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FORENSIC LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS: CIVIL SERVANT SPEECH EQUATING PROSTITUTES WITH PROBOLINGGO PARLIAMENT MEMBERS

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ABSTRACT

The research investigated an alleged defamation statement made by a civil servant in Probolinggo, suggesting that the Regional People's Representative Council of Probolinggo (DPRD Probolinggo) held a lower social status than local sex workers, employing forensic linguistics as its analytical framework. The research was a single case study that applied a qualitative approach to analyze the data. A single case study was a suitable method for analyzing a single case of an individual; here was a civil servant in a socialization event attended by the regional government. The data consisted of four sentences of verbal statements and eight accompanying non-verbal cues made by the civil servant toward Probolinggo Parliament members. The research uncovers that the civil servant's remarks contain pointed appraisals and judgments aimed at DPRD Probolinggo members, ultimately leading to legal action predicated on allegations of defaming the collective dignity of DPRD Probolinggo. However, it is important to emphasize that these critical assessments are specific to certain members rather than constituting a comprehensive censure of the entire institutional body. Consequently, the civil servant may potentially be exempt from institutional defamation charges, with these actions interpreted as robust workplace criticisms. Nevertheless, the research underscores the potential legal repercussions stemming from such critiques and the need for a meticulous evaluation of their legal implications within the legal framework, given their potential to generate future legal disputes.

Keywords: forensic linguistics, defamation, legal investigation

INTRODUCTION

In forensic linguistics, focused on analyzing linguistic evidence for legal purposes (Coulthard, 2010), the research explores insult and defamation through a detailed examination of language, offering valuable insights for legal investigations. Nilufar (2023) has illuminated that insults and defamation when viewed through the legal lens, embody acts that undermine the dignity of individuals or institutions (Ishak, Malik, & Suwarti, 2023). Notably, the discourse surrounding defamation within the Indonesian context, especially in political and institutional realms, has been significantly enriched by studies conducted by Bachari

(2019), Biela (2022), and Vidhiasi, Saifullah, and Bachari (2023). These comprehensive investigations primarily leverage the appraisal theory, focusing on linguistic elements to dissect written content for defamation. However, a conspicuous research gap becomes apparent when one considers the limited attention given to the gestural elements that often accompany these acts, leaving a substantial void in understanding the intricate dynamics of insults and defamation.

While existing research provides valuable insights into linguistic nuances, such as the use of hate speech and negative language on digital platforms, as seen in Bachari's (2019) research on defamation

*Corresponding Author 253 against Indonesia's President, Joko Widodo, and Biela's (2022) exploration of insults and hate speech directed at the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), it primarily centers on linguistic components, largely neglecting the significance of accompanying gestures.

Vidhiasi, Saifullah, and Bachari's (2023) investigation into defamation involving Natalius Pigai further contributes to people's understanding of the intersection between linguistic choices and political judgments. However, these studies have tended to emphasize linguistic aspects, resulting in a substantial research gap that pertains to the analysis of gestures in the context of defamation.

The research gap becomes more conspicuous when contextualized within the contemporary trends in forensic linguistics, as highlighted by Tayebi and Coulthard (2022). This emerging trend emphasizes the use of the appraisal theory to evaluate content, encapsulating attitudes, graduation, and engagement based on Martin and White (2005). While this approach has proven invaluable in dissecting linguistic elements in written and spoken communication, it often confines its analysis to the realm of the written or spoken word, overlooking the rich communicative potential offered by gestures.

The research identifies a specific gap within this landscape. The limited exploration of how nonverbal cues contribute to the complexity of insults and defamation. Silpani, Suematsu, and Yoshida's (2022) emphasis on gestures in pragmatics and Cienki's (2022) assertion that bodily movements and facial expressions play a crucial role in conveying intentions suggest an untapped dimension in the study of defamation.

The research addresses a critical gap by concurrently analyzing linguistic and gestural elements in insults and defamation. This dual-perspective methodology enriches the understanding of communicative intent, contributing significantly to forensic linguistics. The integrated approach not only bridges existing gaps but also sets the stage for future research, acknowledging the interplay between language and gesture in shaping communication.

