1984, p. 50). While Feldman's processes exist in WAGs, this study finds some specific sources of norms, such as the purposes of founding WAGs. Concerning Tuckman's, the study's observations indicate that WAGs' norms are possibly established without conflicts, i.e., through the framing of unmarked behaviors. Marked behaviors refer to utterances or actions evaluated negatively or positively by other members, while unmarked attitudes will go "largely unnoticed (i.e., it will be politic/appropriate)" (Locher & Watts, 2005, p. 11). This study follows the general stages of the developing group (i.e. forming, storming, and norming) to elaborate on the findings.

Forming and Storming

The data indicated that the objectives of creating WAGs have roles in regulating the members' interactions. The WAGs' aims might be unstated, informed implicitly, or declared explicitly. The first and second types were eligible for WAGs whose members were fully informed, e.g., the WAGs created by an institution to reach their goals. Concerning the second type, the purposes of WAGs were explained subtly through group names or other methods. The group's leader, founder, or other members proposed an explicit statement of goals regarding the third category. Excerpt (1) shows how the founder declared the aims, and excerpt (2) indicates WAG's norms rooting in the objectives.

Data (1)

1. 4201 created this group
2. 4201 added 415
3. 5719 : Thanks for having me in this group pak F.
4. 4201 : Assalamualaikum Bapak An, Bapak Dr J, Pak N, Ph.D. This is a group of Pragmatics discussion. I Hope that we are able to know each other and share our knowledge of Pragmatics

Excerpt (1) was the forming process of a WAG. The conversation occurred on 18 May 2020, the same day when 4201 created the virtual group. The WAG's members include academicians that are interested in Pragmatics. The excerpt was an "orientation" process (Tuckman, 1965, p. 396), involving the addition or invitation of new members, greeting, thanking, and introducing. Lines 1-2 were information generated by *WhatsApp* informing the creator of the WAG and the new members, respectively. Line 3 was the expression of thanking of the newly added member. The word *pak F* 'Mr. F' indicates that 5719 had already known 4201. *Pak* or *Bapak* 'Mr.' is a title expressing respect among Indonesian; the first is less formal than the second. In line 4, 4201 greeted three new members and introduced them to the existing members. Lines 4 also introduced the group's name and aims. The introduction shows that some new members were not fully informed

about the group. The message of purpose was an essential attribute in the development of WAG's norms. Excerpt (2) shows how the aim contributes to the process of storming or negotiating, norming, and performing.

Data (2)

5. 0675 joined via an invite link
6. 0675 :(Advertising two applications)
7. 6180 : Q buat apa mba M
'What is Q, sister M'
8. 0878 : Paraphrase bu hehe
'It is an application to paraphrase, Mrs. 😊(laughter emoticons)'
9. 0675 : (No consent to be the data)
10. 4756: bukankah Q free y?
'Q is free, isn't it?'
11. 0675 : (No consent to be the data)
12. 3363 :[reply 0675] Apakah ini berkaitan dgn PDF??
'Does it relate to PDF?'
13. 0675 : This message was deleted
14. 8782: (reply -3363-) A passer-by, Pak. T. Numpang lewat..... 🙂
15. 4201: For your info. This is a WAG for Pragmatics Discussion Forum. The focus of this group is bridging pragmaticians and pragmatics learners. No commercial Ads are allowed except Call for paper in language studies.
16. 0675 left
17. 4756 : lha iya,wong jelas2 Q gratis malah diperjualbelikan
'Q is free, but she sold it instead.'
18. 4201: Mungkin kayak G ada yg free, ada yg premium?
'It may be like G; there are free and premium editions.'
19. 3363: Mungkin saran saya coba fokus ke PDF saja, misalkan bagaimana membumikan Pragmatics di Indonesia, mempopulerkan, diskusi dan sharing secara konstruktif
'I suggest focusing on PDF, for instance, how to introduce Pragmatics in Indonesia, to popularize, discuss, and share constructively.'
20. 0878 : 👍👍
21. 4201 : [reply 3363] dan mestinya orang jualan itu ngga boleh baper. begitu diingatkan left.
'and a seller should not be too sensitive. She left the group when others warned her'.
22. 3363 : [reply 4201] Mungkin Bapernya bukan Bawa Perasaan, Namun Bawa Perubahan.
'The baper did not mean sensitive but brought changes'.
23. 4201: mungkin bisa presentasi korelasi antara Q dengan memahami konteks ujaran dalam ranah pragmatics. 🤣.
'She may present the correlation of Q and context of utterances in Pragmatics. emoji'
24. 0878 : 🤣
25. 5027 : (reply 4201) Dia masuk grup memang tujuannya jualan pak..😀🤣 Krena dilarang ya langsung left..
'Her only goal in joining the group is to sell her merchandise. Laughter (emoji). She left because it was prohibited.'

