Relationship of Ambiguity and Character Education in Covid-19 Humor Discourse

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ABSTRACT

Character education for children can take advantage of humor discourse that is spread on social media. The purpose of this study is to describe the meaning of ambiguity in the Covid-19 themed humor discourse. The data sources utilized in this study were 14 Covid-19 humor discourses found in social media Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram (in Indonesian). Data collection used image documentation techniques that contain sentences. The researcher records the words or sentences in the discourse, grouping the words or sentences that contain the meaning of lexical and grammatical ambiguity. Data analysis used translational identity method. The results showed that lexical ambiguity consisted of polysemy and homonym. The polysemy words included (1) tahu (2) putu, (3) paku, (4) naga, (5) molen, (6) matahari, (7) cair. The homonym words included: PPKM, surat, and jalan. Grammatical ambiguity found included: amphibolity, idioms, and proverbs found in phrases: (1) corona negatif, (2) istri positif, (3) adu mulut, and (4) barang bunguk merindukan bulan. The value of character education includes religious values, caring for cleanliness, love for the homeland, and discipline.

Keywords: humor discourse, meaning relation, ambiguity, covid-19

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is experiencing the phenomenon of the Covid-19 pandemic or Corona virus. All countries are making various efforts to stop the spread of this virus. In Indonesia, the government has made a policy of Stay at Home and Learn from Home. In fact, it is not uncommon for companies to enforce Work from Home (WFH). The policies implemented by the government and companies make people stressed and tense. The stiff situation that results from not leaving the house and excessive fear of this virus can make muscles and minds tense. Not long after the government implemented the policy, various humorous memes or banners appeared.

Discourse according to the medium of delivery is divided into two, namely oral discourse and written discourse [1]. Discourse can be categorized into various forms, one of which is humorous discourse. Humor discourse is a discourse that is formed from a non-bona fide process of communication [2].

The discourse of humor becomes important to study, because in everyday life almost everyone faces funny situations, funny stories, and even funny thoughts. It is explained that humor can free people from the burden of anxiety, confusion, cruelty, and misery [2]. The Covid-19 virus humor banner is usually installed around the entrance gate of a residential or rural area. This sparked laughter from people around and social media residents. Because, the humorous discourse in banners and others also spread to cyberspace. The creation of humorous stories is expected to minimize public tension in a pandemic situation.

The creation of humor is not only concerned with the level of humor, but must contain good qualities, both in terms of language and character education values. The creation of humor in terms of language by utilizing techniques in building humor, one of which is by utilizing the meaning of each word, namely through the form of ambiguity. The creation of humor can also take advantage of sound play through the form of sound resemblance or the form of two or more words that have different meanings. The creation of humor is also expected to educate the public about the importance of character education. Instilling character values that are always carried out on children intensively in the family environment and schools or madrasas will result in the growth of a generation of noble character or personality.

The following is an example of a humorous text containing character values.


(2) Buat kalian yang nimbun dan menaikan harga masker, Jahanam is waiting for you brother.
Research on humor discourse or linguistic aspects in humor discourse was carried out by Resticka (2017) on humorous speech in caricatures [3]. Wijayanti (2018) researched on homonymy and polysemy [4]. Sukardti researched homonymy in meme discourse [5]. Sari researched anecdotal text [6]. Andini researched the ambiguity of speech acts [7]. Mitang researched social criticism in humor [8]. Setiyanto researched humor about traffic signs [9]. Sudarsono researched the discourse of humor in memes [10]. F. Bayu researched the language of humor [11]. Research related to aspects of ambiguity in humor discourse also was carried out by [12]. Research on character education was conducted by Prayitno on the value of positive politeness and character [13]. Prayitno also researched character education on Instagram [14]. The topic related to the linguistic aspect of the form of ambiguity in humor discourse has actually been studied quite a lot. However, what distinguishes this research from previous research is that previous research only examined humor discourse with various topics, but this research focused on one topic, namely Covid-19. The interesting thing about this research is that it focuses more on analyzing humor discourse on the topic of Covid-19, which is still quite massive in development in Indonesia.

