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Forensic Linguistics: Netizens’ Hate Speech Implicature on the Issue of the 2024 Presidential Election (TikTok Social Media Case Study)

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ABSTRACT

In the area of language, vocabulary could be an indicator in materials for legal investigations. One of them is the vocabulary contained in hate speech. The aim of this research is to analyze netizens’ hate speech implicature on the issue of the 2024 presidential election by using forensic linguistics approach. This study is qualitative descriptive with data in the form of a collection of netizens’ hate speech written in the comment boxes of ten Tiktok videos. The result shows if implicatures of hate speech that arise on social media regarding the political issue of the 2024 presidential election mostly revolve around the performance and sensitive issues of ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup (SARA) attached to the potential presidential candidates. These hate speeches categorized as, (1) insults, (2) defamation, (3) provoking, (4) inciting, and (5) spreading fake news. Awareness is needed that there are limitations, such as respect for human rights (HAM), within the freedom of expression. In addition, awareness of the criminal aspects contained in the Criminal Code (KUHP) and the ITE Law is also crucial, so that netizens exercise greater caution in expressing their thoughts, especially in social media, as it leaves a digital footprint.

Keywords: Forensic Linguistics, Implicature, Hate Speech, Presidential Election

1. INTRODUCTION

In this industrial era 4.0, social media is not only a tool of communication to strengthen user kinship, but also plays a role in creating social conflict. With freedom of expression in public spaces, social media users, commonly called netizens, often make and spread inappropriate tweets or information. Netizens are very accessible in expressing feelings and thoughts through social media and tend to ignore ethics in conveying writing[1]. This condition is supported by the ease of conveying information or comments via social media to the public, which makes information or comments on social media unfilterable. As a result, these netizens’ tweets could turn into hate speech which could be detrimental to many parties, such as the commenter himself and the comment receiver.

Literally, hate speech is a sentence that describes hatred towards an object. In addition, hate speech is an act of communication in the form of provocation, incitement, insult, blasphemy, defamation, and spreading of fake news in aspects such as race, skin colour, gender, ethnicity, physical disability, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, and others committed by individuals or groups[2]. Hate speech belongs to criminal acts violating the Law on Information and Electronic Transaction, and suspects can be imprisoned or fined. There are several factors that a person or group can utter hate speech on social media. It divides these factors into 2 types, namely internal and external factors[3]. Internal factors consist of being unable to respond to opinion differences, expressing emotions, and disliking objects shown on social media. Furthermore, external factors are influenced by the environment.
One of the social media often used by netizens to argue and convey hate speech is TikTok. Based on data from We Are Social, as of April 2023, TikTok had 1.09 billion users. TikTok is a social media that displays relatively short videos with various types of content. TikTok users are not only comprised of Generation Z but also various ages with different backgrounds. We can like, comment, follow, share, or save video content on the TikTok application. More and more TikTok content is spreading among the public, such as entertainment, education, and news. One content topic currently being discussed and attracting public attention is the 2024 presidential and vice presidential elections.

According to President Joko Widodo through Lemhannas in 2022, participants in the 2024 election must start a campaign that reduces mass mobilization and maximizes information technology. Information technology is expected to generate campaigns with integrity that refuse SARA (Ethnicity, Religion, Race, and Intergroup) and identity politics and prioritize concepts and ideas. In addition, people should support their candidates respectfully and courteously. Unfortunately, some people support their preferred presidential candidate unfavourably on social media. They utter hateful and negative comments by offending SARA and degrading the dignity of their political opponents. In other words, netizens misapply the right to freedom of opinion by uttering on social media without paying attention to societal norms.

Hate speech in comments written on TikTok can be read by anyone, including the intended person. This phenomenon will have an impact on reporting actions. Indonesia has regulated hate speech cases summarized in the Law on Information and Electronic Transaction (UU ITE) since hate speech is disseminated through information technology. According to the Circular Letter of the Chief of the Indonesian National Police Number SE/6/X/2015 concerning handling hate speech, these acts are categorized as hate speech, (1) insults, (2) blasphemy, (3) defamation, (4) objectionable acts, (5) provoking, (6) inciting, and (7) spreading fake news.

This research focused on the implicature of netizens’ hate speech on TikTok towards the 2024 presidential election. The concept of implicature explains the difference that often arises between “what is said” and “what is implied”. Using implicature in language aims to soften speech, maintain polite ethics, or utter subtle (indirect) satire. Hence, utterances that contain implicature tend to imply something different. In forensic linguistics (linguistics and law), vocabulary could be an indicator in materials for legal investigations. One of them is the vocabulary contained in hate speech.

