

Minor Insult in Youtube Videos: A Forensic Linguistic Study

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to examine utterances containing minor insults found in a YouTube video using a forensic linguistic approach. The research adopts a descriptive qualitative method, employing semantic theory as proposed by Chaer (2009) and the illocutionary speech act framework developed by Leech (1993). The analysis reveals that many utterances within the transcript carry strong contextual meanings that function not only as expressions of insult but also as tools of symbolic violence for reinforcing religious stereotypes. These utterances, when examined linguistically, reveal the deliberate use of language to marginalize, generalize, or delegitimize specific individuals or groups. Each instance of verbal expression is further classified into specific categories, including stupidizing (attacking intelligence), group labeling (assigning derogatory identities to social groups), appearance shaming (mocking physical or religious attributes), institutional shaming (criticizing entire institutions), and religious stereotyping (framing religious groups through biased generalizations). From the perspective of speech act theory, the utterances predominantly take the form of expressive, representative, and directive acts. These findings suggest that minor insults, often perceived as less harmful than hate speech—can be linguistically identified through their structural and pragmatic features. Therefore, forensic linguistic analysis offers a critical tool in distinguishing between legitimate expression and potentially defamatory or discriminatory language within public discourse.

KEYWORDS – ForensicLinguistics, Minor Insult, Semantics, Illocutionary Acts

I. INTRODUCTION

Forensic linguistics is a specialized subfield of applied linguistics that explores the interaction between language and law. The discipline involves scientific analysis of language as it occurs in legal and judicial contexts, including written legal documents, courtroom discourse, police interviews, and public statements. Originally developed as a tool to support criminal investigations, forensic linguistics has evolved into an interdisciplinary field that plays a significant role in examining whether certain utterances can be classified as legally offensive or criminal. This can include defamation, hate speech, threats, or verbal abuse, all of which can have legal consequences depending on the context, intent, and content of the utterance (Coulthard & Johnson, 2007).

A recurring issue in legal and linguistic discourse is the phenomenon of minor insults. This refers to verbal expressions that, while not physically threatening, are capable of undermining a person's sense of dignity or self-esteem. Such utterances are often subtle, indirect, or non-explicit, but can still cause emotional distress, public embarrassment, or damage to reputation. In Indonesia, the regulation of minor insults is rooted in the belief that language has the power not only to communicate but also to injure. The legal system therefore provides specific provisions to deal with this form of speech.

Several Indonesian legal instruments regulate minor insults. First, Article 315 of the Criminal Code (KUHP) punishes those who intentionally insult others in public without reason (KUHP, 1946). Second, the draft Criminal Code (RKUHP) 2023, specifically Article 437, expands this to include modern forms of communication such as digital media (RKUHP, 2023). In addition, the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), specifically Article 27 paragraph (3), targets insults and defamation that are disseminated electronically, such as through social media, messaging platforms, or online videos (UU ITE, 2008). These laws reflect the government's concern for maintaining public order, social harmony, and individual dignity in the face of increasingly widespread and easily accessible communication technology.

At the same time, the Indonesian Constitution, through Article 28 of the 1945 Constitution, guarantees the right to freedom of expression. This article affirms the freedom to express opinions, either orally or in writing, and to associate or assemble (1945 Constitution, Article 28). However, these freedoms are not absolute; they must be exercised responsibly and in accordance with laws designed to protect the rights of others and prevent social conflict. The coexistence of laws that protect freedom of speech and criminalize harmful language highlights the complex legal and ethical tensions between civil liberties and the need for social protection.

In Indonesia, cases of minor insults are increasingly common in public discourse, both in face-to-face interactions and through digital communication. Public figures, religious leaders, and ordinary internet users have been involved in controversies sparked by speech targeting specific religious, ethnic, or ideological groups. These incidents often result in legal disputes, media debates, and social divisions. The diversity of cultures, religions, and languages of Indonesian society makes determining what qualifies as insulting language challenging.

In this context, forensic linguistics emerges as an important tool for objective analysis. By applying theories of meaning, speech acts, and language functions, forensic linguistics can dissect the structure and implications of an utterance to determine its legal relevance. The illocutionary speech act theory proposed by Leech (1993) provides a framework for analyzing the speaker's intention and the communicative force behind a statement. Meanwhile, the semantic theory developed by Chaer (2009) offers insight into the meaning of words and expressions based on their lexical and contextual interpretations. Both theories are important for understanding how language can simultaneously convey information, perform actions, and cause social harm.