A new member (0675) joined the group (5) and shared an advertisement (6). She offered two applications (Q and G) at a bargained price. While enquiring about the function of Q application, 6180 called 0675 *mbak* M (10). The title and name respectively indicated that they know each other. *Mbak* literally means 'elder sister' in the Javanese language. The conversation was in Bahasa Indonesia; however, the title has been adopted and well known in the region. The expanded meaning of this word shows respect to the elder siblings, relatives, acquaintances, friends, and even strangers. The conversations were "unnoticed" (Locher & Watts, 2005) until 3363 posted a question (12). The question was "non-literal" and "indirect speech acts" (Searle, 1975, pp. 169-170; Wijana, 2021, p. 25). Questioning the relationship between the conversation (particularly the advertisement) and PDF (Pragmatics Discussion Forum; the name of the WAG), 3363 rooted his question to the aim of WAG (4). When 4207 reposted the group's purpose (15), it is clear that the "illocutionary force" (Dresner & Herring, 2010, p. 253; Searle, 1968, p. 407) of the line (12) was to warn 0675 (6), she broke the norm and hence the conversations were inappropriate. Rooting the moral evaluation (i.e., improper)

to line 15 indicates that the aim of WAG is the moral order. The evaluation is not only 3363's "idiosyncratic evaluation" (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 67), other critics (e.g., 14, 25) designate typical expectancies of appropriate/inappropriate behaviors. How the members evaluate the advertisement show that WAGs' purposes are the "familiar scenes of everyday affairs" (Garfinkel, 1967; Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 67), leading to the moral meaning of right or wrong actions.

Norming

Regularities of Positive and Negative Evaluations as Norms

Evaluations of utterances or actions involve three poles, namely "unmarked" (unnoticed conversation or actions), "negatively marked," and "positively marked" behavior (Culpeper, 2012, p. 418; Locher & Watts, 2005, p. 12; Long, 2016, p. 4). The three types of evaluations lead to norming or the emergence of WAG's norms through framing. Moral evaluations (e.g., appropriate/ inappropriate, write/ wrong, etc.) are framed as the members' expectancies when they occur regularly. Concerning positive or negative evaluations, the process encompasses the role of critics/disagreements or compliments/ agreements, which potentially cause storming or negotiating interpersonal interests. Within the storming and norming process of WAGS having many members, the silent majority dominates the conflicts. They are "ratified recipient[s]" (Haugh, 2013, p. 61) or participants that passively read or even neglect chats during or after the WAGs' discussion.

Pertaining to negatively marked behavior, the example of it is when 3363 (15) criticized 0675 (9). The reply 8782 (17) reinforced the implicature of this negative evaluation; 0675 broke the norms of the WAGs. Only ten members posted 36 responses on the topic. One conversant was interested in the applications, and seven participants disagreed with 0675's advertisement (9) and her actions to leave the group (19). The data indicates that most of the members were the silent majority. The negative evaluations of advertisements in the WAG recurred three times in two months. Excerpt (2) was the third warning against advertising. The second "refusal speech act" (Allami & Naeimi, 2011, p. 386; Shishavan & Sharifian, 2016, p. 78) was posted 13 days before the excerpt (2), and the first was a month before the second. The regularity of actions with few opponents potentially frames the negative evaluation against advertising as the micro norm of the WAG. Terkourafi (2005, p. 247) argues that norm is a regularity that recurs in language expressions.

Issues of interpersonal differences, such as values, norms, personality (de Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012, p. 360), or economic interest (e.g., excerpt 2), may cause disagreements or conflicts among group members. Intense or moderate disagreements characterize the conflicts, and the first leads to friction. Moderate conflicts affect some members and do not harm group harmony and performance in general. The example of moderate conflict in excerpt (2) has various effects on its members. 0675 might consider 8782's utterance (17) as aggressive words leading to the "feeling of friction, annoyance, and irritation" (Thiel, Harvey, Courtright, & Bradley, 2019, p. 4) and, hence, causing her to leave the group (19). The laughers' emoji, and pun (25), however, indicate that the participants consider their critics "teasing" (Haugh, 2010a). Concerning the pun, the *baper* (25) is a slank word, which stands for ***ba****wa* ***per****asaan* 'sensitive feeling'; however, 3363 changes the meaning into ***ba****wa* ***per****ubahan* 'bring changes'. The absence of negative evaluation towards the sarcasm, teasing or pun indicates the acceptance of the members into the word game and jocular mockeries as the micro norms of the WAG.