The research promises to enhance the analytical scope of forensic linguistics, providing comprehensive insights into insults and defamation. The integrated approach holds potential for legal practitioners, policymakers, and societal stakeholders in understanding defamation cases in the digital age. As the digital landscape evolves, a heightened understanding of both verbal and non-verbal dimensions becomes crucial for effective communication strategies and safeguarding integrity.

By integrating verbal and gestural analysis, the research aims to achieve comprehensive results, offering a dual perspective that enhances our understanding of the subject. Forensic linguistics, defined as the study of language in legal contexts, plays a pivotal role in decoding complex communicative acts.

Therefore, the research analyzes a recent case of insult and defamation that arose in May 2023 in

Probolinggo, Indonesia. The case involves a civil servant who, during a meeting with members of the Probolinggo Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) to discuss tobacco awareness, made derogatory remarks comparing the honorability of prostitutes in Probolinggo to that of the attending DPRD members.

The civil servant states that statement because the prostitutes are willing to sacrifice themselves for the well-being of their families. In contrast, the DPRD members of Probolinggo only think about official visits and neglect the community they represent (Rofiq, 2023). This statement is triggered by the scarcity of subsidized fertilizer available in the region for growing tobacco, and that is why the civil servant becomes angry and makes such remarks.

Immediately, this infuriates all the members of the DPRD present in the room. Subsequently, 50 DPRD members promptly report the statement and the civil servant to the police. As there has been no further development regarding this case within the legal domain, this report has led to the civil servant potentially being charged with the criminal offense of defamation against a state institution, namely the Probolinggo DPRD, if proven guilty.

This newly emerged insult and defamation case from May 2023 presents an intriguing opportunity for forensic linguistic analysis, as no prior research exists. Examining this case through linguistics holds significant implications for advancing the field of forensic linguistics. The research seeks to scrutinize a statement made by a civil servant from a forensic linguistic perspective and assess its legal implications. To address this issue, the research aims to uncover the grounds for legal action taken by 50 members of the Probolinggo Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) against the individual in question.

The research aims to analyze the utterances and physical movements made by the subject as evidence to demonstrate the subject's real intention. Given the absence of conclusive findings, the research provides fresh insights by examining the case from a forensic linguistics perspective.

METHODS

The research is considered qualitative because the data needs further elaboration regarding its underlying meanings. Furthermore, the research does not examine numerical data, thus making it suitable for qualitative research. It also involves contextual analysis of the acquired data, which is a characteristic that categorizes it as qualitative research.

In the data collection and analysis process, several steps are followed. Initially, the researchers obtain a video as the primary data source from Pikiran Rakyat (2023). After viewing the video using VLC, the researchers transcribe the civil servant's utterances for clarity and put them in Microsoft Word, highlighting any unclear portions. Once the transcription is

complete, the researchers categorize specific elements from the video. The elements found are utterances of verbal statements, which are organized in Table 1, and the gestures made by the civil servant documented in Figures 1 to 8.

In the Results and Discussion section, the gathered data is presented in a single table, incorporating both the civil servant's utterances and accompanying gestures. The researchers employ appraisal and gesture theories to interpret the data, providing precise and comprehensive explanations. Appraisal theory is applied to analyze the civil servant's statements that equate or diminish the social status and dignity of DPRD members, given its extensive work in language analysis. Subsequently, the theory of gestures in pragmatics is utilized to reinforce the claims derived from the appraisal theory. This analytical process continues until all the data is thoroughly discussed, as detailed in the following section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data consists of short videos with a duration of approximately 47 seconds, depicting how one of the civil servants states that the members of the Probolinggo Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) are no more honorable than prostitutes in the Klerkeran, Besuk, Probolinggo area. Since the acquired data is in video format, visual and textual aspects can be analyzed. To put it short, the research has two types of data: utterances transcriptions and gestures used by the civil servant.