This study focuses on transcripts of public videos containing statements deemed to be derogatory or insulting to certain religious groups. Using Leech's speech act theory and Chaer's semantic framework, this study aims to identify linguistic forms of mild insults, interpret their meaning, and evaluate their potential consequences in the legal and linguistic realms. This interdisciplinary approach offers a model for understanding how language, law, and society intersect in cases of verbal violations.

II. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

In research, theoretical studies are needed which are used as a basis for solving the problems that have been formulated. In the research, several theories applied are as follows.

2.1 Forensic Linguistics

In Forensic Linguistics it is stated that: all types of texts have the potential to be forensic texts, both oral and written, which can be important evidence in an investigation or criminal or civil case. This includes a) text creation (authorship); b) ambiguity of form and meaning; c) language as a crime/part of a crime; d) the language of the court (in cross-evidence); e) language of witnesses/defendants; f) text of legal rules (regulations, statutes, decrees, and similar). (Olsson and Luchenbroers, 2014: 155)

2.2 Semantics

To prove language facts in the form of linguistic evidence, the Forensic Linguistic approach utilizes linguistic theories, both microlinguistics and macrolinguistics. In this research, the theories used as support is Semantics. Semantics is agreed as a term used in the field of linguistics to study the relationship between signs and the things they signify. Therefore, semantics can be interpreted as the science of meaning or significance. The meaning of language can be divided into various things when viewed from different sides and views.

According to Chaer (2012), meaning in semantics is divided into three, namely lexical meaning, grammatical meaning and contextual meaning. 1) Lexical meaning is the meaning that a lexeme has or exists even without any context. 2) Grammatical meaning is the meaning that exists as a result of grammatical processes such as the affixation process, reduplication process, composition process or sentenceization process. 3) Contextual meaning is the meaning that exists in a lexeme or word that is in one context.

2.3 Pragmatics

Pragmatic intent can be studied using speech act analysis. Speech acts are divided into three types of actions, namely the act of providing information or stating something, which is called locution. Second, speech acts that indicate doing something are called illocutionary and perlocutionary or actions that have an influence on the speech partner or require a reaction or effect from the speech partner. This research only analyzes the illocutionary act of Saifuddin Ibrahim's utterance. There are five categories of illocutionary act (Searle, 1993). There are Assertive, Directive, Commissive, Expressive and Declaration.

1) Assertive

Assertive is a speech act that is used to communicate the speaker's belief in the truthfulness of the information being presented, such as affirming, alleging, asserting, forecasting, predicting, announcing, and insisting.

2) Directive

Directive acts are a type of speech act that serve the purpose of motivating or urging the recipient to take a specific action. Essentially, this illocutionary act has the power to direct the listener to perform a specific action, whether it be by words or actions. E.g.: asking, begging, commanding, forbidding, recommending, requesting.

3) Commissive

Commissive acts refer to speaking acts that serve to motivate or encourage the speaker to take action. The illocutionary function of this is pleasurable and less competitive as it relates to the concerns of the interlocutors rather than the speaker's own interests. E.g.: offering, promising, swearing, volunteering, and vowing.

4) Expressive

Expressive acts refer to verbal activities that encompass emotions and attitudes. This speech act serves to convey and disclose the psychological attitudes of the speaker towards the individual they are interacting with. E.g. apologizing, congratulating, thanking, commiserating.

5) Declaration

A declaration act is a speech act that serves to validate or justify a prior speech act or another speech act. In other words, the speaker performs this declarative action with the goal of producing a new entity, condition, or circumstance such as adjourn, veto, sentence and baptize.

III. METHOD

The data source of this research is speeches of Saifuddin Ibrahim that are taken from his YouTube channel entitled **"Ir Soekarno- 15L4M SONTOL0Y0 = MU5L1M K4DRUN- GUS YAQUT TERUSLAH BERSUARA"**. The video was uploaded in April 2023 with fifteen minutes duration. Data collection in this research began by watching the video repeatedly. After watching and observing the contents of the video, the video is transcribed into text. After the video transcription is carried out, the transcription text is read and understood again and then classified into several parts before finally being analyzed. Text data was analyzed by applying qualitative descriptive analysis methods. In this case, linguistic elements that are considered to contain religious blasphemy are classified according to the linguistic classification that is considered to have the potential to give rise to nuances of religious blasphemy. After that, the classified data is analyzed based on the forensic linguistic approach which is supported by semantic and pragmatic theories.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the utterances contained in the video using a forensic linguistic approach with semantic theory by Chaer (2009) and illocutionary speech acts by Leech (1993). The analysis was conducted to identify the meaning of utterances containing elements of mild insults and classify them into linguistic categories such as stupidizing, group labeling, appearance shaming, institutional shaming, and religious stereotyping. Each utterance is examined in terms of lexical and contextual meaning, as well as its illocutionary type, and then evaluated whether it meets the elements of mild insults as regulated in the Criminal Code and the ITE Law.

