

Sarcasm and Cynicism in Political Discourse on the 2017 DKI Jakarta Regional Election on Social Media

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ABSTRACT

The tight political competition in the 2017 DKI Jakarta Election left a negative impact in terms of language use, especially ones in social media. With the basis of Semantic-Pragmatic theory and the use of descriptive-qualitative data analysis method, it was discovered the fact that in term of discussing Jakarta Election 2017, people predominantly used sarcasm and cynicism style. When sarcasm is a satire style for saying bitter and harsh words and cynicism is a style of language containing doubt and ridicule; then the two were used in to satirize, ridicule, mock, and even put down a person/party in target. The use of sarcasm and cynicism style as a impolite language actually reflects the culture of linguistic poverty, it, then, has the potential to obscure the function of social media as a provider of information and facts that should educate.

Keywords: *political discourse, sarcasm, cynicism, social media*

1. INTRODUCTION

The heat of political temperature in Indonesia was felt during the political contestation, not only political events, but also of media coverage of mass and social media, both before and after the elections of Jakarta 2017. As a matter of fact, the election of capital of Indonesia could be considered controversial and phenomenal in the history of elections, as laden with political interests and issues of SARA [1]. Political actors not only used the media to convey their message in the form of a program of work and statement, but also massively conveyed black campaign to public so it made media go far beyond what can be done by the political parties in delivering his message. Consequently, the access to media was the main concern among the political actors [2]. In addition, the development of polarization among the supporters also creates divisions between groups that tended to have a strong commitment and felt that their principle is the best. In fact, public opinions through social media seemed more interactive and it might affect the actions of its time and space [3]. Social media has an important role in political campaigns [4]. All issues and political news certainly use language as the medium. In fact, language in political discourse is now not only used to convey

information, but is also used to marginalize certain parties so that deviations such as defamation and distorting facts can cause different points of view to the readers or listeners of the discourse. We actually found the language used in political discourse was the one considered inappropriate and include elements of SARA in constructing the discourse.

This is in line with the research conducted [5] that internet users targeted social media as a field of argument and propaganda contest. This situation is increasingly supported by press freedom and social media in Indonesia which has become increasingly liberal since the era of reform and globalization [6]. In fact, language actually has a very important role in influencing and helping to provide clear facts to the strata of society so that they can change their perspective for the better [7]. Indonesian people should be more politically educated with freedom of speech and opinion [8].

In fact, there are several tasks that must be carried out by the mass media in delivering the democracy. First, the mass media must inform (*to inform*) in terms of "surveillance" or "monitoring" of what is happening around the community. Second, the mass media must educate (*to educate*) about the meaning and benefits of facts (*facts*) while maintaining its objectivity in analyzing that fact. Third, the mass media must provide

a platform for the public regarding political discourse, facilitate the formation of public opinion, and prepare feedback opinions from wherever they come. Fourth, the mass media provides publicity to the government and other institutions, which act as “watchdogs”. Fifth, the mass media in a democratic society serves as a channel for the benefit of empowerment (*advocacy*) regarding various political points of view [9].

The tasks that are carried out by the mass media are now our shared tasks. This is influenced by developments in technology that are increasingly spry in processing information to the public sphere. Apparently, all information or news contained in print, electronic media, including information on social media is mass media. Social media is seen as a platform for political communication. Political communication certainly has to have a strategy to achieve political goals. Obvious impacts include convincing millennial generations to vote their preferred candidates and increasing the votes in the final election calculation [10].

Social media has become a medium to strengthen relations of people with official institutions and political elites so that they can have a two-ways and direct communication. In addition, social media can also be a tool for public political participation to influence political policy. Furthermore, social media also includes a form of cyber democracy, a concept that sees technology that has a transformative social influence and expands democratic participation [11].

As a matter of fact, public these days can make their own discourse and then post it through social networking accounts like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Wikipedia, etc. Social media is also considered good in increasing individual freedom so that it is also considered good in the process of democratization [12]. Therefore, do not be surprised that information or news posted by a person on social media can be a source of information, even those related to crisis and risk [13], [14].