Table 1 Data Transcription of Civil Servant's Utterances

| No. | Time Stamps | Manual Transcription of the Utterances Spoken by the Civil Servant |
|-----|---------------|---|
| 1. | 00:01 – 00:06 | Di Probolinggo ini, masih lebih mulia pelacur yang ada di Klerkeran itu pak haji. (Here in Probolinggo, prostitutes in Klerkeran are more noble, Sir.) |
| 2. | 00:08 - 0015 | Saya menerima karena kalau pelacur itu mau menjual dirinya untuk keluarga dan anak-anaknya. (I can accept it because they do prostitute for their family and children.) |
| 3. | 00:17 - 00:22 | Sedangkan anggota dewan cuma kunjungan saja, yang difikirkan dirinya. (Meanwhile, the members of parliament only make visits, think of themselves.) |
| 4. | 00:23 - 00:28 | Sekarang ini yang terpenting permasalahan pupuk gimana (The important for now is what about the fertilizer problem?) |

Therefore, it can be categorized the utterance before within the appraisals that the civil servant made, which are:

Table 2 Appraisals Found in Civil Servant's Utterances 1

| Appraisal | | |
|------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Attitude | Graduation | Engagement |
| Pelacur (Prostitute) | | |
| Masih lebih (are more) | Mulia (Glorious) | |

Table 3 Appraisals Found in Civil Servant's Utterances 2

| Appraisal | | |
|---|----------------------|------------|
| Attitude | Graduation | Engagement |
| keluarga dan anak- anaknya (their family and children) | Menerima (Accept) | Saya (I) |

Table 4 Appraisals Found in Civil servant's Utterances 3

| Appraisal | | |
|---|------------|------------|
| Attitude | Graduation | Engagement |
| Sedangkan (Meanwhile) | | |
| yang difikirkan dirinya (think of themselves) | | |
| Cuma kunjungan (only make visits) | | |

Table 5 Appraisals Found in Civil servant's Utterances 4

| Appraisal | | |
|------------|-------------|--|
| Graduation | Engagement | |
| | Gimana | |
| | (How about) | |
| | | |

Beyond transcribing utterances, the research collects images showcasing gestures accompanying speech. In these figures, the civil servant uses hand movements such as pointing forward, left, up, and down. Also, the civil servant maintains a consistent physical stance to emphasize feelings and convey information. The notable gestures can be seen in Figure 1. Figure 2 is linked to utterance number 1 in Table 1, which are bodily gestures and pointing gestures. The pointing also goes the same in the utterance 2 in Figure 3. Utterance 3 contains significant gestures that enhance the intention of the civil servant, which can be seen in Figures 4 and 5. The last gesture found of the civil servant is in utterance number 4, which can be seen in Figures 6, 7, and 8.



Figure 1 Gesture of Utterance 1



Figure 2 Gesture of Utterance 1



Figure 3 Gesture of Utterance 2



Figure 4 Gesture of Utterance 3



Figure 5 Gesture of Utterance 3



Figure 6 Gesture of Utterance 4



Figure 7 Gesture of Utterance 4



Figure 8 Gesture of Utterance 4

The following is data on the speech uttered by the civil servant regarding his speech, which compares and says that prostitutes are in a more noble position than DPRD members in the courtroom. Apart from that, there are gestures used by the civil servant when making the speech. This combination of verbal and gestural data is exciting and can be discussed further. Therefore, that data need to be elaborated and explained further in the next explanation.

The actions of the civil servant have led to his reported involvement in criminal cases involving insult and defamation. This analysis delves into the linguistic aspects behind this legal recourse. Table 6 shows the very first statement uttered by the civil servant.

Table 6 of Utterance 1

| No. | Utterances Gestures | |
|-----|--|--|
| 1. | Di Probolinggo ini, masih lebih mulia pelacur | |
| | yang ada di Klerkeran itu pak haji | |
| | (In here Probolinggo, prostitutes in Klerkeran are | |
| | more noble, Sir.) | |

The meaning that can be gathered from Table 6 is that the civil servant is comparing the position of a sex worker with a member of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) who is inside the room. The inclusion of the term 'pelacur' in the statement made by the civil servant can be interpreted to be taken from the context of the numerous prostitution establishments in the Probolinggo area. Furthermore, the prevalence of prostitution cases in Probolinggo, especially in the location referred to by the civil servant, Klerkeran, has been happening for a long time and has become a common occurrence if that place is indeed a prostitution area in Besuk, Probolinggo (Ilmiah, Azizah, & Amelia, 2018). This may indicate that the civil servant uses the term 'pelacur' as a reference because prostitution is one of the complex issues in the Probolinggo area.

