

Differences in Gossip Communication Between Women and Men in Lembean Village, Kauditan District, North Minahasa Regency

Joanne P. M. Tangkudung¹

Email: joannetangkudung@unsrat.ac.id

¹Communication Science Study Program, Sam Ratulangi University, Manado, Indonesia

Received: February 15, 2025

Received in Revised: March 17, 2025

Accepted: April 24, 2025

Abstract

Gossip is always associated as a negative communication because it contains talk about other people's shame. Many people do not realize that gossip actually has an important role in society, namely as a form of social control. Gossip can be exclusive and dangerous, but it cannot be avoided and can be a good thing. This study uses a qualitative method, informants are women and men. The focus of the study is related to the topic of discussion; gathering time; closeness of social ties; data is analyzed in a qualitative-constructivist approach preceded by efforts to reveal trustworthiness. The results of the study of women's gossip consisting of; competition (personal; economic factors; social status); toxic relationships (gossip victims), gathering in a place (stall, mall, house), exposure to social media (sarcasm, pictures), cooperation, self-evaluation. For men; Friendship (success/slump); gathering in a place (home, coffee shop, exercising), cooperation, self-evaluation.

Keywords: Communication, Gossip, Differences, Women, Men

Introduction

The need for humans as part of society for communication to fulfill the need for information updates and establish relationships in the Lembean Village community, Kauditan District. Along with the development of the times, the forms of human communication are increasingly diverse, from oral to written, direct or indirect (Syahyudin, 2019). The content is very unlimited, from news about each other, current events experienced or witnessed, information, knowledge, to issues around the community.

Many people agree that discussing issues in society such as neighbors buying new cars, coworkers who turn out to have hidden relationships with their superiors, or nephews who often come home late is more fun than discussing corruption of social assistance funds or lobster seeds, and this form of communication is often called gossip. In social sciences, gossip, rumors, are usually defined as communication about people who are not present while also evaluating that person, good or bad (Rayhaniah, et al. 2021). This kind of informal communication is very important for sharing information (Muspawi & Gulo, 2023).

Gossip is needed for social cooperation and social control; This kind of conversation is what mostly embeds social ties and clarifies social norms in society (Asiani, 2022). Based on this phenomenon, the study aims to find differences in gossip communication between women and men in Lembean Village, Kauditan District. Gossip is always associated as negative communication because it contains talk about other people's shame (Mustaqim, 2020). Many people do not realize that gossip actually has an important role in society, namely as a form of social control.

Gossip can be exclusive and dangerous, but it cannot be avoided and can be a good thing. The urgency of research produces knowledge innovation, understanding of Gossip Communication

Between Women and Men in Lembean Village, Kauditan District with the research topic of gender mainstreaming in development and in accordance with the Unsrat Renstra in the field of excellence Social Humanities and Arts and Culture, the output is Intellectual Property Rights.

Communication as a social process is an integral part of society, in general it has the following functions: Communication connects various components of society. The components here are not only individuals and society, but also various forms of social institutions (press, public relations, universities); Communication opens up a new human civilization; Communication is a manifestation of social control in society; It cannot be denied that communication plays a role in the socialization of values to society; and a person will be known as a human being because they use communication. That also means that communication shows a person's social identity (Aditia, 2021).

Social communication is also a process of influencing to achieve the desired social connection between individuals in society (Pandaleke, et al. 2020). Social communication at least suggests that communication is important for building our self-concept, self-actualization, survival, achieving happiness, avoiding stress and tension (through communication that can entertain) and having relationships with others. Through communication we work together with members of society (family, RT, RW, city, country, etc.) to achieve common goals. It is communication that enables individuals to build a frame of reference and use it to learn and apply adaptive strategies to cope with the problematic situations they find themselves in. Social communication is a communication activity that is directed at achieving a situation (Higgins, 1992).

As social beings, humans have made gossiping a means of social interaction with others (Abdusshomad, 2021). Everyone has a tendency to gossip with various motives including to be accepted by society or just for entertainment. On the other hand, gossiping is not only liked by people with open and aggressive personalities. Individuals who tend to be introverted also have a desire to be accepted in their environmental groups which can be done by gossiping. Knowing information and participating in gossiping will make people feel considered in a group (Munif, 2020). Participating in chats in an environment can be used as a person's social capital and be a benchmark for good acceptance in a group (Hall & Graham, 2004).

Gossip is not only done by women. Gossip is actually also commonly done by men. In fact, according to research conducted by the Social Issues Research Center in the UK, men and women both like to gossip even though the time they spend gossiping is different. In addition to time, there are several other differences between gossip done by men and women, such as who they gossip about and what they gossip about. Adam C. Davis, a researcher from the University of Ottawa, Canada and several other psychology and social science researchers conducted a study that showed differences between gossip done by women and men. Here are five differences.