First, in terms of social networking users, Facebook was chosen as the source of data because it ranked first as the most popular social media and is loved by all levels of society in Indonesia. This made Facebook very crowded, especially from the fact put forward by the Ministry of Communication and Information that 95% of internet users access social networks [15]. Global Web Index Survey data also confirms that Indonesia is a country whose citizens are crazy about social media. The percentage of Indonesian social networking activities reached 79.72%, the highest in Asia, beating the Philippines (78%), Malaysia (72%), China (67%). Even Asian countries with advanced Internet technology have low use of social media, like South Korea (49%) or Japan (30%).

The making and the spread of information have been controlled by the media. The use of the internet and social media as a means of campaigning and as a medium of interaction has dramatically changed political communication and political

'marketing' [16]. Correspondingly, there arose the problems of freedom of language use on social media, one of which was verbal violence.

Based on several survey results about the use of social media in Indonesia, Facebook turned out to be the first-ranked in Indonesia. The Ministry of Communication and Information revealed that internet users in Indonesia in 2018 reached 54% or 143 million people out of 265 million inhabitants. In fact, in one minute, 3.3 million information can be spread on Facebook [17]. News in the mass media also revealed that Indonesia was the fourth largest country with Facebook users with 111 million users [18]. Second, there were no restrictions and rules on how one should issue ideas, suggestions, opinions, and comments on Facebook social media. It made anyone could freely express their ideas and comments on Facebook social media. Third, in terms of language use, verbal violence was found in the political discourses of the 2017 DKI Jakarta Regional Election which was considered to be used to carry out black campaigns. Fourth, social media Facebook is a media that is able to get closer to the community's relationship with official institutions and political elites, so that they can have two-ways and direct communication [11].

With a very large number of users and the ease of accessing the internet, it makes anyone free to express opinions, arguments, suggestions, solutions, to scorn and curses can be expressed on political issues that develop on social media Facebook. In this case, social media users should be able to respond and provide a good response in the form of input, criticism, refutation and thoughts that are well expressed and not offend other users. On the contrary, there were many political discourses that are delivered roughly, fueling conflicts, spreading SARA issues, spreading lies and distorting the facts [19].

2. METHOD

This study used a type of qualitative research, a type of research whose findings are not obtained through statistical procedures or other forms of calculation [21]. To analyze data, content analysis technique was used to describe the data in an objective, systematic and qualitative manifestations of communication, with five steps: (1) the process of following the rules, (2) a systematic process, (3) the process of clicking generalizing, (4) the process of questioning the content, and (5) the process of discussing the content qualitatively and quantitatively [22]. This technique can be used to analyze the textual data such as discourse. In this case, the data of political discourse that m engandung element of sarcasm and cynicism in social media are analyzed textually.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of data analysis, it was found verbal violence in the political discourse of the 2017 DKI Jakarta elections on social media, which was dominated in the form of sarcasm and cynicism. The data was found from public comments on personal political elite facebook, on the account of community groups (groups), and on Facebook accounts on online news portals, with the reality of the data as follows.

2.1. Sarcasm

The use of sarcasm are presented in the following data:

- (1) “Sejarah akan mencatat Pak Ahok dengan karya2 gemilangnya, sedangkan si Anis? Dia akan tercatat dalam sejarah **menang pilkada dengan cara hina, tukang fitnah, fuck!!!**” (D55/25A/NC)
- (2) “**Tua renta** serasa apa gitu padahal semua orang tau kalau **dia** ini **sinting, upnormal.**” (D40/25A/DC)
- (3) “**Mulutnya** si Ahok **kayak lobang pantat.** Pemuja pencitraan mangap2 minta jatah. **Dasar mental jongos.**” (D24/30J/SS)
- (4) “**Anak muda yang bego,** ya pastilah **milih tu anjing.**” (D27/3F/HN)

In speech (1) above, the use of sarcasm could be seen from the sentences. The statement *dia akan tercatat dalam sejarah menang pilkada dengan cara hina, tukang fitnah, fuck!!!* is one form of sarcasm because the sentences above were directly targeted to one of the candidates. The sentence contained insults, expletives, and the target candidate was assumed to have done a dirty play to win the election. If it was associated with the context, the speakers left a comment her on Ahok’s Facebook but aimed at Anies. Thus, it can be implied that the speaker tried to compare what was done by one candidate to the other candidate who spread campaign.

