

Pragmatic Study of Linguistic Expressions of Anger in Uab Meto

Desio De Amandio Nono Nule¹, Floribertha Lake^{2*}, Ubaldus Djonda³

^{1,2,3} English Education, Widya Mandira Catholic University Kupang, Indonesia

Article History:

Received:

July 31, 2026

Accepted:

September 30, 2026

Published:

October 13, 2026

Keywords:

Anger Expression;
Napan People;
Pragmatics;
Speech Acts;
Uab Meto.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the linguistic expressions of anger in Uab Meto spoken by the Napan people of Timor Tengah Utara Regency from a pragmatic perspective. Drawing on Speech Act Theory and Face Negotiation Theory, this descriptive qualitative study involved ten native Uab Meto speakers aged 30 to 60 in Napan Village. Data were collected through elicitation tasks comprising 20 scenario-based questions and semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal twenty verbal anger expressions categorized into direct (nine), indirect (eight), and metaphorical (three) forms. Direct expressions occurred slightly more often than indirect ones and mainly functioned to reprimand, accuse, and warn. The findings also identify eight cultural factors and seven pragmatic factors that shape the use of anger expressions. The cultural factors include educational background, age and social status, kinship relationships, inherited communication style, community values and habits, family environment, environmental and geographical factors, and gossip and communal gatherings. The pragmatic factors include the speaker's emotional state, conflict and disagreement, miscommunication, the speaker's intention, context of interaction, intonation and speech delivery, and curiosity or excessive involvement. Anger expressions in Uab Meto therefore emerge as context-sensitive communicative practices shaped by the sociocultural and pragmatic norms of the Napan community.

Copyright © 2026 to the Authors



Corresponding Author:

Floribertha Lake
English Education Study Program
Widya Mandira Catholic University Kupang, Indonesia
Email: * lakefloribertha@gmail.com

How to cite this article:

Nule, D. D. A. N., Lake, F., & Djonda, U. (2026). Pragmatic Study of Linguistic Expressions of Anger in Uab Meto. *Huele: Journal of Applied Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 6(2), 103-113. <https://doi.org/10.30598/huele.v6.i2.p103-113>

Journal Homepage : <https://ojs3.unpatti.ac.id/index.php/huele>

Journal E-mail : journalhuele@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Emotion is a universal aspect of human experience, yet its linguistic realization varies significantly across languages and cultures (Parkinson, 2023; Rimé, 2009; Sadiqzade, 2025). Among various emotional expressions, anger is a complex phenomenon strongly related to interpersonal relationships and social interaction (Allan & Gilbert, 2002; Fischer & Evers, 2011). The expression of anger is not merely a spontaneous psychological reaction; rather, it is a strategic communicative act shaped by cultural expectations, social distance, power relations, and communicative context (Hong et al., 2024; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Petkanopoulou et al., 2019; Ting-toomey & Kurogi, 1998). While some cultures favor direct and open expressions of anger to emphasize authority or honesty, others prefer indirect strategies, figurative language, or silence to maintain politeness and social harmony (Kövecses, 2007; Sadiqzade, 2025). Consequently, analyzing anger expression through a pragmatic lens provides crucial insights into how meaning is constructed beyond literal words, taking into account the speaker's intention and the sociocultural norms of the speech community (Kuppens et al., 2007; Scherer, 2003).

In the local context of East Nusa Tenggara, Uab Meto is a vital local language spoken by the Atoin Pah Meto, including the Napan people in the Timor Tengah Utara Regency (Benu et al., 2023; Steinhauer, 1993; Tarno et al., 1992). For the Napan community, Uab Meto functions not only as a tool for information exchange but also as a profound symbol of ethnic identity, tradition, and social interaction. The community maintains strong customary values and kinship systems that heavily influence their communicative practices (Wijana, 1996, 2010). Comparable studies in other Indonesian communities show that kinship terms are used to maintain social harmony in interaction (Gusnawaty et al., 2022). In this setting, the expression of anger is tied to social hierarchies, age differences, and community values (Allan & Gilbert, 2002; Petkanopoulou et al., 2019). Speakers must carefully navigate these cultural norms, often employing specific vocabulary, intonation patterns, or metaphorical expressions to convey dissatisfaction or reprimand while preserving interpersonal harmony and respecting local politeness systems (Kövecses, 2007; Ting-toomey, 2005).