According to research conducted by the Social Issues Research Center (SIRC) in the UK, women and men both like to gossip. However, women do spend more time gossiping, which is 67 percent of their talking time. Meanwhile, men only spend 55 percent of their time. According to a paper written by Adam C. Davis and colleagues, women prefer to talk about physical appearance, partner loyalty, and the social conditions of other women around them. This study also highlights that women more often emphasize a person's physical qualities. Meanwhile, men tend to prefer talking about wealth, achievements, and physical strength. Women are apparently more honest than men. They are more likely to admit that they are gossiping.

Men prefer the term 'chatting with friends' which is actually also gossiping. Men prefer to claim that they use their phones for work rather than for their social affairs. In fact, what they call 'working' is actually the same as gossiping. The results of a study conducted by Francis McAndrew, a psychology professor at Knox College, United States, showed that men actually prefer to gossip with their partners. Meanwhile, women enjoy sharing gossip with their female friends and partners. The effects of gossip on friendships can be different for women and men. David C. Watson, assistant professor of psychology at Grant MacEwan University in Edmonton, USA, conducted a study on 167 women and 69 men to see the effects of gossip on their friendships.

In men, gossip can make their friendships closer because information and knowledge are considered a way to increase their status. The higher a person's status, the more they will be accepted in a group of friends. On the other hand, gossip does not strengthen friendships in women. In fact, gossip in women can threaten their friendships. The most widely accepted theory of the development of gossip comes from anthropologist Robin Dunbar.

Dunbar, a lecturer in evolutionary psychology at the University of Oxford, defines gossip as the discussion of social topics. Based on this definition, his 1997 study of human conversation found that gossip accounted for about 65 percent of the conversation when people were in malls and other public places. Dunbar's theory explains that gossip serves as a means of gathering that strengthens social bonds. Humans need an easy and effective way to convey social norms to protect themselves from bad behavior.

Methods

This research method uses a qualitative method with in-depth interviews with several informants and direct observation in the community. Qualitative methods are used by considering the suitability of the objects studied and the relevant scientific studies, that there are differences in gossip communication between women and men. The location of the research was conducted in Lembean Village, Kauditan District. This research method or design is to find a difference between women and men in gossiping using a qualitative method, namely asking for information from competent informants with the research problem and then interpreted by the researcher into the research subject. The focus of this study is gossip time, social topics and gathering facilities. The population of this study is the Lembean village community, Kauditan District. While the research subjects from the target population are determined based on all elements contained in the population. From here the subjects will be selected by purposive sampling according to the need to obtain depth of information. The subjects of this study are women and men. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with each research subject. This interview is a face-to-face interview between the researcher and the respondent, with an in-depth interview technique. Here the researcher is the main research instrument. Data analysis in the qualitative-constructivist approach (Regar, et al., 2014) is preceded by an effort to reveal the trustworthiness of the research subjects, namely testing the truth and honesty of the research subjects in revealing reality. This trustworthiness is tested through testing; the credibility of the subjects by testing the answers to questions related to their unique experiences and knowledge.

Results and Discussion

North Minahasa Regency (Minut) with the center of government in Airmadidi, is located in North Sulawesi Province. This regency has a strategic location because it is located between two cities, namely Manado and the port city of Bitung. The distance from the center of Manado to Airmadidi is about 12 km which can be reached in 30 minutes, and one of the sub-districts is Kauditan District and Lembean Village is one of the villages located on the slopes of Mount

Klabat. The life of the people in Lembean Village can be said to be very familial because the bonds of brotherhood are still very close, so that many are involved in social groups formed based on family background (clan) and also from groups based on social ties with the government. However, the phenomenon that occurs is that there are groups that are created only because of the desire to gather while sharing stories which ultimately lead to an activity of telling about other people or it can be said that gossip is simply telling about other people.

In its most basic form, gossip is an individual strategy in improving their own reputation and interests at the expense of others. Gossip is sometimes considered bad, even though it plays an important role in the social world. The bad side of gossip covers the good side of its social function. In fact, gossiping can be seen not as a deficiency but as a high-level social skill. People who can't gossip usually have difficulty maintaining relationships and often feel excluded. Like it or not, we are the descendants of curious creatures. The point is, we need to re-examine the role of gossip in everyday life: there is no need to avoid or be ashamed of gossiping. Successful gossiping indicates the ability to be a good team member and share important information about others without being seen as benefiting yourself. Gossiping means knowing when it's the right time to talk and when it's better to stay silent.