Data (3)

26. 6796 : Di xxxxxxxxx sdh banyak pandemi2 yg lain. Narkoba, korupsi, semua siaga 1.
'In xxxxxxxxx, there are many other pandemics. Drugs, corruption, all are in stage 1.'

27. 2678 : Wkkkkk
'Laughter'

28. 2515 : Anakku sing MI malah wis bar pesta siaga lho mas F 🤣😅🤣
'My kid in elementary school had siaga [scout] gathering, brother F. laughter (emoji).'

29.2520: Bp ibu bahas dan komen tentang covid 19 baiknya tidak sambil tertawa apalagi meremehkan. Info mlm ini sgt mengkhawatirkan negeri kita. Cuma saran..
'Mr and Mrs, if you discuss or comment on Covid 19, it is better not to laugh or underestimate it. Tonight's news informed the critical conditions of our country. It is only a suggestion ..'
30.2576: Njih hbs liat mata najwa jg..
'Yes, I also watched it in Mata Najma [TV programme]'
31. 👍👍👍
32. 4727 : (News link)
33. 2520 : Kita perlu belajar dan ambil hikmah dari kasus di xxxxxx.
'We should learn and take the lesson from cases in xxxxxx.'
34. 2810 : Angka kematian akibat Covid-19 xxx xxx sudah mencapai 9,4 %
(Wawancara TV7 dg Gub xxx) 😱
'Death rate of Covid-19 was 9.4%
(Interview of TV7 with xxx Governor).'
35. 450: Dan saran juga, kita juga tidak tahu secara persis kondisi anggota keluarga dari warga Pxxxxx, barangkali ada di antara kita yang sedang mengkhawaktifkan saudaranya. Oleh sebab itu. Oleh sebab itu kita jaga perasaan hati dari warga Pxxxxx
'And also my suggestion, we do not know precisely the condition of Pxxxxx family members, some of us may be worrying about their relatives. Therefore, we should take care of the feeling of Pxxxxx members'.
36. 2678 : Betul. Leres pak J 👍👍👍
'It is true. It is true Mr J' 👍👍👍

Negative or positive evaluations do not necessarily generate conflicts; they are potentially accepted without divergence. Excerpt (3) indicated critics without group disruption. The conversation dated back to 18 March 2020, the beginning months of the Covid-19 pandemic. Talking about the plague, 6796 classified the pandemic, together with drug abuse and corrupt behaviours, stage (*siaga)* one (26). Then, 2678 (27) and 2515 (28) replied with laughter and pun (*siaga)*, respectively. *Siaga* 'be on the alert' (26) means the stages in a natural disaster, while *siaga* (28) refers to scout rank. 2520 (29), then evaluated the "non-serious or playful frame" (Haugh, 2010a, p. 2108; 2014, p. 78) negatively. 2520 interpreted laughter as an act of belittling the increase in Covid-19 cases. To show approval of the negative evaluation, the other participants posted thumbs-up emoticons (31, 36) and then relayed the Covid-19 news (30, 33, 34) or addressed the playful expressions of a lack of empathy for those suffering from Coronavirus disease (35).

Conservative Individual and Social Norms

The data indicated that the emergence of WAGs' norms might leap over Tuckman's storming process. It means that the WAGs did not experience disputes during the norming process; harmony or non-conflict interactions are the sources of group norms. The norming processes are largely "unmarked" or "unnoticed" (Locher & Watts, 2005) by the members. The group members potentially narrated the unnoticed behaviors repeatedly. Moreover, the unmarked utterances or actions root in individual and social norms of non-virtual interactions.

Excerpts (2) and (3) indicate that moral evaluations (appropriate, inappropriate, polite, impolite, etc.) of WAGs' conversations involve members' alignment with conservative individual and social norms. Conservative norms refer to traditional values or norms of non-virtual social interactions. Excerpt (2) shows how individual norms affect WAGs' member evaluations. First, 6180 (7) and 0878 (8) tend to have "intentional silence" (Ephratt, 2012, p. 63; Kasher, 1976, fn.5). They were supposed to understand that 0675's advertisement (6) forfeited the WAG's norms, but they did not criticize her. The absence of negative evaluations (silence) indicates that they avoid "face-threatening acts" (FTA) (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 72). Second, 3363 (12, 19) and 4201 (15) tend to mitigate FTA. They used non-literal and indirect speech acts to criticize 0675 obliquely. Third, other conversant affiliated with open criticism. The *numpang lewat* 'passerby' (14), pun (22), or laughter emoji (25) are likely to be "banter" or "mock impoliteness" (Leech, 1983, p. 144) or

