

Abstract

Anger is a complex phenomenon with multiple definitions. It shares similarities with many overlapping constructs such as frustration, hostility, contempt and has been extensively researched. Significant attempts have been made, over the past several decades, to demarcate 'normal' anger from that which is clinical in nature, as well as to develop quantitative measures of the emotion. The role of cultural and linguistic practices that are crucial to the study of the emotion has, however, not been studied with much rigor, especially on the Indian subcontinent. The role of language and linguistic analysis, in particular, could capture many nuanced aspects of this 'basic' emotion, especially in a multilingual culture such as ours. The current exploratory research aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenology of anger by using a cross-sectional research design that undertakes a 'thick description' of data. It does so by analyzing the stories of anger narrated by young Indian adults, deploying the lens of narrative methodology. Two different methodological constructs are used in this regard, both qualitative in nature, in order to map the linguistic manifestation of the experience and expression of anger. These constructs are modified Labovian analysis and Nair's notion of 'impliculture', which builds on Labov's analysis but incorporates a structure of 'mini-codas' within the narrative conversation. The results of this research show how the tools of linguistic, semantic and narrative analysis can reveal details about, and open apertures into, the psychological processes that underlie the emotion of anger. The prolific use of figurative language in these narratives and the 'folk wisdom' that narrators bring to their perceptions of anger, emerge as powerful aspects of this prismatic emotion. Despite the limitation of small sample size, a preliminary 'Anger Lexicon' has also been constructed for the first time in this thesis bringing out both the cultural, as well as possibly universal, dimensions of the emotion. Overall, the research attests to the fact that linguistic analysis can supplement quantitative

measures in the study of anger, and that this methodology can likely be extended to other emotion research. In this sense, it is anticipated that the linguistic tools presented in this thesis will serve as a starting point, at least in the Indian social context, for a more sophisticated use of qualitative analytic methods in the study of the psychology of the emotions.

Keywords: Anger, Narrative, Evaluation, Implicature, Negation, Modals, Intensifiers, Repetition, Metaphor, Folk Theories, Code switching, Lexicon.