Suryani, Rika, and Siti (2021) previously conducted research on hate speech entitled *Forensic Linguistics of Hate Speech against Aurel Hermansyah on Instagram*. This research and the previous research both examine hate speech on social media. However, the social media platforms used are different. In addition, previous research focused on illocutionary speech acts in hate speech using a forensic linguistic approach, while this research will focus on implicatures in hate speech using a pragmatic approach. The second similar research was conducted by Hernina (2018) entitled *The Implicature of Netizens’ Utterances Towards Public Officials on Instagram*. Research conducted by Hernina examined the implicature of hate speech against public officials on social media. Similar to the previous research, this research will also analyse the implicature of hate speech, but the social media platforms used differ. Furthermore, previous researchers only analyse insults and the spread of fake news, while this research will present forms of hate speech with broader categories such as insults, defamation, blasphemy, objectionable acts, provocation, incitement, and the spread of fake news.

From the two previous studies, it could be concluded that this research has a different focus, namely a descriptive study of hate speech cases currently rife ahead of the 2024 presidential election on TikTok. The data and analysis methods of this study have no similarities with previous studies. Thus, this research is not a re-examination or replica of previous research.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a forensic linguistic approach. Forensic linguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies and examines language in the area of law. This type of research, referred to Moleong[9], explores and understands meaning by individuals or groups related to social issues that could be described using words with scientific concepts.

The researcher will use the listening method with basic tapping techniques and advanced note-taking techniques to obtain data. Furthermore, to get the completeness and depth of the data, the authors will also use a purposive sampling technique. The data in this study will be in the form of a collection of netizens’ hate speech written in the TikTok video comments column (2022 – 2023 period) regarding the 2024 presidential election issue. Therefore, the source of this research comes from videos uploaded by 10 accounts on TikTok.

Furthermore, to analyze the data, the researcher will use the pragmatic sub-type equivalent method with the basic technique of Determinant Element Sorting (PUP). This basic technique is then followed by the Comparative Relationship Technique to Equalize the Subject Matters (HSBP).
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Analysis of Hate Speech Implicature

1. Insult

Insult is a form of hate speech aimed at demeaning an individual. Insults can take various forms, such as degrading someone based on physical appearance, race, ethnicity, skin color, likening or comparing someone to animals, and other forms of derogatory remarks. Furthermore, the objects of insult can pertain to a person's sense of self-worth or dignity, concerning either individual or communal honor. The following is an analysis of the forms of hate speech insults found in Tiktok accounts discussing the 2024 presidential election, which have the potential to incite hostility or social conflict.

Data 01 (July 9th, 2023)

“Kayaknya waja taipe itu”

(It seems like taipe face)

In this comment, there is a video containing the opinions of experts regarding their predictions on the winner of the 2014 presidential election. Data (01) is identified as hate speech insult. Lexically, the term waja (face) means what appears first or is a portrayal (KBBI V). The implicature of the phrase waja Taipe (Taipe face) is that only indigenous people, not of foreign descent, have the right to express opinions and predict the winner of the 2024 presidential election. As a consequence, this comment builds a biased sentiment towards individuals with an oriental appearance, even if they are Indonesian citizens. This cannot be justified, as it also contradicts Article 28E paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution, which states that everyone has the right to freedom of association, assembly, and expression.

Data 02 (April 12th, 2023)

“calon ketua RT”

(Candidate for neighborhood association chief)

In the context of this comment, there is a video displaying the opinion of one of the presidential candidates regarding the 2024 presidential election. Data (02) is identified as hate speech insult. The implicature of the phrase calon ketua RT (candidate for neighborhood association chief) is to insult the ability of one of the presidential candidates to lead. The writer implies that the candidate for president is incompetent and unfit to lead a country, suggesting that they should only be a leader at the local level, such as in a neighborhood association (RT). This is clearly an insult to the object by undermining their dignity as a politician.

2. The Dissemination of Fake News (Hoax)

A hoax can be defined as information that is uncertain of being fact because the definition of information is a collection of factual data. This information is an attempt to deceive or trick the audience into believing something that is false. Hoax spreaders certainly have a subjective or objective value that is harmed through their speech or conveyed information. Additionally, hoax or fake news not only contains falsehoods but also creates distrust towards public institutions. The following is an analysis of the form of hate speech in the dissemination of fake news found on accounts discussing the 2024 presidential election on the Tiktok platform, which has the potential for hostility or social conflict.