If previously there is a bit of context regarding why the word 'pelacur' appears in Table 6, the theory of appraisal is applied to the utterance above to see why the civil servant reasoning is reported. According to the theory of appraisal, there are three branches of assessment. Namely, 'affect' provides an assessment expression based on the emotional condition perceived by the speaker. Furthermore, there is a 'judgment' that evaluates an action, and finally, there is an 'appreciation' that provides an assessment of an object.

The statement in Table 6 contains a key phrase that is the focal point of the assessment, namely, "masih lebih mulia pelacur". When analyzed using the appraisal theory, this expression can be categorized into two aspects: an assessment based on emotions and an assessment of a person's behavior referenced within their surrounding context. The emotional-based assessment is evident in the phrase "masih lebih mulia", rooted in the dissatisfaction and disappointment of this civil servant towards the performance of the regional legislative council (DPRD) members in that area. This is further supported by an evaluation of the behavior or performance of the DPRD members, compared against the existing norms in the region. This is evident in the reference to prostitutes, which is prevalent in the Probolinggo area.

The presence of the word 'pelacur' expresses disappointment with the performance of the members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), which is viewed unfavourably by civil servants. Coincidentally, there are many prostitutes in that area, leading to a comparison between prostitutes and DPRD members. This is also a form of criticism towards the performance of the DPRD members who cannot carry out their work effectively, thus being overshadowed by prostitutes who, according to the civil servant, possess the capacity to perform their work well.

The disappointment and criticism are further intensified by the expression of graduation or the degree of evaluative intensity, which involves adding the term 'mulia'. This 'mulia' term is attributed to a prostitute, and undoubtedly, this demonstrates the civil servant bias towards the prostitute rather than the

members of the DPRD. This understandably angers the DPRD members as they are considered by the civil servants to be lower than prostitutes.

Furthermore, there are two critical gestures in the expression made by the civil servant, as shown in Figures 1 and 2. The first gesture is leaning forward and gripping the chair tightly. Meanwhile, the second gesture is pointing, but not directly, towards the members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), somewhat towards the left side of the civil servant.

According to Abdulghafor et al. (2022), the advanced body indicates that a person is confident and sure of what they are saying and is not afraid to express what they want. The second gesture is a pointing gesture, which indicates showing or directing attention to something being pointed at (Ahn, 2022). In the context of the image, the civil servant seems to be indicating the location of the prostitution and indicating that the place is in the area.

Table 7 of Utterance 2

| No. | Utterances Transcription | | |
|-----|---|--|--|
| 2. | Saya menerima karena kalau pelacur itu mau | | |
| | menjual dirinya untuk keluarga dan anak-anaknya | | |
| | (I can accept it because they do prostitute for their | | |
| | family and their children | | |

Considering the utterance in Table 7, there is undoubtedly a judgement made by the civil servant. Prostitutes are often regarded as lowly by society due to their occupation being considered less respectable in the societal framework than members of the Regional Legislative Council (DPRD). The evaluative expression that drives the discourse above is initiated again by disappointment and criticism of the performance of DPRD members, as indicated by the abovementioned earlier.

However, the expression of disappointment is also accompanied by an appreciation for what sex workers do in their daily lives: to support their families and children, as mentioned in the phrase "keluarga dan anak-anaknya". Furthermore, the civil servant is already convinced of the sex workers' intention to support their families, indicated by the verb menerima. Of course, this has made the members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) angry about this statement, as normatively, their occupation holds a higher status than that of a sex worker, and not all sex workers work to support their families. However, this civil servant is expressing appreciation towards sex workers rather than the DPRD members.