Despite the significance of emotional expression in daily communication, studies concerning anger expression in Uab Meto remain notably limited. Previous linguistic research on Uab Meto has predominantly focused on structural aspects of the language. For example, Tarno et al. (1992) provided a grammatical description of the Molo variety, covering phonemic inventory, morphology, and phrasal syntax. Steinhauer (1993) examined verbal morphology in the Miomafo variety, particularly agreement-prefix allomorphy, verbal suffixes, and enclitics, while Edwards (2016) investigated sound correspondences in Uab Meto from a historical phonological perspective. More recent work has examined the morphosyntax of middle voice in Uab Meto (Benu et al., 2022) and ecological metaphors in the natonu oral tradition of the Atoin Meto (Benu et al., 2025), but neither addresses verbal anger. These studies demonstrate that earlier linguistic research has largely emphasized the structural properties of Uab Meto, leaving room for further investigation of its pragmatic and sociocultural dimensions. Although recent linguistic studies have begun to explore pragmatic and sociocultural dimensions of Eastern Indonesian languages, including language management and minority language maintenance in the region (Arka, 2013), politeness in Manggarai welcoming rituals (Gunas et al., 2023), and ritual speech acts in Manggarai (Jama & Menggo, 2026), investigations specifically into verbal anger in authentic communicative situations among the Napan people have not received adequate attention. This scarcity of research creates a significant gap, leaving many local communicative practices and the cultural meanings embedded in emotional expressions undocumented. Without further pragmatic studies, the intricate ways in which the Napan people linguistically negotiate anger within their sociocultural framework remain poorly understood.

To address this gap, this study aims to investigate the linguistic expressions of anger in Uab Meto spoken by the Napan people from a pragmatic perspective. Specifically, this research seeks to identify the forms of verbal anger expressions, categorized into direct, indirect, and metaphorical forms, and to analyze how cultural and pragmatic factors shape these expressions in real-life interactions. By exploring the intersection of language, emotion, and culture, this study expects to provide a deeper understanding of the pragmatic strategies employed by the Napan community. Furthermore, it contributes to the

broader field of pragmatics by enriching the documentation of emotional expression in Indonesian regional languages and supporting the preservation of local cultural communication practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspectives on Pragmatics and Anger Expression

Pragmatics examines linguistic acts within their contexts, emphasizing that meaning is co-constructed by participants, setting, and cultural norms rather than derived solely from literal words (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996). Within this framework, Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1975; Searle, 1969) posits that utterances perform actions. Anger expressions, therefore, function as expressive speech acts that communicate psychological states, dissatisfaction, and social evaluations (Labov & Fanshel, 1977). Furthermore, Ting-Toomey's (2005) Face Negotiation Theory emphasizes that individuals manage face concerns during conflict and that cultural orientations may influence the ways in which face is negotiated. In collectivist contexts, maintaining interpersonal relationships and social harmony may encourage the use of indirect or restrained communicative strategies. However, the distinction between collectivist and individualist communication should not be treated as absolute, as face concerns and conflict-management strategies can also vary across individuals and situations (Hou, 2023; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). Therefore, Face Negotiation Theory is used in this study as a framework for understanding the possible influence of cultural and relational contexts on anger expression rather than as a fixed explanation of communicative behavior. Accordingly, anger expressions can be realized through different pragmatic strategies, including direct, indirect, and metaphorical forms. Direct expressions explicitly communicate criticism, accusations, warnings, or commands, whereas indirect expressions convey anger through strategies such as implicature, sarcasm, or other context-dependent meanings. Metaphorical expressions, in contrast, use figurative language in which the intended meaning of anger is conveyed through comparison, imagery, or culturally meaningful expressions rather than through literal wording. In this study, these three forms, direct, indirect, and metaphorical, are treated as distinct analytical categories because metaphorical expressions may carry culturally specific meanings that are not adequately captured by a general direct–indirect distinction. The choice between these forms is heavily influenced by social power, interpersonal intimacy, and cultural expectations regarding politeness (Fischer & Evers, 2011; Hong et al., 2024; Petkanopoulou et al., 2019; Rimé, 2009). Recent evidence from Javanese further suggests that politeness depends less on directness itself than on whether speech aligns with social hierarchy, intimacy, and cultural values (Nursanti et al., 2026).

Previous Studies on Emotional and Anger Expression

Empirical studies on anger expression highlight the complex interplay between emotion, social dynamics, and culture. Allan and Gilbert (2002) found that anger expression is related to perceptions of social rank, entrapment, and depressive symptoms, while Deffenbacher et al. (2002) reviewed empirically supported principles for managing problematic anger. In the Indonesian context, pragmatic studies have shown that Javanese speakers frequently employ indirect politeness strategies to mitigate face-threatening acts and maintain social harmony (Atmawati et al., 2024; Sukarno, 2015; Wijana, 1996), although more recent evidence indicates that direct strategies can also predominate in Javanese directives when they are mediated by appropriate markers or licensed by the social context (Nursanti et al., 2026). Despite these valuable insights, a significant gap remains regarding the pragmatic realization of anger in under-documented regional languages. This study addresses this gap by applying the aforementioned theories to analyze how cultural and contextual factors shape direct, indirect, and metaphorical anger expressions specifically among the Napan people, thereby connecting the theoretical frameworks directly to the unique sociocultural setting of the research.