2. METHOD

This research utilized descriptive qualitative approach. The object of this research is the meaning of lexical and grammatical ambiguity and the value of character education in the Covid-19 humor discourse. The subjects of this research are all words, phrases, sentences in humorous discourse on social media Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (in Indonesian).

The data sources used are 14 COVID-19 humor discourses. The data are in the form of words or sentences that show the meaning of lexical and grammatical ambiguity.

Data collection used observation and documentation techniques. The documentation technique is an advanced technique that is used when applying the observation method with the advanced technique above [15]. The steps in data collection: (1) documenting and recording images containing sentences in the Covid-19 humor discourse, (2) grouping words or sentences in the form of lexical and grammatical ambiguity meanings and the value of character education in the Covid-19 humor discourse.

The data analysis method used in this research is translational identity method. Researchers conducted an analysis of the linguistic aspects of the Covid-19 humor discourse. The referential identity method in data analysis of this study was carried out by selecting the appropriate lingual unit, aligned, suitable, the same as the determining element. Test the validity of the data in this study used triangulation theory. The theory used is the theory of ambiguity.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Among Indonesian people, humor is an attempt to entertain themselves and each other. Humor is usually created in a language play about a life problem which is then made a topic of humor. Humor discourse has various meanings that can be analyzed using semantic studies. One aspect of meaning in humorous discourse is related to the form of ambiguity. The analysis of the relation of ambiguity to the Covid-19 humor discourse is described in the following section.

3.1 Lexical Ambiguity

Lexical ambiguity occurs at the word level. Lexical ambiguity is caused by the presence of lexical items that have multiple meanings either because of the application of their use or because of things that are lexical [16]. Each word can have more than one meaning and can refer to something different, according to the environment in which it is used. One of the types of lexical ambiguity in humor discourse is homonymy. Homonyms are the same words, but differ in terms of meaning. The following describes the form of homonymy in the Covid-19 humor discourse.

### 3.1.1 Polysemy

Polysemy in the Covid-19 Humor Discourse is shown in the data below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicature</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Goro-goro Corona, Mbah iki nekat adol putune (akun Facebook @Khalid Bin Alswalid, 2020)</td>
<td>Image of a grandfather selling putu cake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Penjual Tahu : “Katanya PPKM dipperpanjang lagi ya?” Pembeli : “Tahu dari mana?”</td>
<td>Picture of a conversation between two men, namely a Sumedang tofu seller and a buyer talking about lockdown.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data (1) is a picture of a grandfather who is selling putu cake. The word putu in data (1) contains a homonym meaning caused by the entry of new words into the Indonesian vocabulary. The word putune in the quote above originate from the root word putu. The inclusion of the word putu meaning ‘grandson’ from Javanese into Indonesian resulted in the word putu having two meanings, namely putu 1 ‘a traditional cake made of glutinous rice flour’ and putu 2 which means ‘grandson’. The use of polysemy in the data to deviate meaning presents an impropriety or absurdity in the experience conveyed through language.

In data (2) there is a deviation in the meaning of using the polysemy word tahu which means ‘understand’ with the word tahu which means ‘name of food made from soybeans’. The deviation of meaning is indicated by the word Sumedang, which is a type of tofu. The sudden twist of meaning is an attempt to surprise the reader. The seller knows what the man meant by misinterpreting the word tahu. It was deliberately done for the purpose of building a humor in the meme. The use of polysemy in the data to deviate from meaning presents an experience that is conveyed through language.

Data (3) is about foreigners who were surprised because Indonesia was free from Corona, then the answers from Indonesian netizens were very unique and cause humor. Answers from netizens that gave rise to a form of humor, turned out to have ambiguous meanings. Homonymy forms include the sentence “paku saja dijadikan sayur”. The word paku has more than one meaning, namely: (1) a type of plant, (2) nails, long round objects made of metal. In the sentence “Naga dijadikan pencuci mulur”. The word naga has ambiguous meanings, namely: (1) dragon which is the name of a very large snake, (2) dragon which is the name of a fruit. In “molen dijadikan cemilan”, the word molen has double meaning: (1) name of a food based on banana, (2) an instrument to stir sand and cement in construction. In quote “dan paling hebat belanjanya juga di matahari”, there are double meanings in the word matahari: (1) our sun, (2) Matahari, a mall brand in Indonesia.