Furthermore, the expression also reinforces the personal disappointment held by the civil servant regarding the performance of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) members in that area. In this case, the civil servant expects a positive resolution from the regional parliament members. The absence of a concrete solution results in disappointment,

which evolves into anger with an elevated speaking tone. He employs a metaphorical comparison, likening the parliament member to a prostitute supporting their family. Thus, when evaluated in terms of engagement, the pronoun 'saya' at the beginning of the sentence refers to the opinion expressed by the civil servant, purely stemming from their thoughts and without any coercion or influence from others. This increasingly indicates that the civil servant in question does not have a favorable view of the existing DPRD members.

The gestures shown in Figure 3 made by the civil servant are also the same as the gestures made in the first utterance, which is a pointing gesture, but this time with a different intention. The civil servant directs this pointing gesture forward, and normatively, knows that members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) are always positioned at the front of the room during meetings. This certainly reinforces the statement from the civil servant that draws a comparison between the status of a prostitute and a member of the DPRD.

Table 8 of Utterance 3

| No. | Utterances Transcription | | |
|-----|---|--|--|
| 3. | Sedangkan anggota dewan cuma kunjungan saja | | |
| | yang difikirkan dirinya | | |
| | (Meanwhile, the members of parliament only | | |
| | make visits think of themselves) | | |

The pinnacle of assessment given by civil servants to the members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) is found in Table 8. This begins with the word 'sedangkan'. Chico (2022) has said that the word 'sedangkan' is a transitional phrase that carries a negative message within a sentence. In Table 8, the word 'sedangkan' is intended to provide a contrasting effect, aiming to compare the work motivation of a prostitute with the work motivation of the members of the DPRD, according to those civil servants.

Afterward, the civil servant provides assessments of disappointment, dissatisfaction, judgment, and valuation. Not only these four, but there are also quantification and refinement of assessments. The expressions of assessment regarding disappointment, dissatisfaction, and judgment remain the same as in the first and second sentences. They still assess the position of DPRD members as lower than prostitutes, as prostitutes have high dedication and moral goals and are willing to sacrifice. However, this is also accompanied by an appreciative aspect of valuation. The civil servant provides an emotional opinion stating that the value of the performance of the existing DPRD members is not beneficial for their surroundings. This is marked by the phrase 'yang difikirkan dirinya'.

Furthermore, a limitation can be seen in the word 'Cuma' (only). Its definition in KBBI (Indonesian Dictionary) means 'nothing else' or 'no other options'.

In the context of the sentence, this word quantifies the work done by members of the DPRD (Regional People's Representative Council), specifically 'cuma kunjungan' (only visits). This can be interpreted as only the activity of visits can be carried out by members of the DPRD, and there is no option to perform other tasks.

All feelings of disappointment, dissatisfaction, judgement, and evaluation present in the sentence are reinforced by the lack of reference regarding the opinion of the civil servant. In the sentence above, the opinion is formed solely based on the monoglossia employed by the civil servant, which means they only use first-person pronouns and do not involve third parties to support the argument they present. This further demonstrates the displeasure of this civil servant towards the members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in Probolinggo.

The dislike of civil servants is further clarified by the gestures shown in Figure 4, which are intended for the members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). Pointing to the left is a gesture aimed at prostitutes living in the Klerkeran area. Meanwhile, Figures 4 and 5 show the civil servant raising his hand when he says that the parliament members are only visiting. Putting his hand forward (to the parliament members) and up and away from his body means he intends to emphasize his disappointment with the parliament members' actions. Of course, this is to show and clarify how the civil servant compares the prostitute in Klerkeran with the DPRD member in front of them. This gesture also reinforces the expressions of assessment that they make earlier and in this sentence.

Table 9 of Utterance 4

| No. | Utterances Transcription | |
|-----|--|--|
| 4. | Sekarang ini yang terpenting permasalahan pupuk | |
| | gimana (The important for now is what about the fertilizer problem?) | |

As stated in Table 9, an assessment is used by the civil servant, namely the aspects of valuation and concern. The aspect of valuation can be seen in the keyword, where he considers the issue of fertilizer for tobacco cultivation in that area to be the most important thing to discuss. Furthermore, he expresses an emotion, a concern, reflected in the word 'gimana' (how). This word indicates that he is anxious because the matter still needs to be resolved during the meeting, resulting in a lack of decisions.