Despite the growing interest in pragmatic studies of Indonesian regional languages, research on Uab Meto remains predominantly structural. Previous documentation efforts have focused on grammar, morphology, and phonology (Edwards, 2016; Steinhauer, 1993; Tarno et al., 1992), leaving the pragmatic dimensions of emotional expression largely unexplored. This gap indicates that pragmatic approaches can still provide significant new insight into how emotional and interpersonal meanings are expressed in Uab Meto. However, the present study specifically focuses on verbal anger expressions among the

Napan people and examines their direct, indirect, and metaphorical forms in relation to cultural and pragmatic factors. In the broader Indonesian context, sarcasm and irony frequently function as indirect anger expressions to maintain social harmony, and the use of kinship terms often mitigates face-threatening acts in traditional communities (Atmawati et al., 2024; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Gusnawaty et al., 2022; Wijana, 1996). A recent study on politeness strategies also highlights pragmatic variations in digital interactions (Amelia et al., 2025), and a study on linguistic strategies employed by a popular K-pop song emphasizes the use of illocutionary acts in its lyrics (Nursanti et al., 2025), demonstrating the dynamic nature of pragmatic rules. Furthermore, individual differences in patterns of appraisal significantly shape the subjective experience of anger (Kuppens et al., 2007), while effective facework and conflict management remain particularly complex in collectivist cultures (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Ting-toomey & Kurogi, 1998).

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to describe and analyze linguistic phenomena based on naturally occurring data without utilizing statistical procedures. This design is appropriate for the study's purpose, as it focuses on understanding the complex forms, meanings, and contextual usage of anger expressions in Uab Meto. Grounded in [Averill's \(1982\)](#) social constructivist theory, which views anger not merely as a biological reaction but as a social role governed by cultural norms, this design allows the researcher to capture the authentic linguistic practices and the sociocultural dynamics of the Napan community in their natural setting.

Research Site and Participants

The field research was conducted in Napan Village, North Bikomi District, North Central Timor (TTU) Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, in June 2026. This location was purposively selected because it provides a rich, diverse sociocultural context relevant to the study of language and emotional expression. Furthermore, the researcher's native background in the village facilitated cultural rapport and natural data collection. At the same time, this insider position may have shaped what informants were willing to say and how they performed anger in the presence of a familiar member of their own community. The participants of this study were 10 native Uab Meto speakers selected using purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria required participants to have sufficient knowledge of the Uab Meto language and its culture, and to be aged between 30 and 60 years old. This age range was chosen to ensure that the informants possessed mature, experienced linguistic insights and a deep understanding of the local cultural norms regarding emotional expression.

The profile of the ten informants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of the Ten Informants

Informant Code	Age	Sex	Family/ Community Position	Participant Status
I1	36	Male	Family	Native Uab Meto speaker
I2	38	Male	Family	Native Uab Meto speaker
I3	42	Female	Community position	Native Uab Meto speaker
I4	50	Female	Community position	Native Uab Meto speaker
I5	56	Female	Community position	Native Uab Meto speaker
I6	60	Male	Community position	Native Uab Meto speaker
I7	38	Male	Community position	Native Uab Meto speaker
I8	48	Male	Community position	Native Uab Meto speaker
I9	54	Male	Family	Native Uab Meto speaker
I10	59	Female	Community position	Native Uab Meto speaker

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected using two primary instruments. First, elicitation tasks comprising 20 scenario-based questions in Indonesian were used to prompt informants to express their responses in Uab Meto.

This instrument was designed to capture contextual linguistic forms, including word choice and intonation, in a natural, usage-based framework. The use of scenario-based elicitation tasks is a well-established method in cross-cultural pragmatics research for capturing speech act realizations in controlled yet contextually meaningful settings (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). For presentation purposes, the 20 scenarios were grouped into five situational types: (1) dishonesty, stealing, and deception (5 scenarios); (2) criticism, disapproval, and interpersonal disagreement (4 scenarios); (3) threats, warnings, and confrontation (4 scenarios); (4) family, social responsibility, and unwanted involvement (4 scenarios); and (5) metaphorical or figurative mockery and reprimand (3 scenarios). Second, a semi-structured interview guide was utilized to gather in-depth explanations regarding the cultural and pragmatic factors shaping these anger expressions. The data collection procedure began with obtaining informed consent, followed by natural, collaboratively scheduled sessions where the researcher asked prompts in Indonesian and the informants responded authentically in Uab Meto.