1. Stupidizing

Stupidizing is an insults that degrade the intellectual capacity, logic, way of thinking, or intelligence of a person or group.

Saat itu belum ada tandingannya dengan masyarakat Indonesia sekarang ini enggak ada tolok ukurnya eh dia mengatakan bahwa Islam sontoloyo, islam dimana orang-orang yang beragama itu rendah sekali pemahamannya

“At that time, there was no comparison with Indonesian society today, there is no benchmark, eh, he said that Islam is stupid, an Islam where religious people have very low understanding.”

Based on Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) Sontoloyo means silly, wrong, stupid and used as a swear word. Contextually, its use in the sentence indicates an assessment of a particular religious group as irrational or low in thinking power. Based on Leech (1993) theory, this utterance is considered a representative illocutionary act, because it displays a claim or description that is considered a fact by the speaker. It also showed by emphasizing more information “an Islam where religious people have very low understanding”.

2. Group Labelling

Group labeling is general negative labeling of a social, religious, or ideological group, usually to denigrate or discredit the group.

dan Jangan mundur sedikitpun dengan kaum kadrin itu kaum Islam sontoloyo itu Pak.

and don't back down one bit from those Kadrin people, those stupid Islamic people, sir.

Semantically, the word *Kadrin* is an acronym for *kadal gurun* or desert lizard. *Kadrin* is not a standard word in the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), but has become a popular slang term and has negative connotations. In the context of this speech, *Kadrin* has a contextual meaning as a label for conservative Islamic groups with nuances of insult or mockery. In Leech's speech act framework, this utterance is included in the expressive illocutionary act, because it shows dislike and negative emotional evaluation of a certain group.

3. Institutional Shaming

Institutional shaming is insults against an institution, whether educational, religious, or state, by generalizing that the institution spreads bad or dangerous values.

Bapak periksaganti guru-gurunya yang karena pesantren itu melahirkan kaum radikal semua..

Sir, check and replace the teachers because **the Islamic boarding school produces radicals.**

According KBBI, radical means very loudly demanding change toward laws and government. Based on Chaer's theory, the contextual meaning of this utterance is very strong, because it contains a negative generalization of Islamic educational institutions. In terms of meaning it conveys the stereotype that all graduates of Islamic boarding schools are radicals, which semantically demeans the institution collectively. This utterance is a representative speech act, because the speaker states something that he considers to be true, even though it is not based on objective facts.

4. Appearance Shaming

An insults based on physical characteristics or outward appearance, including religious or cultural symbols worn by an individual.

ASN jidat hitam, cingkrang, jenggotan jangan jadi PNS

ASN with black forehead, cingkrang, beard should not become a civil servant.

From a semantic perspective as stated by Chaer, this utterance contains significant contextual meaning because it connects physical attributes commonly associated with religious identity, such as a black forehead and beard with negative judgment in the form of an assumption of unworthiness to become a State Civil Apparatus (ASN). This type of association represents a form of symbolic discrimination, in which physical appearance is used as the basis for unfair judgments against certain individuals or groups. In terms of speech acts, this utterance can be categorized as a directive illocutionary act, because the speaker conveys a kind of command or recommendation to another party not to recruit people with a certain appearance.

5. Religious Stereotyping

An insults in the form of generalizations or negative stigmas against a particular religious group or belief.

Teroris semua dari pesantren, tidak ada dari sekolah Kristen.

All terrorists are from Islamic boarding schools, none from Christian schools.

This utterance is a form of contextual meaning that contains biased comparisons and generalizations. The speaker contrasts two religious groups by cornering one and emphasizing the other, without any objective basis. This utterance is a representative illocutionary act, because it is in the form of a claim or statement about reality, but is carried out in a non-factual manner.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above this study shows that language, especially in public discourse, can serve as a powerful means of expressing minor insults. Through the application of Chaer's (2009) semantic theory and Leech's (1993) illocutionary act theory. These utterances are primarily manifested as expressive, representative, and directive acts. By categorizing these forms of insult into types such as stupidizing, group labeling, appearance shaming, institutional shaming, and religious stereotyping, this study highlights how everyday language can operate as symbolic violence. Within the framework of forensic linguistics, these findings emphasize the importance of analyzing the communicative function and socio-legal implications of seemingly non-threatening language that can constitute minor insults under Indonesian law.

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