Cyberpragmatic Analysis of Indonesian Opposition Politicians' Tweets

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Abstract—**The study attempts to describe how opposition politicians construct their transmission of meaning by utilizing cyber-based communication features, particularly in a social media platform. A corpus of 30 Twitter postings (tweets) is qualitatively analyzed within a cyber-pragmatic framework. In analyzing the data, the authors focused on the textual-visual explicature and implicature. In other words, interpreting the politician tweets entails a comprehensive analysis of the processing of the text, visual images, and the identification of possible connotative meanings. The data were collected during the 18th Asian Games 2018 in Indonesia. An underlying assumption for choosing the timeframe is that a multinational sporting event should be neutral and unifying in nature. Thus, it is interesting for the authors to study how the Indonesian oppositions compensate their responses through Internet-mediated communication.**

Keywords—communication; cyberpragmatics; internet-mediated communication; pragmatics; social media

I. INTRODUCTION

The Internet changes how people, organisations, politic institutions, and government to communicate and negotiate political information and political roles [1]. Hence, researches in political communication on new media are always exciting yet challenging. The opening movements of government departments using ICT tools and its applications at large scale. Such as internet services, government web portals, mobile services, social networks that's generated innovative online services to make up good governance, strengthen existing relationship, set up new partnerships within civil society & other stakeholders to gain the spot in a digital world by adopting e-government service [2]. With the growth of Social Media, government and politicians could create opportunities for political participation: enabling, engaging and stimulating followers for various benefits [3]. The study by Kim shows that social media use can give positive impacts on encouraging social media users' political participation [4].

The current study investigates on how social media, particularly Twitter, can be constructed by the politicians as a medium to convey and convert not only the politicians' messages but also their emotion. In political discourses, Twitter is the ideal vehicle for self-promotion. This application can spread the information directly to many people about the current political events, trends or even what comes from the mind of the politicians [5]. However, that there is not a "right" or "wrong" way to use Twitter and that advocates of Twitter may claim that its use can increase and improve transparency, serving not only as a vehicle for leaders' self-promotion. Others may disagree, asking if Twitter use is different from the use of any other media, in order to convey messages [5].

Politicians really "understand" how they can exploit the platform for their causes [6,4]. Twitter has been used extensively by politicians in their daily interactions with their constituents since the politicians networking did not necessarily motivate the public to participate in their social media activities. Thus, Twitter users played a much more critical role in creating the highest impact of their postings. Based on this foundation, the authors seek to describe how opposition politicians in Indonesia construct their transmission of meaning by utilising cyber-based communication features, particularly in the Twitter platform.

A. Twitter and Politics

Twitter is a social media platform with three main functions for its users. First, to see out what topics are currently trending. Secondly, to discover and share curated stories showcasing today's most significant events, headlines, and videos in real time. Finally, Twitter users can join in conversations or create an issue to be discussed online by utilising the Twitter features like retweets, likes, shares or replies to Tweets on Twitter.

Twitter is a wide-ranging used free social networking tool that provides opportunities for people to share information, in a real-time news feed through posting brief comments about their experiences and thoughts. As a communication tool, Twitter allows the free exchange of ideas nationally and globally, between people interested in similar areas of expertise, as well as providing the opportunity to engage in critical debate [7]. The ability to produce and instantly relay brief, costless messages to a potentially huge audience makes Twitter a unique tool for politicians to boost their political image and ideas [8].

The analysis used in this paper is shaped by previous studies on Twitters and its roles in the political world, particularly on the analysis of how the constructed messages on Twitter can assist the political mission of politicians in both

real and digital world [9-13]. The previous studies indicated that building active digital followership through social media platform can serve as a crucial part of a successful political career.

B. Cyberpragmatics

Cyberpragmatics was introduced in 2001 for a cognitive pragmatics study of Internet-mediated communication. Its primary interest is the analysis of how information is produced and interpreted within the Internet environment [14]. Due to the limitations that plain text messages exhibit when compared to face-to-face communication, one of the central areas of cyber pragmatic research focuses on the internet users' ability to connote their messages with different attributes of verbal communication, typically found in the vocal and the visual (e.g., emoticons) channels of oral interactions [15].