The collected data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach with the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), which has also been applied in recent speech act studies (Jama & Menggo, 2026; Wailissa, 2023) and consists of three concurrent flows of activity. First, data reduction involved selecting, categorizing, and thematically coding the verbal responses to identify culturally specific patterns of anger expression, such as direct, indirect, and metaphorical forms. Second, data presentation was conducted through narrative descriptions reinforced by direct, authentic quotations from the informants. Finally, conclusion drawing was performed by interpreting how these verbal forms reflect the values, norms, and social dynamics of the Napan community to answer the research questions. To ensure the validity and reliability (trustworthiness) of the qualitative data, the study employed methodological triangulation by cross-checking data from both the elicitation tasks and the interviews, as well as member checking, where the interpretations and translations of the Uab Meto expressions were confirmed directly with the informants and other native speakers.

FINDINGS

Theme One: Forms of Verbal Anger Expressions in Uab Meto

The first major finding of this study pertains to the forms of verbal anger expressions used by the Napan people in Uab Meto. The data revealed a total of twenty verbal anger expressions, which were systematically categorized into three distinct types based on their pragmatic delivery: direct, indirect, and metaphorical expressions. Direct anger expressions were slightly more frequent than indirect ones, comprising nine instances. These expressions function primarily to reprimand, accuse, and warn, characterized by explicit wording that leaves no ambiguity about the speaker's emotional state. Examples include *Mu-'moe babaun* (Stop cheating), *Kais-a mu-bak m-ten* (Do not steal again), and *M-punu m-mat* (Rot and die right there).

Indirect anger expressions accounted for eight instances. In these expressions, speakers convey dissatisfaction implicitly through sarcasm, rhetorical questions, or subtle criticisms to maintain social harmony. Examples include *I-ja mu-leok man* (You are very good - used sarcastically), *Hi mi-skol ka?* (Do you study or not? - used as criticism), and *Mo-nit-am meop lele* (If you want to make a living, work in the garden - indirect criticism for laziness).

Finally, metaphorical anger expressions comprised three instances. In the coding process, an expression was classified as metaphorical when it used a figurative image or non-literal referent to characterize the addressee, rather than directly describing the person's behavior or stating the speaker's anger. For example, *Le belo* (literally, "monkey") is used to address a person through the image of an animal. In the communicative context, the speaker is not referring literally to a monkey but uses the animal image as a harsh characterization of the addressee. Thus, although the expression functions as an explicit insult, its classification as metaphorical is based on the figurative mapping from the animal referent to the human target. Similarly, *Mu-lete m-ak abakat* uses the image of a thief to characterize the addressee, while *Hoe, faut bubu kais-a m-polin neo na* uses the image of a round rock to mock the hearer. These expressions are therefore distinguished from direct anger expressions not by the intensity of the insult, but by the figurative image used to convey the negative evaluation. The distribution and individual examples of the twenty expressions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution and Individual Examples of Verbal Anger Expressions

No	Category	Example (Uab Meto)	English Meaning	Pragmatic Function
1	Direct	Mu-'moe babaun	Stop cheating	Reprimand / Command
2	Direct	Kais-a mu-bak m-ten	Do not steal again	Warning / Prohibition
3	Direct	M-punu m-mat	Rot and die right there	Curse / Condemnation
4	Direct	Ati m-nen fe'	Listen, first	Command / Protest
5	Direct	Le na-kloi ko?	Did he stab you?	Questioning / Accusation
6	Direct	Neo au ail-ah	I will just take a look	Threat / Warning
7	Direct	Au it ane au teop isan	If I see him, I fight him	Threat / Revenge
8	Direct	Ho ija mu-'moe-la-ha kau	You are really deceiving me	Accusation / Reproach
9	Direct	Hi m-ak au anha neo sa?	Why are you bullying my child?	Confrontation / Protest
10	Indirect	I-ja mu-leok man	You are very nice	Sarcasm / Criticism
11	Indirect	Hae ma-it-it mu-ton-an kau	If you want to take it, tell me	Reproach / Confrontation
12	Indirect	Hi mi-skol ka?	Do you study or not?	Criticism / Disapproval
13	Indirect	Ho ija lo m-palu	You are incredibly greedy	Criticism / Condemnation
14	Indirect	Ho mua-'kan-a m-ten, ho m-maet	If you curse again, you are dead	Threat / Warning
15	Indirect	Mu-skot on nae	Slide over there	Command / Dismissal
16	Indirect	Sin ka na-m-nes nok-ko fa	They are not the same as you	Comparison / Reproach
17	Indirect	Mo-nit-am meop lele	If you want to make a living, work in the garden	Advice / Reproach
18	Metaphorical	Mu-lete m-ak abakat	You damn thief	Insult / Condemnation
19	Metaphorical	Le belo	You damn monkey!	Insult / Mockery
20	Metaphorical	Hoe, faut bubu kais-a m-polin neo na	Hey, round rock, do not throw it there	Mockery / Reprimand
Total		20 expressions (9 direct, 8 indirect, 3 metaphorical)		

Theme Two: Cultural and Pragmatic Factors Shaping Anger Expressions

The second major finding reveals that the use of these verbal anger expressions is not merely a spontaneous emotional outburst but is significantly shaped by specific cultural and pragmatic factors within the Napan community.