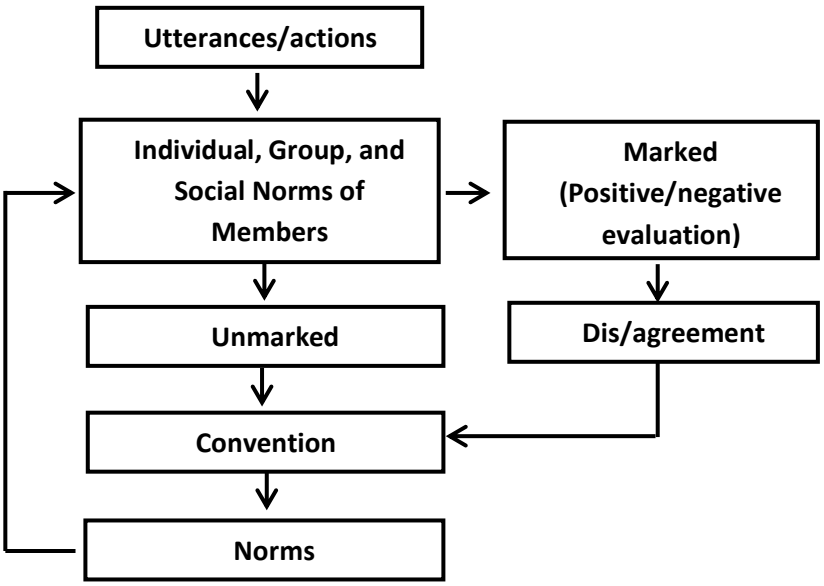
"jocular mockery" (Haugh, 2010a, p. 2107) among the members. However, 0675 potentially interpreted it differently. The *numpang lewat* was another popular name for advertisement in Indonesia; some TV presenters used it to end their statements before commercial breaks. The laughers (emoji) confirmed the jocular mockery among the members. For 0675, however, she probably infers the meaning semantically; the phrase categorized her as an outsider that only sought profit in the WAG. This assessment likely stems from the fact that she joined the WAG for a few seconds and immediately placed an advertisement. Pertaining to norms, the differences in how to answer advertisements show the existence of individual norms in WAGs conversations. Different methods of criticizing (indirectly and jocular mockery) are then accepted in this WAG.

Furthermore, excerpt (3) relates the members' non-virtual social or cultural norms to the virtual norms of the WAG. 2678 (36) agreed with 2520's evaluation (29) expressed with three markers: the words *betul* 'true', *leres* 'true' and the three thumbs up emoji. In addition, all members of the WAG speak Bahasa Indonesia, most of them speak Javanese, and some people also speak Arabic and other local languages. The conversations were in Bahasa. *Betul* indicates 'agreement' in the Indonesian language. Meanwhile, 2678 repeated the acceptance in the Javanese language (*leres*). The speaker should have a particular intention of repeating the agreement in two different languages. Semantically, *leres* and *betul* have the same meaning; however, they are different sociolinguistically. The *betul* address members of all social groups, and the *leres* might personally address 2520. The inference arises from the speech levels of the Javanese language. It has four types of words: *ngoko* 'low', *madya* 'middle', *krama* 'high', and honorific (*krama inggil* and *krama andhap)*. The *Leres* is a *krama* variation of the ngoko *bener* 'true' (Sasangka, 2005, p. 93). *Krama* indexes refined and formal level (Poedjosoedarmo, 1968, p. 57; Wolff & Poedjosoedarmo, 2002, p. 4) to express polite (Poedjosoedarmo, 1968, p. 57) and respect (Smith-Hefner, 2009, p. 213) manners, "Speaker deference to Addressee" (Silverstein, 2003). Someone of lower status uses *krama* to address higher-level hearers (Oakes, 2009, p. 820). In this context, 2678 used *leres* to respect older colleagues (i.e., 2520). Concerning the emergence of WAGs norms, the speaker's affiliation with conservative social norms affects the virtual language ideology of the speaker.

The Establishment of WAGs' Norms

The data indicated two patterns of WAGs' norms: (1) those specified, discussed, and accepted when the groups are created and (2) the norms that emerged gradually during the members' interaction. Figure 1 shows the process of the emergence of WAGs' micro norms. When a member posts utterances, emoticons, stickers, videos, images, or other actions, others evaluate them as "unmarked" or "marked" (Locher & Watts, 2005, p. 12) behaviors. Utterances or actions which meet members' expectancies are unmarked (see excerpt 4) and largely go "unnoticed" (Locher & Watts, 2005, p. 11). They may also be marked positively or negatively. The evaluations, either negative or positive, are potentially accepted (see excerpt 3) or negotiated by others. The negotiation causes less conflict (see excerpt 2) or tension among members. The final agreements of the evaluation and unnoticed behaviors are the convention and micro norms of WAG's interactions, "familiar scenes of everyday activities" (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 33). The convention is "recurrent schematic behavior" (Kádár & Mills, 2013, p. 143) which mainly "regulates social interactions" (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 264).