In the current study, politicians are assumed to have their particular strategies in delivering their ideas or responses on social media. To get a more significant impact, a politician will employ numerous strategies so their social media content can reach a broader audience [12]. Hence, cyberpragmatics becomes an analytical tool to explore how social media users attempt to compensate and to communicate not only the right interpretation from their offline verbal content but also the whole range of feelings, emotions, and impressions associated with their content on the social media postings.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study is qualitative, and the authors have employed a cyberpragmatic framework in collecting and analysing the data. The sample consists of 30 twitter postings (tweets) from Indonesian opposition politicians during the commencement of 18th Asian Games 2018, Jakarta, Indonesia. The reason of choosing the particular timeline is due to an underlying assumption that while sporting successes can offer politicians good public relations boost, there are often severe repercussions when the worlds of sport and politics collide [16]. Therefore, a sporting event should be free from political agenda and should be unifying in nature.

In selecting the politicians' tweets as the study sample, the authors chose five opposition politicians with the highest number of Twitter followers. In analysing the data, the authors used the analytical framework developed by Fransisco Yus [14]. The use of Twitter is massive among the country's politicians. Twitter Indonesia in 2018 stated that as a public platform, Twitter is widely used by Indonesian users to keep abreast of domestic political developments from various sides and perspectives.

Based on the cyberpragmatic analysis foundation, the authors performed five coding stages. First, collecting visual data from the politicians' tweets; secondly, sorting visual data to identify the visual and narrative structures, the third step is generating categories based on the dominant explicature elements. The next step is identifying studying the frequency and type of denotative element found in both visual and written features of the tweets. Finally, the authors analyse implicature elements implied by the composition of images, language and online based features on the politicians' tweets. To assist the

authors in collecting, categorising, and coding the data, the author used MAXQDA to process the raw data and interpret the connection between the visual and linguistic features appeared on the politicians' tweets.

In the visual analysis as well as cyberpragmatic analysis, coding becomes the most prominent step in analysing the data. In this current study, coding means attaching a set of descriptive labels or categories to the online images and language features [17,18]. The coding categories are observable on the Twitter postings and clearly describe what composition is in both of the image and textual features. The coding itself relies on a postulated connection between the visual contents and the broader cultural context. Furthermore, the coding categories have some characteristics "regardless of their assumed status as interpretive or descriptive [19]. The coding categories were based on image composition, language features, online-based symbols and cultural expression in related to the study aims. The research methodology is briefly described in the following table 1:

TABLE I.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Questions	Visual Data	Data collection	Analysis method
In what ways do the Explicature elements of the opposition tweets are constructed?	A corpus of 30 Twitter postings (tweets) is analysed within a cyberpragmatic framework [14].	Textual coding and categorizing from the Indonesian Opposition Politician tweets The data were collected during the commencement of 18th Asian Games 2018 in Indonesia.	Qualitative Paradigm Cyberpragmatic Analysis adapted from Yus analysis model. The visual data are collected, categorized using MAXQDA. Then, the data are interpreted and described in descriptive narrative form Throughout the analysis, special attention is devoted to determining which contribution each mode (text/picture) makes to the overall meaning of the tweets
In what ways do the Implicature elements of the opposition tweets are constructed?			

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

As a theory grounded in cognitive pragmatics, cyberpragmatics focuses on describing how internet users make sense of messages when delivered on the web or in this case, the social media. In order to reveal that, an extension of analysis is needed by looking not only at the visual structure of

the posted messages but also the connotative messages which were constructed and communicated in forms of pragmatics patterns [18]. The results of the data analysis are described by emphasising on the visual explicature and the implicature elements of the politicians' tweets.