In the speech (2), the use of sarcasm characterized by the use of words -said *tua renta, sinting, upnormal* directed at someone. Based on the context, the speaker commented about the news on Facebook regarding Ratna Sarumpaet wrote a satire with the name of Ahok in it. In the statement, the speaker showed his anger by swear words the person. Thus, the use of sarcasm in the speech aims to hurt the opponent. In this case, the use of sarcasm is not in accordance with its purpose as to give criticism [23].

The use of figurative language sarcasm in the utterances (3) was characterized by the choice of words *mulutnya kayak lobang pantat, pemuja pencitraan, mangap2 minta jatah, dan dasar mental jongos*. Based on the context, this occurred when one netizen commented on Fadli Zon’s comment that was considered a hateful speech, mocking flower boards at the Town Hall that were sent to Ahok-Djarot, and also Fadli Zon,

according to the speaker, liked giving a negative opinion and always cornered Ahok as a religious issue. This comment was taken up by netizens as data speakers (3) as a counter-attack against negative comments to Fadli’s in which cornered Ahok. From these comments, it can be implied that the speaker was very upset, even praying for his interlocutor to die soon. Based on the data, sarcasm used to hurt each other, not only aimed at politicians governor candidate respective parties but also hurt amongst netizens.

Speech (4) is a speech of a netizen with the aim of denouncing supporters of one of the candidates. Language is used as a political tool and not as an interaction tool as intended in politeness theory [24]. In the context, the speaker comment about Ahok’s popularity in the perspective of young people. From these comments, it was known that according to the speaker, *anak muda* who supported Ahok were *beg* or foolish ones. Next, he/she analogized the candidate with the word *anjing* which is very inappropriate, harsh and vulgar. This choice of words led the commentary to be categorized as sarcastic.

2.2 Cynicism

Based on data identification and data classification, the use of cynicism in netizen comments in the local election discourse can be seen in the following data.

- (5) “Yang merasa orang muslim **jangan memilih Ahok, pilihlah yang seiman.**” (D7/5J/RK)
- (6) “Tatapan matanya **menyimpan kelicikan.** Silahkan menikmati jaman era SBY, **duit banyak keluar tapi pada mangkrak.** Mudah2an ingat kerja SBY hanya buat **rumah hantu di hambalang.**” (D64/3F/AT)
- (7) “**Mulut manis tapi tukang ngeles.**” (D13/10F/ZF)
- (8) “Anis belum berpengalaman **jadi bupati tapi pengalaman menteri yang dipecat karna korupsi. Yang pilih Anis pasti sama-sama suka korupsi.**” (D75/12A/ES)

In data (5), the use of cynicism is shown by the use of the statement *jangan memilih Ahok, pilihlah yang seiman*. Although it looked rather subtle, the sharp allusions were aimed at Muslims who still liked Ahok. The satire *pilihlah yang seiman* obviously poked Muslim voters who did not have thoughts like the speaker. Related to the context, during Jakarta regional head election 2017, one of the candidates was, indeed, being charged with blasphemy. So, the speech strongly teased this, by provoking Muslims not to choose the candidate.

Moreover, one of the netizen’s cynical comments was expressed through the data (6). If related to the context, the speaker commented on AHY’s photo upload in his campaign video with hateful comments. It stated that from AHY’s gaze, *sudah menyimpan kelicikan*. Then,

indirectly he also called on society to recall the days in the era of SBY (AHY's father) ruled, *uang banyak keluar tapi pembangunan pada mangkrak*, so he made a labeling *rumah hantu hambalang*. The use of such cynical comments can actually lead to degradation of language quality in political communication [25].

In data (7), there was a use of cynicism which is indicated by *mulut manis, tapi tukang ngeles* was addressed to a candidate. Based on the context, the speaker commented on the news about Anies who argued that he never offered a 0% DP of housing. Anies's statement, according to the speaker, received terrible comments from public who had hoped beforehand with the good news. The comment also implied that Anies often broke promises but could not keep it. In this context, it means that the use of cynicism style is aimed to convey criticism negatively . In speech (8) , the use of cynicism can be seen from the utterance *dipecat karena korupsi* . The comment was expressed by one of the opponent's supporters of Anies-Sandi. If the context is associated with it, that comment occurred when Prabowo uploaded a video debate of Jakarta Election 2017. As we know, Anies-

Sandi were candidates promoted by the party Gerindra and Prabowo was the party chairman. From these comments, it can be implied that the speaker put down Anies who was considered inexperienced to be a governor. Then, the speaker also stated that Anies quit the previous position as a education minister because of corruption. Speakers also assumed that the people who chose Anies were those with the same type as Anies, fond of corruption. In fact, the speech was not necessarily true. The expression could be just a form of resentment felt by the speaker. Thus, the use of cynicism in these comments could actually produce propaganda. In fact, social media such as Facebook can be used as an effective political campaign media to gain support, not as a means of propaganda [14].