The gesture produced by the civil servant in this sentence remains the same, which is a pointing gesture, but this time, the civil servant is pointing downward, as shown in Figures 6, 7, and 8. The downward pointing gesture can be interpreted as indicating the current condition or ongoing situation. This indicates that the civil servant wants everyone present to focus on the

issues again.

Upon thoroughly analyzing the evaluations expressed by the civil servant towards DPRD members, it becomes necessary to ascertain whether these assessments are specifically aimed at individual DPRD members, a portion of them, or if they encompass the entire DPRD of Probolinggo. This inquiry is crucial for clarifying the legal implications surrounding the civil servant's actions, and it will help determine if charges related to defamation and slander are warranted or if other legal avenues should be explored.

Several key moments are related to the expression of assessments used by the civil servant in the meeting room. The first moment the civil servant uses in the comparisons within the expressions he/she utters is the phrase 'anggota dewan'. In that assessment expression, he does not direct the comparison towards the institution because he does not use the phrase 'Probolinggo DPRD'. The civil servant uses the phrase 'anggota dewan' directed towards the members of the Probolinggo DPRD. Given that the target of appraisal is exclusively the 'anggota dewan' or parliament members, in accordance with appraisal theory, the assessment is specifically directed towards the identified target (Tayebi & Coulthard, 2022).

The second point is how the comparison between prostitutes and members of the Regional Legislative Council (DPRD) comes from the inadequate performance of DPRD members; the expression can be categorized as destructive criticism due to its inelegant wording and potential to provoke anger from the speaker. Nevertheless, it justifies criticism (Neoh et al., 2022). However, sharp criticism can also act as a stimulus for its recipient (Zada et al., 2022), depending on how the recipient accepts the criticism. Thus, the expression in question has well-founded reasons.

Moreover, no gesture moves the hand in all directions of the room. If the civil servant does that, it can be interpreted that the circular pointing gesture continues to refer to the entirety of the DPRD institution, as the members of the DPRD do not sit on the left, right, or back parts of the room.

The fourth keyword is in the fourth sentence; after providing an appraisal from sentences 1 to 3, the civil servant invites anyone in the meeting room to return to the core issue of the meeting. This indicates the professionalism of the civil servant, who does not wish to linger in criticism and wants to delve into the topic of the ongoing work discussion immediately.

It can also be concluded that these four keywords are directed at something other than the prominent institution of the Probolinggo DPRD but rather at several individuals considered not to be doing their job well. This results in sharp criticism from the civil servant towards members of the Probolinggo DPRD, which can damage professional relationships in the workplace if it is not to be taken lightly (Neoh et al., 2022).

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that the forensic linguistic analysis indicates that the civil servant's expressions, while strong, are likely to be interpreted as a form of sharp criticism rather than direct insult and defamation toward the DPRD institution. From the recorded utterances, hand gestures, and physical movements, it is evident that the civil servant's intention is not to insult or offend the entire DPRD institution. Instead, he aims to express disappointment specifically toward the hypothetical parliament member who appeared dissatisfied with their service to the citizens. The straight-pointing hand movement indicates a focus on an individual, not the entire parliament present in the

Offensive implications might arise if he gestured in a circular way, encompassing the whole parliament, but this is not the case. However, this does not rule out the possibility that this civil servant will meet with other processes because of a form of sharp criticism since it can damage relationships and has the potential to cause other problems.

Nevertheless, the limitations of the research implementation include the need for more extensive linguistics data since this research is a single case study. Also, a deeper context analysis and a deeper exploration of the potential consequences of sharp criticism on interpersonal relationships also need to be elaborated further by the next researchers.

For researchers exploring similar themes, it is recommended to use various linguistic data context analysis and to prove some interpretation in this research. Also, the potential societal and interpersonal implications of sharp criticism ensure a nuanced understanding of the communicative acts in question.

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