Data 03 (January 24th, 2023)

“Ijazah UGM Pak X ASLI”

(UGM diploma of Mr. X is authentic)

In this comment, there is a video supporting the current president to run again in the third round of the 2024 presidential election. Data (03) has been identified as hate speech in the dissemination of fake news. The implicature of the sentence ijazah UGM pak X ASLI (UGM diploma of Mr. X is authentic) implies a mockery towards the previous president who was once reported to have used a fake diploma from the same university. The mockery contains a comparison suggesting that the currently supported candidate possesses an authentic diploma, hence considered better. However, this comment is not in line with the facts presented by UGM (October 2022), which has stated that the current president is indeed a legitimate graduate of the university.

Data 04 (July 10th, 2023)

“pemenangnya udah di lock belum min...??? nanya aja loh yaaa”

(Has the winner already been decided...??? Just asking)

In this comment, there is a video from the official Tiktok account of the General Election Commission (KPU) containing an invitation to register as a permanent voter in the 2024 presidential election. Data (04) is identified as hate speech in the dissemination of fake news because, according to the definition, hoaxes also include distrust towards public institutions, in this case, the KPU. The implicature of the sentence pemenangnya udah di lock belum min...??? nanya aja loh yaaa (Has the winner already been decided...??? Just asking) indicates a lack of trust in the accountability of the KPU. In other
words, the writer is suspicious of the KPU being non-transparent and being controlled by certain political parties to determine the winner of the 2024 presidential election. This comment is not in line with the vision of the KPU, which aims to be the organizer of the General Election with integrity, professionalism, independence, transparency, and accountability, to create a high-quality Indonesian democracy based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

3. Provocation

According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), a provocation is an act performed to arouse anger by means of annoying or creating negative thoughts in others. Hate speech for provocation is divided into three categories: (1) shaping the reader’s thoughts to agree with what is being conveyed, (2) discrimination based on group distinctions, and (3) excessive emotional encouragement from the speaker. Below is an analysis of the forms of hate speech for provocation found in Tiktok accounts discussing the 2024 presidential election, which may have the potential for hostility or social conflict.

Data 05 (October 27th, 2022)

“milih yang keturunan java”

(choosing the Javanese descendants)

In this context, there is a video stating that the president of Indonesia must always be of Javanese descent. The video also conveys a prophecy from mythology that the leader of Indonesia must come from the Javanese ethnicity. Data (05) is identified as hate speech for provocation. Lexically, keturunan (descendants) means descendants from previous generations (KBBI V). The implicature of the phrase keturunan Jawa (Javanese descendants) is that the history of Indonesian leaders comes from the Javanese ethnicity, and therefore, the next leader should also come from the Javanese ethnicity. Additionally, the comment creates negative thoughts in others that people from other ethnicities are not as capable and competent as those from the Javanese ethnicity. The impact of this comment is that it reinforces existing opinions and indirectly discriminates against other ethnicities, which could lead to social conflicts and divisions among different ethnic groups. However, it is important to note that there are no requirements in the presidential candidacy that the candidate must come from a specific ethnic group.

Data 06 (June 16th, 2023)

“BEERRRR..., X NGAK BISA KERJA, BISANYA NGACAK_NGACAK, NGK PANTAS JADI PEMIMPIN, ingat saudaraku”

(GEEZZ… X CAN’T WORK, HE CAN ONLY MESS AROUND, HE DOESN’T DESERVE TO BE A LEADER, keep in mind my friends)

In this comment, there is a video showcasing the performance of one of the potential presidential candidates during his tenure as a governor, particularly focusing on his efforts to improve public facilities. Data (06) is identified as hate speech for provocation. The implicature of the sentence BEERRRR..., X NGAK BISA KERJA, BISANYA NGACAK_NGACAK, NGK PANTAS JADI PEMIMPIN, ingat saudaraku (GEEZZ… X CAN’T WORK, HE CAN ONLY MESS AROUND, HE DOESN’T DESERVE TO BE A LEADER, keep in mind my friends) is to display an excessive emotional outburst from the writer towards the former governor's performance. The repetition of the phrase mess around implies destruction. This is because the potential presidential candidate is alleged to have caused damage to green areas in a certain region while serving as governor, thereby leaving a significant problem for the next leader. Furthermore, the comment indirectly provokes readers to take a contrary stance toward the potential presidential candidate. The phrase keep in mind my friends means a warning and indirectly invites netizens to side with the writer by not supporting the mentioned candidate.

