

Presupposition Analysis in Twitter Reply Columns in Alleged Cyberbullying Case

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ABSTRACT

The present forensic-pragmatic study was conducted to explore the types of presupposition in Twitter replies. This descriptive qualitative study focuses on examining the presupposition in the Twitter reply columns to reveal any cyberbullying-related speech. The data were analyzed based on Yule's types of presupposition and Willard's types of cyberbullying. The linguistic data were obtained through screenshots and text transcription of Twitter in the non-formal context. The results show that 1) the utterances of the speakers suspected of cyberbullying through the conversation contain the lexical, structural, factive, existential, counterfactual, and non-factive presuppositions, as classified by Yule; 2) the classifying utterances of speakers suspected of cyberbullying through the conversation contain the harassment, flaming, and denigration, as classified by Willard, 3) and the analysis of presupposition, in the forensic linguistics viewpoint, have a tendency to violate the Law of the Republic of Indonesia concerning Electronic Information and Transactions, article 27 paragraph 3 Jo45c about affronts and defamation.

Keywords: *Cyberbullying, presupposition, Twitter*

1. INTRODUCTION

Supported by the rapid development of digital technology, a variety of social media platforms are mushrooming. Cross (2013) refers to social media as a term that describes various technologies used to engage people to collaborate, exchange information, and interact through web-based messages. According to Nasrullah (2015), social media has the power of user-generated content (UGC), meaning that the contents in social media are produced by the users, not editors of the mass media institution. One of the most widely used social media today is Twitter.

Twitter constitutes an online service for social networking and microblogging which facilitates its users to send and read text-based messages. Based on the data released by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kemenkominfo), the number of Internet users in Indonesia has currently reached 63 million, 95 percent of which use the Internet to access social networking. Indonesia is ranked as the world's 5th largest Twitter users. This position is only behind the USA, Brazil, Japan, and England.

The ease of accessing social media has not been matched by the users' behavior. Consequently, in this context, many people still misuse social media through various forms of violations. Oftentimes it violates criminal laws. Disputes and problems arise due to the posts uploaded on social media, particularly Twitter, and many of these cases have resulted in court charges, even death.

Of the several forms of violations, in this study one would be examined, i.e. the language phenomenon in Twitter, especially in Twitter reply columns. According to Indrayani and Johansari (2019), the development of social media technology brings two sides, which are positive and negative. One of the negative sides is namely cyberbullying on social media.

Data related to cyberbullying in Indonesia are obtained from the survey conducted by APJII (2019). The survey of 5,900 internet users in 514 cities throughout Indonesia was carried out from March 9 to April 14, 2019. It was found that 49% of respondents said they have ever been bullied on social media. This means that 2891 people experienced cyberbullying within one month. Among those experiencing cyberbullying have

seriously thought of committing suicide, even actually committed suicide, and the average victim is bullied by anonymous or fake accounts. In line with that, as many as 90.4% of respondents in O'Dea & Campbell's study (2012) agreed that cyberbullying constitutes an insult from someone unknown.

In this study, the pragmatics approach was used, especially the presupposition, to analyze the speeches or utterances indicated as cyberbullying. Presuppositions are divided into 6 types according to Yule (2000). They include lexical presupposition, structural presupposition, existential presupposition, factive/factual presupposition, counterfactual presupposition, and nonfactive/nonfactual presupposition.

Cyberbullying is categorized into 7 types, based on Willard (2007), which are: harassment, flaming, cyberstalking, denigration, masquerade parties, outings and trickery, and exclusion. In association with the present pragmatic-forensic study, they were used to analyze the presumptions and types of cyberbullying. Yule's types of presupposition and Willard's types of cyberbullying were utilized. The data, after analysis, would be interpreted in the Law of Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE).

The presupposition is one part of seeing the assumptions of netizen's utterances that contain cyberbullying. So far, research on presuppositions there has been several studies that discuss, namely (Khalili, 2017; Li & Sun, 2018; Oktoma & Mardiyono, 2013). Oktoma and Mardiyono (2013) discuss the types of Yule presuppositions used in the short story *Silvester Goridos Sukur*. The results are there are six types of Yule presuppositions, including: exclusive, structural, factive, non-functional, counterfactual, and lexical. Khalili (2017) discusses the types of presuppositions taken from the characters in films for what types are often used in films, *The Reader*. Li and Sun (2018) discuss direct examination, presuppositions make the evidence more acceptable, witnesses more credible and therefore narrative is more coherent, trustworthy; in cross-examination, presuppositions are primarily used to challenge the credibility of hostile witnesses and because it deconstructs the narrative from his opponent's lawyer.