The ambiguity of the words became the basis to produce the humor discourse through word play.

3.1.2 Homonymy

One of the types of lexical ambiguity in humor discourse is homonymy. Homonyms are the same words, but differ in terms of meaning or different meanings. Homonyms are raised by humor creators by using language symptoms, using names or titles, abbreviations, and divergence of meaning. Every word has the potential to have more than one meaning [17]. The meaning of a word can refer to something different according to the environment in which it is used. One of the meaning relations that fall into the type of lexical ambiguity is homonymy [17]. The following describes the form of homonymy in the Covid-19 humor discourse.

### Explicature

| (4) Baru mau ke jalan yang benar eh jalannya ditutup, ada PPKM | Picture of someone who wants to pass but the road is closed due to lockdown policy |
| (Halaman Facebook @PPKM, 2021) | |
| (5) A: “Assalamualaikum Ustad” B: “Wa’alaikumsalam” A:”Ustad, surat apa yang kita baca agar terhindar dari virus Corona?” B: “Baca Surat edaran Walikota/Bupati” | Picture of a conversation in a chat application about someone asking a cleric |
| (akun Twitter @memelord, 2020) | Image of a seller who ran out of capital because of lockdown policy |
In data (4) the deviation of meaning uses homonymous words, namely the word "jalan" which means 'a place for traffic of people (vehicles and so on)' with the word "jalan" which means 'the life decision chosen to be passed'. At first, the collocation that is present in the verbal element of the meme directs the interpretation of the meaning of "jalan" as an act of making the right life decisions. Then suddenly there was a change in the meaning of "jalan" as a place for people to traffic. Data (4) uses homonymous words to distort meaning by bringing up the sentence "The road is closed, there is lockdown" in humorous discourse as an explanation for the deviation of meaning. The deviation of meaning that occurs in the data (4) tries to surprise the reader with the second meaning that appears. This is done as an effort to build humor in a discourse or meme. The meaning of strange or unnatural surprise has the potential to stimulate the reader's laughter.

In data (5) the deviation of meaning uses homonymous words, namely the word "surat" which is a non-standard form of the word surah, meaning 'section or chapter in the Qur'an' with the word "surat" meaning 'written paper and so on'. At first, the collocation that was present in the verbal element of the meme directed the interpretation of the meaning of "surat" as part of the book of the Qur'an. Then suddenly there is a distortion in the meaning of "surat" as a form of official letter or circular of the Mayor or Regent. The deviation of meaning that occurs in data (5) tries to surprise the reader with the second meaning that appears. This is done as an effort to build humor in a discourse or meme. The meaning of strange or unnatural surprise has the potential to stimulate the reader's laughter.

Data (6) shows that there is a homonymy caused by the abbreviation process. The PPKM acronym when associated with the Covid-19 virus refers to a rule or lockdown policy made by the government in 2021. The short form of PPKM is actually Pemerintah Pusat Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat (Enforcement of Restrictions on Community Activities). Humor discourse based on the acronym PPKM was created and shared on social media to entertain internet users. The context of data (6) is that PPKM is associated with business problems, namely about sellers who run out of capital. Indirectly, the discourse in data (6) describes sellers who run out of capital due to the lack of buyers during the lockdown period. Residents of social media users create a discourse through the alternate acronym making PPKM stands for with sentences that invite laughter.

Similar research on the use of language in humor with data from memes on social media can be found [5]. This study focuses on the deviation of the meaning of homonymy and polysemy which is the basis for creating humor from the image of a meme. Fitri conducted research on the humor discourse schemata of Stand Up Comedy Indonesia [18]. Research on humor discourse with pragmatic aspects was carried out by Rahayu with data on humor discourse in the Thengil Rubric in Ancas Magazine. [19]. The humor discourse analyzed in Rahayu's research contained a violation of the principle of cooperation and the principle of harmony, which results in the creation of humor. Another study was conducted by Listiyorini. Their research used data in the form of memes on social media which are studied from semantic, phonological, and pragmatic aspects [20].