Based on the findings and results of the data analysis, it was found the level of use of sarcasm and cynicism in the local election discourse and the level of face threat , called FTA (Face Threatening Acts) for the intended or the target person, can be seen in the restricted data classification in the research in the following table.

TABLE 1: THE USE OF SARCASM AND CYNICISM IN THE 2017 JAKARTA ELECTION ELECTION POLITICAL DISCOURSE ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE LEVEL OF FACE THREAT (FTA) THAT IT CAUSED

Phrases/ Dictations	total	Face threat category (FTA)
Sarcasm	31	Very high
Cynicism	42	High
Irony	13	Not really high
Anti-Fascist	2	Low
Satire	2	Low
total	90	

From 90 data that contained verbal violence, there were five levels of community statements and comments contained sarcastic meanings for the candidates in the DKI Election. The most dominant level of meaning found was a cynical-style commentary with 42 data with a high face threat category, and the next dominant was sarcasm with 31 data with a very high face threat category. While the next three levels of meaning, namely the irony of 13 data with a less high level of face threat, as well as antiphrasis and satire, each consists of 2 data with a low level of face threat.

Based on the mapping of the data in the scope of this study, it turned out the use of verbal violence in the form of sarcastic was preferred by the public in expressing comments about the elections. Based on the context, the choice of the sarcastic in the situation caused by the intense political competition when. Moreover, after the completion of the first round, the people of DKI at the time seemed to be divided in two sides, resulting in a dispute in the midst of the community which led to the rise

of negative comments on social media. In such situations, political rhetoric and narratives which were supposed to use politeness were ignored. This can be seen from the rise of the use of diction which tends to contain meanings that were rude and cynical . The use of sarcasm was thought to be inappropriate because it can fade the proper interpretation of information [26]. Supposedly, in the socio-political, the quality of discourse can depend on a particular candidate/political partner [27]. However, in the event of Regional Election Jakarta in 2017, the discourse actually called for another discourse on social media such as Facebook of people who then generated certain propaganda. That also impacted to negative face threat (such as hatred, anger, etc.) or positive face threat (such as sharp criticism, insults, accusations, humiliation, humiliation, etc.) to the candidate or the intended party. Thus, the use of comments containing sarcasm and cynicism indicates that the community is in a language-poor condition, in the sense that the dominance of feelings was higher than mind so that they were not / less able to think clearly in choosing appropriate, proper words and

expressions, especially ones conveyed in the social media [28].

Based on the research [20], it was concluded that there were four things that triggered the political conflict during the elections of Jakarta in 2017, namely (1) Although Jakarta is one of the provinces in Indonesia, the city is the capital of Indonesia and a gate to Indonesia; (2) DKI Jakarta Regional Head Election was assumed to be loaded with political interests of two large groups, namely the government group and the "opposition" group or those opposed to the government, each with their supporting parties; (3) one of the candidate pairs (paslon) of the DKI Jakarta Regional Election was involved in the SARA case which triggered a prolonged polemic, not only in Jakarta, but also spread over other regions in Indonesia; (4) based on the estimation of some observers, DKI Jakarta Regional Head Election was a barometer of determining the political temperature in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis of the discussion it can be concluded that the language style of the community in social media in discussing the politics of the 2017 DKI regional elections that emerged such as sarcasm and cynicism can indicate the increasingly high level of community rudeness in expressing their opinions on social media. This can cause frictions in the community. The use of satire such as sarcasm and cynicism also affected the community in making choices in the DKI Jakarta Regional Head Election. Such use of the language also faded out the role of social media that should be carried out by the public in carrying out its function as a platform to express opinions in a democratic country.

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