Other research (Fegenbush, 2009; Whittaker and Kowalski, 2014; Abaido, 2019) that discusses cyberbullying, namely Fegenbush (2009) analyzed cyberbullying to provide analysis results that learn from recent research on cyberbullying and the issues surrounding it for developing hypotheses that can be researched in the future in areas related to school policies and protocols. Another study examines the prevalence

rate of cyberbullying among college-age students, where bullying occurs, with a particular focus on social media and the perception of cyberbullying as a function of target features. The results of this study found that SMS and social media were the most commonly used places for the victimization of bullying, and comments on responses to perceptions of cyberbullying. Abaido (2019) also discusses the spread of cyberbullying among students in the Arab community, its nature, and its place. The results of the study, namely that 91% of the study sample believed cyberbullying on social media with Instagram (55.5%), Facebook (38%), and Twitter (35.5%) being the top three platforms where they felt the implementation of cyberbullying.

Based on this background, this research focuses on the analysis of presuppositions in the Twitter reply column in the case of alleged virtual bullying using Yule's theory which discusses the types of presuppositions. This study seeks to see the assumptions of utterances that are suspected of bullying in DL's Twitter reply column.

2. METHOD

A descriptive qualitative approach was employed through the process of data collection and analysis. It was in accordance with the purpose of this study, i.e. to collect descriptive data in the form of presumptions from the speech of speakers suspected of committing cyberbullying. Nazir (2002) explains that the purpose of descriptive research is to make descriptions or pictures in a systematic, factual, and accurate manner about the facts, characteristics, and relationships among the phenomena investigated. The research subject includes the netizens' speeches in DL's Twitter reply columns. The object includes cyberbullying committed by the netizens in DL's Twitter reply columns.

The purposive sampling was utilized as the data collection technique. The amount of data analyzed was 46. Based on Bouma (1993), purposive sampling in this study was conducted by reading the comments in DL's Twitter reply columns one by one. Several comments were then selected to be analyzed based on the research needs, i.e. the negative comments which contain cyberbullying aspects. Afterward, the selected negative comments were screenshotted. Then the data were transcribed and examined scientifically based on the linguistic perspective to obtain accurate and legally accountable results.

Based on the problem explained above, this study was started by classifying the utterances indicated to contain

cyberbullying based on Yule's classification of presupposition. This is followed by classification and analysis based on Willard's types of cyberbullying. Finally, the results of the analysis were interpreted to the UU ITE Article 27 paragraph 3 Jo 45c.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study is under the topic "a presupposition analysis in Twitter reply columns in alleged cyberbullying case". It focuses on the speeches/utterances indicated as bullying. After the data were analyzed, the findings are obtained as presented below.

3.1. Presuppositions

3.1.1. Lexical Presupposition

Generally, in lexical presuppositions, the use of a form with a conventionally stated meaning is interpreted with a presupposition that another meaning is not stated (Zamzami, 2018).

The context of the utterances, i.e. DL, tells about her skills and talents. The analysis table above shows that the netizen with the initials JW asks DL a question. This is expressed through the following sentences,

DL: "What skills? what achievements? Hihi Fyi dude, I speak four languages fluently (Indonesian, English, German, Chinese). I am a piano and cello player. I am good at playing tennis, swimming, archery, polo, horse racing. I can do the Waltz. Now, about achievement, let's start the list as follows."

JW: "do you know the difference between ginger and galangal???"

The sentence contains a lexical presupposition, indicated by a question between knowing and not knowing, contained in the expression "*know the difference*", which refers to DL. This means that the presupposition in the speech is: DL cannot cook.

3.1.2. Structural Presupposition

A structural presupposition refers to a structure of certain sentences that have been analyzed as a presupposition regularly and conventionally that part of the structure has been assumed to be true. It might be said if the speaker uses such structures for prejudiced information because it is considered true and the truth is accepted by listeners.