5. Incitement

Incitement is defined as encouraging and urging others to intentionally engage in certain actions. It implies an intentional nature and is more forceful than enticing or persuading. Below is an analysis of the form of hate speech in the form of incitement found on Tiktok accounts discussing the 2024 presidential election, which has the potential for hostility or social conflict.

Data 07 (March 22nd, 2023)

“Benarlah pak X masuk Kristen aja, dia udah pernah pake stola, di beri nama Yohanes pula si pak X”

(It’s true that Mr. X just converted to Christianity, he's already used the Stola, Mr. X is also given name Yohanes)

In this comment, there is a video featuring someone expressing an opinion that a potential presidential candidate would gain a larger following if they converted to another religion. Data (07) is identified as hate speech
incitement. The implicature of the statement Benarlah pak X masak Kristen aja, dia udah pernah pake Stola, di beri nama Yohanes pula si pak X (It's true that Mr. X just converted to Christianity, he's already used the Stola, Mr. X is also given name Yohanes) is that the writer consciously encourages others to do something, which is to convert to another religion. This encouragement arises because, at a certain moment, the subject has worn attributes and been associated with a particular religion. This incitement is not acceptable because the freedom of religion of Indonesian citizens is governed by Article 29 paragraph (2) of the Constitution, which states that the state guarantees the freedom of each citizen to embrace their own religion and to worship according to their religion and beliefs.

6. Defamation

The definition of defamation in the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP) is the act of tarnishing someone's good name or reputation through oral or written statements. In Indonesia, there are several criminal acts categorized as defamation, including: accusing something verbally, accusing something in written or published form, slander, false accusation, distributing and/or transmitting and/or making electronically accessible information and/or electronic documents that contain insults and/or defamation[12]. Below is an analysis of hate speech in the form of defamation found on Tiktok accounts discussing the 2024 presidential election, which has the potential to incite hostility or social conflict.

Data 08 (June 14th, 2023)

"X otak kompeni pak..bsnya hy ngerusak di negri ini. Dia y ambisi kekuasaan dan ingin merampok di negri ini”

(X is like a colonialist, sir.. usually only destroys this country. He is ambitious for power and wants to plunder this country)

In this comment, there is a video showing the performance of one of the potential presidential candidates during their time as a governor, particularly in regard to public facility improvements. Data (08) is identified as hate speech and defamation. The implicature of the statement X otak kompeni pak..bsnya hy ngerusak di negri ini. Dia y ambisi kekuasaan dan ingin merampok di negri ini (X is like a colonialist, sir. It usually only destroys this country. He is ambitious for power and wants to plunder this country) that the speaker alleges that the candidate is driven by ambitions for power and seeks to plunder the country. The word plunder suggests forcefully taking away the rights of the people. The word colonialist reinforces the implicature that the candidate is linked to a foreign company, particularly the Dutch. As per historical context, the Dutch colonial era involved their invasion and forcible acquisition of this country's wealth. Therefore, the writer intentionally associates the candidate with the colonialist and indirectly defames their reputation.

Data 09 (June 15th, 2023)

"X the real badut Indonesia.. rusak negara ini kalo dia yg pimpin”

(X is the real clown of Indonesia...This country will be ruined if he leads it)

In this comment, there is a video showing the performance of one of the potential presidential candidates during their time as a governor, particularly in regard to public facility improvements. Data (09) is identified as hate speech in the form of defamation. The implicature of the statement X the real badut Indonesia.. rusak negara ini kalo dia yg pimpin (X is the real clown of Indonesia...This country will be ruined if he leads it) is that the writer assesses the candidate as unworthy of being a leader, believing that the candidate will not contribute to the improvement of the country based on what is depicted in the video, which showcases the degradation of a green area during their tenure as governor. Furthermore, the phrase the real clown of Indonesia reinforces the indicator of defamation, as the object is equated with a clown. Lexically, a clown is known as a comedian. Therefore, the writer intentionally likens the object to a comedian, suggesting that their leadership performance is worthy of ridicule.