Women do like to talk to people they consider comfortable for hours. But this doesn't only happen to women, because men do it too, this can be seen from almost every day after work, coffee shops are always filled with men. If you count, I think more men have time to chat. The COVID-19 pandemic has also made the benefits of gossip even clearer. Overnight, lockdowns have closed the space for individuals to engage in casual conversation or gossip – coffee shop chats, pre-meeting discussions. As people return to face-to-face activities, they may realise how important gossip moments are for social bonding and relationships. Gossip does have a number of benefits in social life. However, this habit of gossiping does run the risk of developing into petty and cruel actions. It serves a prosocial function in that way,” she says, referring to the benefits gossip can have on others. Robbins adds that another way gossip serves a prosocial function is by teaching people what people think is right and wrong. “So even if the gossip isn't about you, you're learning what people think is really bad or really good behavior,” she says.

UK-based registered friendship expert Danielle Jackson believes gossip can help us stay safe by helping us identify who is friend and foe in our social circles. “I need information from other people to know how to navigate the world,” she says. She gives the example of a coworker at a new office telling her about an incident that led to the previous employee being fired (Nariswari, 2023). Gossip is not only done by women. Gossip is actually also commonly done by men. In fact, according to research conducted by the Social Issues Research Center in England, men and women both like to gossip even though the time they spend gossiping is different. In addition to time, there are several other differences between gossip done by men and women, such as who they gossip about and what they gossip about. Adam C. Davis, a researcher from the University of Ottawa, Canada and several other psychology and social science researchers conducted a study that showed differences between gossip done by women and men.

Gossip Time

This study found that women prefer to gather to gossip in the morning when exercising/walking in the morning and in the evening just to sit around relaxing, while men usually gather in the evening after dinner they will go out of the house while gathering in one place while sharing stories. This is according to research conducted by the Social Issues Research Center (SIRC) in England, women and men both like to gossip. However, women do spend more time gossiping, which is 67 percent of their talking time. Meanwhile, men only spend 55 percent of

their time. This difference is actually not too striking and shows that men also gossip quite often.

Gossip Topics

This study also found that women more often emphasize a person's physical qualities, beauty, clothing, cooking and something new bought by neighbors, and tell about what they experience in the family. Meanwhile, men tend to prefer talking about wealth, achievements, physical strength, and work/getting a job from the results of the conversation. According to a paper written by Adam C. Davis and his colleagues, women prefer to talk about the physical appearance, fidelity of partners, and the social conditions of other women around them. These topics are related to sexual selection carried out by women to make themselves more attractive as partners. By talking badly about the physical appearance, ability to maintain relationships, and social conditions of other women, the other women will appear weaker and less attractive as partners.

Openness to Gossip

Men prefer the word 'chatting with friends' which is actually gossiping. Men prefer to admit that they use their cellphones for work rather than for their social affairs. In fact, what they call 'working' is actually the same as gossiping. Women are actually more honest than men. They are more likely to admit that they are gossiping. A study conducted by SIRC showed that 27 percent of women were willing to admit that they gossiped via cellphone, while only 21 percent of men were willing to admit it.

Gossip Friends

The results of a study conducted by Francis McAndrew, a psychology professor at Knox College, United States, showed that men actually prefer to gossip with their partners. Meanwhile, women enjoy sharing gossip with both their female friends and their partners. McAndrew conducted this study by giving 12 types of gossip to 140 research participants. The results showed that men told nine of the 12 gossips only to their partners and women told 11 of the 12 gossips to their partners and friends of the same sex. This study also explains that women of the same sex prefer to tell stories than men, and men also prefer to tell stories with other men.

Effects on Friendship

In men, gossip can make their friendships closer because information and knowledge are considered a way to increase their status. The higher a person's status, the more they will be accepted in a group of friends. On the other hand, gossip does not strengthen friendships in women, but gossip in women can threaten their friendships. The results of the study revealed that the effect of friendship for women can be strengthened by gossiping, as well as for men gossip as a place for a fairly close emotional bond because if they don't get together they are considered less sociable and tend to be arrogant. Women prefer to gather and of course talk to friends in order to maintain friendships and fill their free time, as well as men gathering.

The Effect of Toxic Relationships

Gossip is also caused by bad relationships in a family experienced by women so they look for friends to tell their hearts that are hurt by people at home so they can get out of the toxic relationship. On the other hand, for men when they experience a toxic relationship at home they will leave the house looking for friends to talk and gather but not tell the situation of people at home because according to them it is not a problem that needs to be told.