The context of the utterances, i.e. DL, tells about her skills and talents. A netizen with the initial's SW offers to help DL for treatment. SW's statements are as follows,

DL: "What skills? what achievements? Hihi Fyi dude, I speak four languages fluently (Indonesian, English, German, Chinese). I am a piano and cello player. I am good at playing tennis, swimming, archery, polo, horse racing. I can do the Waltz. Now, about achievement, let's start the list as follows."

SW: "Miss, I am a college student of psychology. Don't you wish to be accompanied to seek clinical help? Or you can try it online by contacting @riliv_app"

The presupposition that is exhibited by SW's utterances is that DL is mentally disoriented and, therefore, needs clinical assistance; which denotes the type of structural presupposition. This is indicated by the interrogative sentence "Don't you wish to be accompanied to seek clinical help?"

3.1.3. Existential Presupposition

The existential presupposition is one that indicates the existence/identity of the referent which is expressed in definite words. More broadly, this presupposition is not only assumed to exist in sentences that indicate ownership, but also the existence of the statements in the speech (Zamzami, 2018, p. 14).

The context of the utterances, i.e. DL, tells about her skills and talents. In the table above, the netizen with the initials HN also responds to it. As in the table, HN judges DL too ambitious by providing this statement,

DL: "What skills? what achievements? Hihi Fyi dude, I speak four languages fluently (Indonesian, English, German, Chinese). I am a piano and cello player. I am good at playing tennis, swimming, archery, polo, horse racing. I can do the Waltz. Now, about achievement, let's start the list as follows."

HN: "one of those thirsty girls"

The utterance demonstrates an existential presupposition, characterized by one's presence. The utterance "girl" is referred to as DL. Besides, the word thirsty is not meant here literally but is defined as too ambitious, which is too eager to obtain something.

3.1.4. Factive/Factual Presupposition

Factive presuppositions are presupposed information that follows a verb and can be taken as reality.

The context of the utterances, i.e. DL, tells about her educational background, talents, and awards achieved from competitions she participated in. The netizen with the initials BL responds to the speech. BL expresses resentment towards DL by providing the following statements,

DL: "From elementary to high school, I never stepped down from the top 5 rankings. Three years in a row at high school, I became the overall champion. I have been active in English debate competitions since junior high school and already had more than 40 trophies, medals, certificates from these competitions."

BL: "What a bullshit, you dick, no need to talk in circles. You brag so bad and can't even prove it to preschool kids. The proof is simple: you are incapable, so stop talking rubbish. Cunt..."

The presupposition here is that DL speaks not in accordance with reality and has no real evidence to convince netizens. Therefore, the netizen thinks DL is lying. It is a type of factive presupposition, marked by the utterance "The proof is simple: you are incapable".

3.1.5. Counterfactual Presupposition

A counterfactual presupposition is defined as that what is presupposed is not only incorrect, but also the opposite of the truth, or "contrary to reality" (Yule, 2000).

The context of the utterances, i.e. DL, tells about her skills and talents. In the table above, the netizen with the initials CA expresses an insult. The CA's statement is as follows,

DL: "What skills? what achievements? Hihhi Fyi dude, I speak four languages fluently (Indonesian, English, German, Chinese). I am a piano and cello player. I am good at playing tennis, swimming, archery, polo, horse racing. I can do the Waltz. Now, about achievement, let's start the list as follows."

CA: "Yeah if we keep backbiting, she will be stressed and depressed then try to hurt herself, and the netizens enjoying this endless hallucination could end up being the ones to blame. This is so entertaining though, I

happen to recognize some college majors hidden all this time."

In the utterances, the presupposition is that CA intends to insult or ridicule and bully since DL is always hallucinating and sharing untrue stories. However, if this kind of action keeps being done, the victim can be stressed, depressed, and hurt himself. However, CA has indirectly ridiculed DL.

3.1.6. Nonfactive Presupposition

A sentence or utterance can result in a nonfactive presupposition which covers the use of dictions including *dreamed, imagined, or pretend* (Yule, 2000). Besides, nonfactive presuppositions can be assumed through a speech whose truth is still doubtful from what is conveyed.

The context of the utterances, i.e. DL, tells about her educational background and several Olympiads she has ever joined. The netizen with the initials KB gives a response to it. As in the table, KB expresses doubt and resentment. The statements are presented below,

DL: "During high school, I participated in the economics and geography Olympiads and have reached the national level. I am studying in Germany, I made it to a German state university in which I have to compete with people worldwide. Still saying that I have no capability and only rely on physical appearance?"