3.2. The Impact of Hate Speech on Social Media

The hate speech freely written by netizens on social media actually has significant but often overlooked consequences. Directly or indirectly, hate speech represents a form of intimidation against something or someone perceived as different from the writer’s (commenter's) perspective and life principles. Below are some of the impacts that can arise from hate speech on social media.

Firstly, the presence of hate speech tends to instil fear among the public to express their aspirations openly, as they worry about receiving online abuses (hate speech) from other netizens. This is supported by Ahnaf and Suhadi (2014)[13], who argue that hate speech fundamentally constitutes intimidation and restricts freedom of speech, as it reinforces a social atmosphere that hinders the free participation of citizens in a democracy. Usually, this affects minority groups. If this situation persists, the citizens' right to safely express their opinions in public will remain unfulfilled. Hate speech impedes the free and healthy exchange of ideas.
Secondly, the emergence of hate speech indirectly widens the scope for discrimination and violence. This often occurs, especially in the context of political competition during elections. Identity conflicts remain a challenge in facing the political years because hate speech divides society into specific groups. Minority groups can be easily mobilized to engage in violence when images of hatred and identity sentiments are used.

Thirdly, hate speech can lead to a crisis of tolerance among citizens towards differences, such as religious, ethnic, racial, or political views. Moreover, such conditions can cause victims to feel fearful in their social environment, leading them to choose isolation and fear interaction.

Fourthly, in legal terms, criminal sanctions against hate speech perpetrators are regulated in the Criminal Code (KUHP) and other criminal provisions outside the Criminal Code. The criminal sanctions against hate speech perpetrators in the Criminal Code and other criminal provisions outside the Criminal Code are as follows:

a) Article 310 paragraphs (1) and (2);

(1) Whoever intentionally attacks the honor or good name of a person by accusing them of something, with the clear intention that the matter be publicly known, shall be subject to imprisonment for a maximum term of nine months or a fine of up to four thousand and five hundred Indonesian Rupiahs.

(2) If such an act is done in writing or through pictures disseminated, displayed, or affixed in public, the offender shall be subject to imprisonment for a maximum term of one year and four months or a fine of up to four thousand and five hundred Indonesian Rupiahs for written defamation.

b) Article 311 paragraph (1);

“If the person who commits the crime of defamation or written defamation is allowed to prove the truth of the accusation, fails to do so, and the accusation is contrary to what is known, then they shall be subject to imprisonment for a maximum term of four years.”

c) Article 311 paragraph (1);

“If the person who commits the crime of defamation or written defamation is allowed to prove the truth of their accusation but fails to do so, and the accusation is contrary to what is known, then they shall be subject to imprisonment for a maximum term of four years.”

Other criminal provisions outside the Criminal Code (KUHP) are stipulated in the legislation of Law Number 19 of 2016 (amendment to Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE Law)), which refers to the following articles:

a) Article 28 paragraphs (1) and (2);

(1) Any person intentionally and without right disseminates false and misleading information resulting in consumer losses in Electronic Transactions.

(2) Any person intentionally and without right disseminates information aimed at fomenting hatred or enmity towards individuals and/or certain groups of society based on ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup (SARA).

b) Article 45 paragraph (2);

“Yes any person who fulfills the elements as referred to in Article 28 paragraph (1) or paragraph (2) shall be punished with imprisonment for a maximum term of 6 (six) years and/or a fine of up to Rp 1,000,000,000.00 (one billion rupiah).”

4. CONCLUSION

The implicatures of hate speech that arise on social media regarding the political issue of the 2024 presidential election mostly revolve around the performance and sensitive issues of ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup (SARA) attached to the potential presidential candidates. These hate speeches fall under the categories of insult, defamation, incitement, provocation, and dissemination of hoaxes. Many netizens still engage in hate speech under the pretext of democracy and citizen participation in voicing their opinions. However, there are many better and healthier ways to express aspirations in the public sphere.

Awareness is needed that there are limitations, such as respect for human rights (HAM), within the freedom of expression. Hate speech constitutes a deviation from freedom of expression. Misinterpretations regarding hate speech often arise because comments are considered merely as criticism or aspirations. Therefore, netizens need to be more conscious in filtering the speech they wish to convey. Awareness of the criminal aspects contained in the Criminal Code (KUHP) and the ITE Law is also crucial, so that netizens exercise greater caution in expressing their thoughts, especially in social media, as it leaves a digital footprint. In the field of linguistics, language serves as one of the indicators in legal investigation and inquiry.
REFERENCES