Culturally, the expression of anger is deeply intertwined with the community's social structure and values. The findings identified eight cultural factors: educational background; age and social status; kinship relationships; inherited communication style; community values and habits; family environment; environmental and geographical factors; and gossip and communal gatherings. For instance, age and social status may affect the acceptability of direct anger: older individuals may express anger directly to younger people as a form of discipline, whereas younger speakers may use softer or more indirect forms to show respect. One informant explained, *"When speaking to older people, we usually choose softer words because respect is very important in our community."* Inherited communication style is also reflected in high intonation and expressive language, which may sound harsh to outsiders but is normalized within the community as a way of emphasizing a point. Family environment, kinship, community habits, educational background, and communal interaction further provide social contexts in which these patterns are learned and interpreted. These eight cultural factors are summarized in Table 3.

Pragmatically, the choice of anger expression is influenced by seven factors: the speaker's emotional state, conflict and disagreement, miscommunication, speaker's intention, context of interaction, intonation and speech delivery, and curiosity or excessive involvement. The speaker's intention is particularly important because an expression that sounds harsh may function as a reminder, criticism, warning, accusation, or boundary-setting act rather than as a literal threat. Similarly, context,

relationship, and miscommunication affect how an utterance is interpreted. Another informant noted, *"Sometimes we speak loudly because we want people to pay attention, not because we hate them."* This illustrates why intonation must be interpreted together with communicative intention and context. These seven pragmatic factors are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Cultural and Pragmatic Factors Shaping Anger Expressions

Factor Type	Specific Factors	Contextual Example / Description
Cultural	Educational background	Educational experience may influence the vocabulary, restraint, and directness used when expressing anger.
Cultural	Age and social status	Direct anger is more acceptable from elders to younger people when used as correction or discipline.
Cultural	Kinship relationships	Closeness between speakers can permit stronger or harsher expressions without necessarily producing lasting offense.
Cultural	Inherited communication style	High intonation and expressive wording may be treated as familiar ways of emphasizing a point.
Cultural	Community values and habits	Shared norms influence which harsh, corrective, or figurative expressions are considered acceptable.
Cultural	Family environment	Patterns of speaking learned through family interaction can shape later ways of expressing anger.
Cultural	Environmental and geographical factors	The local social and environmental setting forms part of the communicative context in which anger is expressed.
Cultural	Gossip and communal gatherings	Public or communal interactions may generate misunderstanding or conflict that triggers anger expressions.
Pragmatic	Speaker's emotional state	The intensity and form of an expression may vary with the speaker's immediate emotional state.
Pragmatic	Conflict and disagreement	Interpersonal disagreement can trigger direct, indirect, or figurative expressions depending on the situation.
Pragmatic	Miscommunication	Misunderstanding may lead speakers to use anger expressions to clarify, protest, or assert a boundary.
Pragmatic	Speaker's intention	A harsh-sounding expression may function as a reminder, criticism, warning, accusation, or threat depending on the intended action.
Pragmatic	Context of interaction	The relationship, setting, and immediate circumstances affect how an expression is interpreted.
Pragmatic	Intonation and speech delivery	High pitch or a forceful delivery can reinforce assertiveness and intensify the perceived anger.
Pragmatic	Curiosity or excessive involvement	Unwanted involvement in another person's affairs may trigger conflict and motivate an anger expression.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to address two primary research questions: (1) what kinds of verbal anger expressions are used in the Uab Meto spoken by the Napan people, and (2) how cultural and pragmatic factors shape these expressions. The findings revealed twenty distinct verbal anger expressions categorized into direct (nine), indirect (eight), and metaphorical (three) forms, with direct expressions occurring slightly more often than indirect ones. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that these expressions are not random emotional outbursts but are strategically governed by specific cultural factors (e.g., age, kinship, community values) and pragmatic factors (e.g., speaker's intention, interaction context, intonation). This finding is consistent with [Averill's \(1982\)](#) social constructivist view of anger, which regards anger as a socially organized response shaped by cultural norms and interpersonal relationships. More broadly, these results support a pragmatic view of emotional language, in which emotional utterances perform culture-specific, relation-aligning functions rather than merely describing inner states ([Parkinson, 2023](#)).