KB: "A if your higher education level is everything huh it's good though. But huft I dunno... already want to swear to myself god damn it"

The presupposition arising from the speech is the nonfactive/nonfactual one for the use of "as if" indicates the truth which is still in doubt because it contradicts the facts presented.

3.2. Cyberbullying

The findings from cyberbullying analysis are presented as follows.

3.2.1. Harassment

Harassment is defined as messages that contain nuisance, abuse, the threat of harm, and intimidation delivered through email, SMS, or text message on social networks (Willard, 2007).

The context of the utterances, i.e. DL, tells about her talents. The netizen with the initial's SW responds to it.

In the speech, SW offers help for DL to get some treatment. The statement is presented below,

DL: “What skills? what achievements? Hihi Fyi dude, I speak four languages fluently (Indonesian, English, German, Chinese). I am a piano and cello player. I am good at playing tennis, swimming, archery, polo, horse racing. I can do the Waltz. Now, about achievement, let’s start the list as follows.”

SW: “Miss, I am a college student of psychology. Don’t you wish to be accompanied to seek clinical help? Or you can try it online by contacting @riliv_app”

SW’s speeches contain *harassment*, denoted by the utterance “Don’t you wish to be accompanied to seek clinical help?”. It indicates the meaning that DL experiences mental disorders that require clinical assistance. This statement is considered harassment because in reality, DL does not necessarily suffer from mental disorders or mental illness.

3.2.2. *Flaming*

Flaming refers to delivering messages in an angry, rude, vulgar way to an individual or a group of people *online* (Willard, 2007).

The context of the utterances, i.e. DL, tells about her educational background and talents. The netizen with the initials BL shows resentment towards DL, indicated by the act of anger and rudeness. The statements are as follows,

DL: “From elementary to high school, I never stepped down from the top 5 rankings. Three years in a row at high school, I became the overall champion. I have been active in English debate competitions since junior high school and already had more than 40 trophies, medals, certificates from these competitions.”

BL: “What a bullshit, you dick, no need to talk in circles. You brag so bad and can’t even prove it to preschool kids. The proof is simple: you are incapable, so stop talking rubbish. Cunt...”

BL’s utterances contain *flaming*, denoted by the word “dick”, “brag”, and “cunt”. “dick” and “cunt” represent a highly impolite and humiliating meaning since in the Indonesian daily context mentioning genitals and other body parts is regarded as a form of insult. Besides, “brag” demonstrates cursing as it means uttering a lot of annoying talks.

3.2.3. *Denigration*

Denigration is the process of indulging one’s bad sides on the internet to damage the person’s reputation (Willard, 2007).

The context of the utterances, i.e. DL, tells about her educational background and talents. The netizen with the initials UW responds to it. In the speech, UW suggests that DL seeks for help immediately by the following sentences,

DL: “What skills? what achievements? Hihi Fyi dude, I speak four languages fluently (Indonesian, English, German, Chinese). I am a piano and cello player. I am good at playing tennis, swimming, archery, polo, horse racing. I can do the Waltz. Now, about achievement, let’s start the list as follows.”

UW: “Rachie you better look for help immediately. I’m afraid you have a *pathological liar* illness.”

UW’s speech contains *denigration*, indicated by the presence of the clause “I’m afraid you have the pathological liar illness”. This implies that DL has lied with intentions and plans. Commonly pathological liars have a clear purpose until the lies they create are accomplished.

Based on the findings as described above, two important aspects become the focused analysis of this study. The first is presupposition aspects in the utterances indicated as containing cyberbullying. The second is the tendency occurring in the data, whether the actions potentially lead to legal implications or not. The speeches in the Twitter reply columns are delivered in an informal context, as people tend to use informal language when using social media. Junus (2015) conveys that oftentimes social media users do not refer to standard forms, even tend to write down speeches the way they deliver them in spoken utterances. The speeches in DL’s Twitter reply columns are indicated to contain cyberbullying.

The results of the analysis were carried out both pragmatically, namely presupposition and forensic linguistics. Several findings and problems that will be discussed further will be linked to several related studies so that it will get clarity and gaps from this research. Then, we will describe some research contexts contained in the utterances in DL’s Twitter reply column, which are indicated to produce some differences and trends in the analysis results. Two important aspects are the center of study in this research. As for the first, namely the presupposition aspect in utterances indicated as

containing cyberbullying. Second, the trend contained in the data, whether it has the potential to have legal implications or not.