Figure 1. The establishment process of WAGs' norms



Excerpt (4) validates the application of figure 1 on unmarked routinized behaviour originating from members' conservative social practices. Data (4) is a conversation between a lecturer (415) and university students in Bahasa on 02 September 2020. They were preparing pre-service teaching practices in secondary schools. When asking whether the students have met the principal of the school, 415 used *sowan* 'to meet' (Javanese language) (37) instead of *menghadap* or *menemui* ('to meet'; Bahasa Indonesia). *Sowan* is the variation of Javanese *ngoko* words *adep*, *mara*, and *teka* 'to meet'. Poedjosoedarmo (1969, p. 170) categorized the word *krama inggel* (KI), while Sasangka (2005, p. 152) classified it as *krama andhap* (KA). Both KI and KA are honorific or "respect vocabulary," indicating high deference to the addressee (Poedjosoedarmo, 1968, pp. 57-58). The lecturer preferred the honorific word to address the school headmaster, that was not the conversation participant. In the WAG, the *sowan* was used six times in September 2020. It is used interchangeably with Bahasa Indonesia *bertemu* 'to meet' (four times) and *ketemu* 'to meet' (ten times). The members of the WAG also regularly use other Javanese words, such as *nggih* 'yes' (KI). The word, together with its variation, i.e., *enggih, nggeh, nggh*, were used 33 times. Other Javanese variations used include *[e]mpun* 'already' (M), *kalih* 'with' (K), *naming* 'only' K), and *dereng* 'not yet' (K). *Madya* (M) is a middle variation between lower *ngoko* (N) and high *krama* (K) in expressing politeness.

Data (4)

37. 415: Apakah sudah pada sowan kepsek / wakakur? Adakah pesan khusus atau catatan dr beliau2x ttg penyerahan, pelaksanaan, dan penarikan PPL?
'Did you meet the principal/vice principal? Are there messages or notes from them concerning handover, action, and withdrawal of pre-teaching practice?'

38. 1269: kalau yg di Pringapus bisa lwat online bapak
'It can be done online in Pringapus, Mr.'

39. 6748: Belum sowan mengenai itu bapak
'I have not met them, Mr.' ...

40. 2309: SD IT MH ngadirojo mpun sowan pak namung kalih kepsek kaleh wakakur dereng
'I have met the vice principal of SDIT MH, instead of the school principal'.

41. 415: MAN 1 C Clear. Saya sdh kontak p. M dan pak Wakakur sdh menerima itu sebagai penyerahan PPL. Beliau nanti akan menyampaikan ke kepsek. PPL tgl 7 sept s.d. 11 Okt.
'MAN 1 C is clear, and I have called Mr M, and the Vice-Principal acknowledged that the call was the participants' handover'. ...

42. 415: Pdf pedoman PPL bisa di print dan jilid sendiri utk diserahkan ke sekolah.
"You can print the the guidance book of PPL and give it to school"
43. 6748 : Baik bapak .Terimakasih
'Yes Mr. Thank you'.
44. 9053 : Nggih pak
Yes Mr.'

The existence of Javanese words in the Indonesian-Javanese code-mixing in the WAG was unnoticed. However, the regular occurrences of the Javanese code show that the agreement of WAG's members originated from one of the respect norms in Javanese culture. The regularity of Javanese codes indicates convention among the WAG's members to index the speaker's deference to the hearer and in absentia third parties in the middle, high, and honorific variations. The members then use it as the norm to evaluate other similar utterances.

Conclusion

The analysis showed that WAGs' norms potentially emerge from four different sources: the group's aims, unmarked behaviors, regularity of negative and positive evaluations, and the alignment of the members toward conservative social norms and individual expectancies. The last findings correspond with Bettenhausen and Murnighan (1985)'s finding indicating personal experiences as the source of group norms. The result suggests discursive WAGs' norms; therefore, the rules are contested from one group to another. The norms are either similar or different based on the negotiation among members. Each member might have similar or different traditional (non-virtual) social experiences, affecting WAGs' interactions. Applying Bettenhausen and Murnighans' findings, WAG's members probably openly or implicitly accept the norms or impose individual beliefs on the virtual group.

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