Conclusion

Women prefer to gather to gossip in the morning during exercise/morning walk and in the evening just to sit and relax, while men usually gather in the evening after dinner they will go out of the house while gathering in one place to share stories. Women more often emphasize a person's physical qualities, beauty, clothes, cooking and something new bought by neighbors, and tell about what they experienced in the family. Meanwhile, men tend to prefer to talk about wealth, achievements, physical strength, and work/getting a job from the results of the conversation. Men prefer the word 'chatting with friends' which is actually gossiping. Men prefer to admit that they use their cellphones for work rather than for their social affairs. In fact, what they call 'work' is actually the same as gossiping. Women are more honest than men. They are more likely to admit that they are gossiping. In men, gossip can make their friendships closer because information and knowledge are considered a way to increase their status. The higher a person's status, the more they will be accepted in a group of friends. On the contrary, gossip does not strengthen friendships in women, even gossip in women can threaten their friendships. In men, gossip can make their friendships closer because information and knowledge are considered a way to increase their status. The higher a person's status, the more they will be accepted in a group of friends. On the contrary, gossip does not strengthen friendships in women, even gossip in women can threaten their friendships.

When someone gossips, you will know the behavior of others. You will be able to easily use that information and therefore you can decide to work with them or not, by gossiping you will be able to filter out people who you might not want to work with. Often when you gossip about someone, you also vent what is bothering you. Many things that have been stored in your feelings and bother you can be expressed, as a result your feelings become calmer with a more relieved feeling you can return to doing many activities with focus. In the midst of gossip, you may unconsciously or consciously learn from the mistakes made by the person being gossiped about, so you can reform yourself and improve your own behavior in that way. Most people gossip when they want to share their worries, need support or even reassurance. Gossiping works well on mental health, and this in turn will improve social skills. When you gossip or ask questions about others and realize that you are not the only one going through a certain thing, it will help build self-confidence. You will feel relieved that you are not the only one going through it, so you will become more confident.

References

- Abdusshomad, A. (2021). Gaya hidup nongkrong di kafe dan perilaku gosip sebagai kontrol sosial. *Al-Adabiya: Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Keagamaan*, 16(1), 57-68. <https://doi.org/10.37680/adabiya.v16i1.593>
- Aditia, R. (2021). Sistem Komunikasi Indonesia: Suatu Proses Sosial, Budaya, dan Politik. *Connected: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 1-10.
- Asiani, F. (2022). *Berbicara Itu Mudah: Asal Tahu Caranya*. Yogyakarta: Anak Hebat Indonesia.
- Chaerudin, A., Rani, I. H., & Alicia, V. (2020). *Sumber daya manusia: pilar utama kegiatan operasional organisasi*. Jawa Barat: CV Jejak (Jejak Publisher).
- Hall, H., & Graham, D. (2004). Creation and recreation: motivating collaboration to generate knowledge capital in online communities. *International Journal of Information Management*, 24(3), 235-246. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2004.02.004>

- Higgins, E. T. (1992). Achieving 'shared reality' in the communication game: A social action that create; meaning. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 11(3), 107-131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X92113001>
- Munif, F. (2020). Pengembangan Madrasah melalui Modal Sosial. *Jurnal kependidikan*, 8(1), 84-98. <https://doi.org/10.24090/jk.v8i1.5133>
- Muspawi, M., & Gulo, C. A. (2023). Konsep Dasar Komunikasi Organisasi. *Jurnal Serunai Administrasi Pendidikan*, 12(2).
- Mustaqim, A. H. (2020). Meredam Stigma dengan Komunikasi dan Sastra (Komunikasi Stigma dalam Cerpen Jenggo Karya Putu Wijaya). *Wanastra: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 12(1), 87-96. <https://doi.org/10.31294/w.v12i1.7568>
- Pandaleke, T. F., Koagouw, F. V., & Waleleng, G. J. (2020). Peran komunikasi sosial masyarakat dalam melestarikan bahasa daerah pasan di Desa Rasi Kecamatan Ratahan Kabupaten Minahasa Tenggara. *Acta Diurna Komunikasi*, 2(3).
- Rayhaniah, S. A., Amin, H., Boer, R. F., Krisnawati, A., Anggraini, R. I., Hamdani, M., ... & Tahrim, T. (2021). *Etika dan Komunikasi Organisasi*. Aceh: Yayasan Penerbit Muhammad Zaini.
- Regar, P. M., Kawung, E., & Tangkudung, J. P. (2014). Pola Komunikasi Antar Budaya Dan Identitas Etnik Sangihe-talaud-sitaro (Studi Pada Masyarakat Etnik Sanger-tahuna-sitaro Di Kota Manado) Tahun Ke 1 Dari Rencana 3 Tahun. *Acta Diurna Komunikasi*, 3(4).
- Syahyudin, D. (2019). Pengaruh gadget terhadap pola interaksi sosial dan komunikasi siswa. *Gunahumas*, 2(1), 272-282.