These findings do more than confirm existing pragmatic theories; they show how these theoretical principles are realized within the specific sociocultural context of the Napan community. The

prevalence of direct expressions functioning as reprimands or warnings supports Searle's (1969) Speech Act Theory, demonstrating that anger utterances carry a clear expressive illocutionary force. However, the Uab Meto data further show that the use and acceptability of direct anger are influenced by social relationships, including age, social status, and kinship, with direct expressions sometimes functioning as forms of correction or discipline. This is in line with evidence that anger expressed by higher-status counterparts is evaluated more positively in Confucian Asian cultures such as Korea and Japan than in Anglo cultures (Hong et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the use of indirect and metaphorical expressions is consistent with Grice's (1975) theory of conversational implicature and Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, illustrating how the Napan people rely on shared cultural knowledge to convey criticism without explicit confrontation. For example, the indirect expression *Hi mi-skol ka?* ("Do you study or not?") is used not as a genuine request for information but as a criticism of someone's lack of study. The utterance flouts the maxim of quantity, since the speaker asks for information that both participants already possess, and this apparent lack of informativeness prompts the hearer to infer that the speaker is criticizing the addressee for not studying adequately. This illustrates how the intended meaning of an indirect anger expression depends on contextual interpretation rather than its literal form alone. Thus, the Uab Meto data extend the application of these theories by showing how indirectness and implicature are embedded in locally meaningful social and communicative practices.

Furthermore, the strategic choice between direct and indirect forms is consistent with Ting-Toomey's (2005) Face Negotiation Theory; in the Napan community, however, face management is closely connected to social hierarchies and kinship ties. This echoes calls to complement the theory with more dynamic, context-sensitive perspectives on face and identity (Hou, 2023). The metaphorical conceptualization of anger observed here also resonates with broader patterns of emotion metaphors documented in cross-cultural linguistic research (Kövecses, 2007; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In Atoin Meto culture, metaphorical language drawing on fauna and the natural landscape has likewise been documented in the natoni oral tradition (Benu et al., 2025), which suggests that animal and natural imagery is a productive source of figurative meaning in Uab Meto. The integration of politeness strategies with local cultural values remains a cornerstone of traditional Indonesian communication (Wijana, 1996, 2010), while misinterpreting directness in these contexts can lead to sociopragmatic failure (Thomas, 1983), even though recent evidence shows that directness is not inherently impolite when it is mediated by locally appropriate markers or licensed by the social context (Nursanti et al., 2026). Evidence of face negotiation and indirect emotional expression in collectivist societies (Matsumoto et al., 2008) further supports the relevance of relational and contextual factors, while the role of intonation remains important because emotional expression in voice carries distinct acoustic markers of assertiveness (Scherer, 2003), although recent research shows that the mapping between acoustic features and emotions varies across cultures, languages, and individuals (van Rijn & Larrouy-Maestri, 2023) and remains incompletely understood (Larrouy-Maestri et al., 2025). Beyond theoretical contributions, these findings hold significant real-world applications. For local educators and practitioners in Timor Tengah Utara, this documented repertoire of anger expressions can be integrated into local content curricula (*muatan lokal*), in line with recommendations for curricula tailored to local needs and for integrating local languages in early education (Matatula & Tupalepsy, 2025), helping younger generations understand the nuanced, culturally rooted communicative practices of their ancestors. For community leaders and mediators, understanding that harsh-sounding expressions often carry positive, corrective intentions (rather than genuine hostility) can aid in community conflict resolution, preventing the escalation of disputes rooted in linguistic or cultural misinterpretation.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the sample size was relatively small (ten informants), which, while sufficient for in-depth qualitative analysis, may not capture the full spectrum of linguistic variation within the broader Napan community. Second, the data were primarily collected through scenario-based elicitation tasks and interviews rather than purely naturalistic, spontaneous interactions, which might slightly influence the authenticity of the emotional responses. Finally, the study focused exclusively on verbal expressions, excluding paralinguistic features such as facial expressions, gestures, and body language that accompany anger.

To build upon these findings, future research should consider expanding the participant pool to include a more diverse demographic, such as younger generations or speakers from neighboring villages, to observe potential diachronic shifts in anger expression. Additionally, subsequent studies could explore other pragmatic phenomena in Uab Meto, such as apologies, requests, or refusals, to build a more comprehensive pragmatic profile of the language. Finally, employing a multimodal discourse analysis approach would provide deeper insights into how verbal anger expressions are synchronized with non-verbal cues in authentic communicative settings.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the linguistic expressions of anger in Uab Meto spoken by the Napan people from a pragmatic perspective. The findings revealed twenty verbal anger expressions categorized into direct, indirect, and metaphorical forms, with direct expressions occurring slightly more often than indirect ones. These expressions are strategically shaped by specific cultural factors (e.g., age, kinship, community values) and pragmatic factors (e.g., speaker's intention, interaction context, intonation), indicating that anger in this community is an intended communicative act rather than a spontaneous emotional outburst.

Theoretically, this study enriches the pragmatic documentation of under-documented Indonesian regional languages by illustrating how Speech Act Theory and Face Negotiation Theory can be applied to the analysis of anger expressions within the collectivist cultural context of the Napan community. Practically, these findings offer significant implications for local educators and community leaders in Timor Tengah Utara. The documented expressions can be integrated into local content curricula to preserve cultural identity, while also aiding mediators in resolving conflicts by understanding that harsh-sounding expressions often carry constructive, corrective intentions rather than genuine hostility.