A. Visual Explicature of the Opposition Tweets

Generally, explicature is a term in pragmatics that focuses on the meaning given to an utterance or in this case a twitter posting by its context. The explicature of a text means what explicitly conveyed by its communicator, as opposed to the implicature, which more concern on the message that the communicator conveys implicitly

Explicature elements of the Twitter postings are analogical to reality and can be seen in forms of the use of language, narrative structure, and images embedded on social media. They are coded according to their composition and importance within the visual data [20]. At this point, the pragmatical analysis is aimed at identifying the visible explicature of the messages as they appear on the politicians' tweets on Twitter. Additionally, the findings of the analysis are described in the following matrix.

Code System	Tweets_Closing	Tweets_Event	Tweets_Opening	SUM
∨ Visual Input				0
shared links or images	■	■		9
emoticon usage			▪	1
code mixing	▪		▪	2
Direct mention	▪	▪	■	10
Hashtag Usage			■	6
Σ SUM	8	7	13	28

Fig. 1. Visual explicature of the oppositions' tweets.

As mentioned previously, the corpus of Twitter postings was collected during the 18th Asian Games 2018, Jakarta, Indonesia from the commencement date on 18 August 2018 to its closing ceremony on 2nd September 2018. Based on the findings, it can be seen that all of the tweets are written in Bahasa Indonesia. Regarding visual and narrative structure, the usage of social media features like direct mentions, hashtags, and shared links or images are applied dominantly.

Direct mentions become the prominent feature on every tweet since the politicians tend to mention or tag those who are related to their message in order to let the tagged social media accounts aware about the message transmitted by the opposition politicians. Every time we tag a Twitter username with the "@" symbol, Twitter assumes we are sending this message directly to that username (person) and will place it in their feed (and mentions folder) accordingly. The inception of social media outlets has shaped a new way of political communication by the use of "hashtag" and "mentions" [21]. By using direct mentions on Twitter, people do not need the bureaucratic hassle of communicating with their target audience. They need to mention the username, and the message will be delivered and can be seen by both twitter followers. Moreover, to strengthen the message, the politicians share images and web links that relevant or beneficial to their online critic messages.

The politicians' mentions and hashtags become an essential step to polarise their political position and influence their followers to believe and support them. In line with this, Conover et al., argued that politicians use hashtags, retweets, and mentions to provoke interaction by injecting exclusive content into information streams whose primary audience consists of ideologically-opposed users [6]. The content of the tweet itself is a statement of fact which is false or accurate in its own right, and the hashtag does not contribute to the truth conditions of this proposition. However, the tweeter is apparently directing the audience as to how they should seek the proposition expressed relevant [21]. In other words, Social media postings in politics are utilised to help the opposition politicians engage their audience, form effective messages, and emerge as a packaged, political trend for the current time.

From that point, the authors found that the explicature elements constructed by the politicians are used to interact directly online as well as get more attention from both the addressee and social media followers. The explicature structure is relevant to what Yus described that internet messaging features (in this case hashtags and twitter mentions) are an essential part of inferential strategies that internet users engage in while processing information located on the internet world or the one exchanged with other users through this virtual medium [22].

B. Political message Injections Through the Tweets Implicature Elements

In addition to delivering explicit messages through various features that are on Twitter, opposition politicians in Indonesia also produce their tweets in certain narrative styles. This tendency can be constructed through implicature elements of the tweets since online textual messages will have high ambiguity if they are released from the context [14].

Based on the collected and analysed data, the authors identified that there were seven implicit pragmatical communication styles used by the politicians in delivering their messages. As can be seen on the table below, the following categories are traced from the most frequent styles used by the politicians: (1) opinion by satire, (2) illusion of interactivity, (3) criticism by synecdoche, criticism by clarifying, (4) opinion by comparison, (5) policy questioning, and (6) pragmatic shift.