Regarding presupposition research, of course, many have researched this research. One of them is by Oktoma and Mardiyono (2013), whose research has an outline of the types of presuppositions in the short stories by Silvester Goridus Sukur. The research was descriptive qualitative. A qualitative descriptive approach is used because it aims to describe the types of presuppositions and the dominant presuppositions in the short stories by Silvester Goridus Sukur. Then the theory used is the theory of presupposition from Yule (2000). The results of data analysis from the research of Oktoma and Mardiyono (2013) 129 existential presuppositions or 58.90%, 47 lexical presuppositions or 21.56%, 9 structural presuppositions or 4.10%, 15 factive presuppositions or 6.84%, 7 non-factive or 3.19%, and 3 counterfactual presuppositions or 1.36%.

Furthermore, research on bullying by Aoyama and Talbert (2010). Broadly speaking, this research is to present the characteristics and theoretical framework that defines and contextualizes cyberbullying including international prevalence and related statistics, background and profile of offenders, and the role of adults. The theory used is the theory of Bernard and Ryan (1998) and Olweus (1993). Willard's theory (2007) is for reference only. The method used is qualitative, which can be compared in many ways to martial arts. There are many approaches to qualitative data collection and analysis. Qualitative research represents a wide variety of epistemological, theoretical, and disciplinary perspectives.

Analysis and data findings indicated that participants felt empowered or "in control" of using social media sites to bully. These findings support Olweus' theory of social domination hierarchies. They feel untouched because there are no repercussions for their actions. After all, often they cannot be identified to prove the dissociative anonymity theory. Lastly, they have no regrets after using social media tools to bully friends because they say it is okay if they hurt someone as long as they feel part of the group, which is in line with Hinduja and Patchin's theory.

From several related studies, such as that conducted by Oktoma and Mardiyono (2013), and Aoyama and Talbert (2010) were used as references for this study. Oktoma and Mardiyono use the theory of presupposition proposed by Yule (2000) to analyze the types of

presuppositions in the short stories by Silvester Goridus Sukur, then Aoyama and Talbert use the theory of Ryan (1998) and Olweus (1993). Willard's theory (2007) is only a reference.

Meanwhile, in this study, the presupposition theory is used to examine utterances that are thought to contain elements of cyberbullying. The results of the analysis in this study indicate that the utterances of speakers suspected of committing cyber bullying contain lexical, structural, existential, factive/factual, contra factual, and non-active / non-factual presuppositions. The results of the analysis produced by Oktoma and Mardiyono (2013) 129 existential presuppositions or 58.90%, 47 lexical presuppositions or 21.56%, 9 structural presuppositions, or 4.10%, 15 factive presuppositions or 6.84%, 7 presuppositions non-factive or 3.19%, and 3 counterfactual presuppositions or 1.36%. This research does not enter into the area of forensic linguistics because the data used is not language data that has the potential to have legal implications.

As with this research, there is more emphasis on analyzing the types of presuppositions and types of cyberbullying. Thus, utterances that can have legal implications can also be found. Given the context of this research, it is in an alleged cyberbullying case. However, if compared globally in the related studies above, it does not lead to evidence of language that has the potential to have legal implications as is done in this thesis research.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the type of presupposition that appears the most is the lexical one as the realization of cyberbullying, while the least emerging is the counterfactual presupposition. The significance of this study can be concluded that the type of presupposition that dominates is the lexical presupposition. The emergence of these lexical presuppositions is linguistic evidence leading to cyberbullying. The realization of cyberbullying is through harsh words, cursing, insulting, demeaning.

Also, based on a forensic linguistic review, it can be concluded that the utterances spoken by netizens tend to bully DL. This is seen in the classification of the types of cyberbullying. The most dominating result is harassment.

These speeches are considered by the UU ITE in article 27 paragraph 3 as meeting the criteria that have been stipulated in the article. Article 27 paragraph 3 Jo 45B of UU ITE reads:

“Any person intentionally and without right distributes and/or transmits and/or causes an electronic information and/or electronic document with defamation and/or slander contents to be accessible”.

The criminal penalty for those meeting the criterion in article 27 paragraph 3 of UU 19/2016 is a maximum of 4 (four) years in prison and/or a fine of IDR750 million.

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