Despite these contributions, the current study is limited by its small sample size (ten informants), its reliance on scenario-based elicitation rather than purely spontaneous interactions, and its exclusive focus on verbal expressions. To address these gaps, future research should employ larger, more diverse demographic samples and utilize multimodal discourse analysis to capture the interplay between verbal anger expressions and non-verbal cues (e.g., gestures, facial expressions) in authentic communicative settings. Ultimately, fostering pragmatic competence is essential for preserving cultural identity in Eastern Indonesian multilingual communities, and these insights extend to foreign language learning, where cultural awareness is key to developing pragmatic competence (Taguchi, 2011).

REFERENCES

- Allan, S., & Gilbert, P. (2002). Anger and anger expression in relation to perceptions of social rank, entrapment and depressive symptoms. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 32(3), 551–565. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869\(01\)00057-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(01)00057-5)
- Amelia, V., Utami, S., & Maspuhah, M. (2025). Politeness in Digital Interaction: A Pragmatic Analysis in Genshin Impact Discord Chats. *Huele: Journal of Applied Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 5(2), 58–77. <https://doi.org/10.30598/huele.v5.i2.p58-77>
- Arka, I. W. (2013). *Language Management and Minority Language Maintenance in (Eastern) Indonesia: Strategic Issues*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/4568>
- Atmawati, D., Kurniawati, W., Sumadi, Damayanti, W., Suyadi, Wahyuni, S., Aji, E. N. W., Utami, R. E., Hendrastuti, R., Izzak, A., & Purnami, W. H. (2024). Indirect speech acts in Javanese. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 14(12), 3804–3813. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1412.14>
- Austin, J. L. (1975). *How to do things with words* (2d ed). Clarendon Press.
- Averill, J. R. (1982). *Anger and Aggression: An Essay on Emotion* (1st ed). Springer New York.
- Benu, N. N., Artawa, I. K., Satyawati, M. S., & Purnawati, K. W. (2023). Local language vitality in Kupang city, Indonesia: A linguistic landscape approach. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10(1), 2153973. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2022.2153973>
- Benu, N. N., Iye, R., & Abbas, A. (2022). The Morphosyntax of Middle Voice in Uab Meto. *APLIKATIF: Journal of Research Trends in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1(1), 21–27. <https://doi.org/10.59110/aplikatif.v1i1.30>

- Benu, N. N., Prasetyo, L., & Denil, M. (2025). Ecological Metaphors in the Natonl Oral Tradition of the Atoin Meto Culture in West Timor, Indonesia. *Linguistik Indonesia*, 43(1), 43–58. <https://doi.org/10.26499/li.v43i1.651>
- Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (1989). Investigating Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: An Introductory Overview. In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House, & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies* (pp. 1–34). Ablex.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press.
- Deffenbacher, J., Oetting, E., & Digiuseppe, R. (2002). Principles of Empirically Supported Interventions Applied to Anger Management. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 30, 262–280. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000002302004>
- Edwards, O. (2016). Parallel Sound Correspondences in Uab Meto. *Oceanic Linguistics*, 55(1), 52–86. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ol.2016.0008>
- Fischer, A. H., & Evers, C. (2011). The Social Costs and Benefits of Anger as a Function of Gender and Relationship Context. *Sex Roles*, 65(1–2), 23–34. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-011-9956-x>
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and Conversation. In P. Cole & J. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics* (pp. 41–58). Academic Press.
- Gunas, T., Bustan, F., Menggo, S., & Jem, Y. H. (2023). Politeness in Tiba Meka ritual in Manggaraian language and culture, Eastern Indonesia. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Sociality Studies*, 3, 61–71. <https://doi.org/10.38140/ijss-2023.vol3.06>
- Gusnawaty, G., Lukman, L., Nurwati, A., Adha, A., Nurhawara, N., & Edy, A. (2022). Strategy of kinship terms as a politeness model in maintaining social interaction: Local values towards global harmony. *Heliyon*, 8(9), e10650. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e10650>
- Hong, S., Moon, R. H., Chang, J. Y., Choi, J. N., & Park, J. (2024). Angry leaders and coworkers: Cross-cultural evaluation of anger expression through high-status and equal-status roles. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 24(2), 235–257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14705958241245370>
- Hou, M. (2023). Face and identity in intercultural conflict management. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 23(2), 88–96. <https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v23i2.55>
- Jama, K. B., & Menggo, S. (2026). Strengthening local culture-based speech acts use to mediate ecological sustainability: A new insight from Congko Lokap ritual in Manggarai, Indonesia. *Journal of Environmental Science and Sustainable Development*, 9(1), 263–283. <https://doi.org/10.7454/jessd.v9i1.1423>
- Kövecses, Z. (2007). *Metaphor and emotion: Language, culture, and body in human feeling* (1. paperback ed., reprint). Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Kuppens, P., Van Mechelen, I., Smits, D. J. M., De Boeck, P., & Ceulemans, E. (2007). Individual differences in patterns of appraisal and anger experience. *Cognition & Emotion*, 21(4), 689–713. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930600859219>
- Labov, W., & Fanshel, D. (1977). *Therapeutic discourse: Psychotherapy as conversation*. Academic Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
- Larrouy-Maestri, P., Poeppel, D., & Pell, M. D. (2025). The sound of emotional prosody: Nearly 3 decades of research and future directions. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 20(4), 623–638. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916231217722>
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Matatula, M. Y., & Tupalessy, P. (2025). Language policy in Indonesian elementary schools: Balancing national, local, and foreign languages. *Huele: Journal of Applied Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 5(1), 52–57. <https://doi.org/10.30598/huele.v5.i1.p52-57>
- Matsumoto, D., Yoo, S. H., & Fontaine, J. (2008). Mapping Expressive Differences Around the World: The Relationship Between Emotional Display Rules and Individualism Versus Collectivism. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 39(1), 55–74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022107311854>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. SAGE Publications.