Code System	Tweets_Closing	Tweets_Event	Tweets_Opening	SUM
∨ The Prediction of Relevance				0
criticism by clarifying (copied link)	▪	▪		5
positive but negative (pragmatic shift)		▪		2
Opinion by Comparison	▪			3
Policy Questioning			▪	3
Criticism by Synecdoche			■	7
Opinion by satire	■	▪	■	17
Illusion of interactivity	▪	▪	▪	9
Σ SUM	12	13	21	46

Fig. 2. Implicature elements of the oppositions' tweets.

The style of "opinion by satire" is the most dominant style used by opposition politicians. Satire can be defined as the use of humour, exaggeration, irony, or ridicule to expose and criticise people especially in the context of contemporary politics [23]. By using satire, a politician can criticise in a very loudly but in an implicit manner. The satire strategy is more in line with the distinctive language characteristics of the Indonesian people who prefer indirectness regarding expressing something. For example, it can be seen from the tweets expressed by a politician:

"Just watched a Hollywood movie, it's really cool, People said he didn't use any stuntman, I believe it, and now I think, maybe he is a stunt legend who has been pretending to be a leader of this country" *(a politician tweet criticizing the Indonesian president on his actions during the Opening Ceremony of 18th Asian Games, Jakarta, Indonesia)*

The word stuntman is a sarcasm word that is widely used by opposition politicians to criticise the Indonesian president while performing a motorbike jumping scene at the opening of the 18th Asian Games. The moment was used as a source of opposition critique by using the language of sarcasm that the President was only a "substitute player" or a "stuntman" of the real leader of Indonesia.

The second most frequently used narrative style is the "illusion of interactivity." Twitter is an interactive social media and can be read by anyone. This condition is well utilised by opposition politicians in their language style, which is as if interacting with many people. This phenomenon gives another pragmatic perspective to indicate author-centred relevance [14]. The illusion of interactivity is employed by the politicians by greeting their twitter followers and by asking for their followers'' responses to the issues raised by the politicians.

The next most widely used language style is criticism by synecdoche, particularly *totem pro part* synecdoche. This type of synecdoche is defined as describing something small as the whole part to play meaning and associations in the audience mind [24]. In the context of political tweets, this synecdoche is used as a form to strengthen the message so it can be seen and understood by the audience as the voice of the majority. As an example of this, the following tweet was sent by an opposition politician:

"I ran out of words seeing the president's hilarious behaviour @jokowi. When the PEOPLE shouted asking for more serious treatment in Lombok for a better disaster relieve process, he just busy with the super-expensive #AsianGames, opening ceremony ..." *(another politician tweet criticising the Indonesian president during the Opening Ceremony and implementation of 18th Asian Games, Jakarta, Indonesia)*

The word "people" written by a female politician in caps-lock format shows that she wants to represent her voice as the voice of the people. By referring directly to President Jokowi, it means that the politician wants to frame Jokowi as a leader who does not hear what the "PEOPLE" needs. The synecdoche also implies to persuade the "Twitterverse" by using the word "people" so that the audience can support the politician's cause. In relations to this finding, Hunter revealed that the usage of synecdoche is a re-imaging instrument for containing the complex reality of a broad theme by making a topic focus on one or more highly visual and narrative elements to represent a predetermined theme [20].

IV. CONCLUSION

Cyberpragmatics analyses how politicians get messages across to their broader audience through social media. In conclusion, the study revealed that texts have a prominent role in web-based discourse interpretation. The inference is involved on both sides of the explicit-implicit elements of the Twitter contents, and the overall intended meaning should be analysed thoroughly by the readers by paying attention to the relations of both elements. Images and Information Link on Twitter postings either illustrate what the text communicates, amplify or elaborate the textual meaning, or aid in altering the textual meaning. Furthermore, direct mentions, hashtags, and the illusion of interactivity are the social media main features in compensating the opposition politicians' ideas.

This analysis focuses only on looking at the use of explicature and implicature elements in political twitter activity. Future work in this area is needed to determine the relative frequencies of each compensating features to assess to what extent the additional social media pragmatical features have been incorporated into "Twitterverse" repertoires.

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