- Nursanti, E., Suhandano, & Sulistyowati. (2026). Directness and politeness: Unraveling the paradox of directive speech acts in Javanese lingua-culture. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, 30(3), 711–737. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-45494>
- Nursanti, R. R., Fienta, A., & Toisuta, E. G. (2025). Illocutionary Speech Acts in Song Lyrics Golden by HUNTR/X. *Huele: Journal of Applied Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 5(2), 78–91. <https://doi.org/10.30598/huele.v5.i2.p78-91>
- Oetzel, J. G., & Ting-Toomey, S. (2003). Face Concerns in Interpersonal Conflict: A Cross-Cultural Empirical Test of the Face Negotiation Theory. *Communication Research*, 30(6), 599–624. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650203257841>
- Parkinson, B. (2023). Cross-cultural calibration of words and emotions: Referential, constructionist, and pragmatic perspectives. *Emotion Review*, 15(4), 348–362. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17540739231182680>
- Petkanopoulou, K., Rodríguez-Bailón, R., Willis, G. B., & Van Kleef, G. A. (2019). Powerless people don't yell but tell: The effects of social power on direct and indirect expression of anger. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 49(3), 533–547. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2521>
- Rimé, B. (2009). Emotion Elicits the Social Sharing of Emotion: Theory and Empirical Review. *Emotion Review*, 1(1), 60–85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073908097189>
- Sadiqzade, Z. (2025). The Linguistic Expression of Emotion: A Cross-Cultural Analysis. *EuroGlobal Journal of Linguistics and Language Education*, 2(3), 42–54. <https://doi.org/10.69760/egjll.2500195>
- Scherer, K. R. (2003). Vocal communication of emotion: A review of research paradigms. *Speech Communication*, 40(1), 227–256. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-6393\(02\)00084-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-6393(02)00084-5)
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139173438>
- Steinhauer, H. (1993). Notes on verbs in Dawanese. *Topics in Descriptive Austronesian Linguistics*, 130–158.
- Sukarno, S. (2015). Politeness strategies in responding to compliments in Javanese. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 91. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v4i2.686>
- Taguchi, N. (2011). Teaching Pragmatics: Trends and Issues. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 289–310. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190511000018>
- Tarno, T., Wakidi, W., Mboeik, S. J., Sawardo, P., & Kusharyanto, S. (1992). *Tata Bahasa Dawan*. <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:221992972>
- Thomas, J. (1983). Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure. *Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 91–112. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/4.2.91>
- Ting-toomey, S. (2005). The Matrix of Face: An Updated Face-Negotiation Theory. In W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Theorizing about intercultural communication* (pp. 71–92). Sage.
- Ting-toomey, S., & Kurogi, A. (1998). Facework competence in intercultural conflict: An updated face-negotiation theory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 22(2), 187–225. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767\(98\)00004-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(98)00004-2)
- van Rijn, P., & Larrouy-Maestri, P. (2023). Modelling individual and cross-cultural variation in the mapping of emotions to speech prosody. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 7(3), 386–396. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01505-5>
- Wailissa, H. R. (2023). A speech act analysis of teacher-student interactions in educational cinema: A case study of "Freedom Writers." *Huele: Journal of Applied Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 3(2), 61–72. <https://doi.org/10.30598/huele.v3.i2.p61-72>
- Wijana, I. D. P. (1996). *Dasar-dasar pragmatik*. Andi Offset.
- Wijana, I. D. P. (2010). *Analisis wacana pragmatik: Kajian teori dan analisis*. Yuma Pustaka.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.