### 3.2 Grammatical Ambiguity

Grammatical ambiguity appears in linguistic units called sentences or groups of words. The double meaning of linguistic forms is not solely caused by the ambiguity of the meanings of the lexical items that compose them, but also because of the merging of these linguistic forms with other linguistic forms. Grammatical ambiguity can be manifested in spoken or written speech. Ambiguity at the grammatical level can occur in the structure of sentences or phrases. The analysis of the grammatical ambiguity of the Covid-19 humor discourse is described below.

#### 3.2.1 Amphibology

**Table 3. Amphibology in Covid-19 Humor Discourse**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicature</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(7) 14 hari di rumah, Corona negatif, istri positif (Akun Facebook @Ajikk Kancill, 2020)</td>
<td>Due to the Stay at Home policy, the wives are not positive in Corona virus but are positive in pregnancy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data excerpt (7) contains grammatical ambiguity in the form of amphibology, because it can be interpreted: (1) 'wife has positive thoughts', (2) 'wife is positive Corona', (3) 'wife is pregnant positive'. The intended meaning of the quote is the meaning contained in point 3, namely a wife who is positively pregnant. The deviation of meaning that occurs in data (7) tries to surprise the reader with the second meaning that
appears. This is done as an effort to build humor in memes. The meaning of strange or unnatural surprise has the potential to stimulate the reader's laughter.

3.2.2 Idiom

Table 4. Idioms in Covid-19 Humor Discourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explication</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(8) A: “Bro-bro, jangan ke sana banyak yang berkerumun dong sampai kaya gitu” B: “Biarin Bro, orang gw mau adu mulut ama itu orang, bikin kesel tu orang soalnya” A: “Jiahh lagi musim Corona gini mulut malah diadu-aduin udah bau jigong nyebat Corona lagi” B: “Heeeh taplak kopi, bukan adu mulut yang diadu gitu bro, maksudnya mau bantain omongan dia gitu. A: “Hahahaha Bilang dong Bro”</td>
<td>Two men who are talking about arguing during a pandemic. The argument meant by one of the men was to deny what the other said, but the second man thought that the argument was like a mouth being pitted against each other.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In data (8) the deviation of meaning uses the idiom "adu mulut" which means "arguing". Deviation of meaning by using idioms tends to clash idiomatic meaning with literal meaning. This can be seen from data (8) which clashes the idiomatic meaning 'arguing' with the literal meaning of "fighting mouth". The deviation of meaning that occurs in data (8) is done as an effort to build humor in memes.

3.2.3 Proverb

Table 5. Proverbs in Covid-19 Humor Discourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explication</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Grammatical ambiguity is found in proverbs as well. Every language has distinctive expressions that are not understood with true meaning and are widely known as proverbs. Wijana (2003: 195) stated that the Indonesian language has hundreds of proverbs that are used to increase wisdom. In data (9) the proverb bagai pungguk merindukan bula means 'hoping for something that is difficult to realize' with the literal meaning of 'like an eagle longing for the moon'. Odd or unusually surprising meaning has the potential to stimulate the reader's laughter.

Humor research with another linguistic angle was performed by Resticka. Different from previous research, their research focuses on using a pragmatic approach with data in the form of caricatures [3]. Arnita conducted research that focuses on violations of politeness principles and implicatures in humorous speech in television programs [21]. Research on humor
and laughter is also carried out by Khranov in the fields of cognitive linguistics and psychology, psycho- and sociolinguistics. This research is based on a collection of selected Internet memes and funny comments taken from social media and further divided into thematic groups [22]. Dzanic and Berberovic conducted a research on political humor with the title “ForgiveUsForWeHaveSinned: Conceptual integration theory and political Internet humour”. Dzanic and Berberovic’s research reveals the extent to which various forms of internet political humor can criticize political affairs such as Bosnia and Herzegovina. In particular, this study analyzes the meaning construction of humorous internet forms, such as memes, and the like that represent innovative ways of providing political commentary on current political affairs [23].

### 3.3 Character Education Value

The Covid-19 virus has made the Indonesian people create ideas in the form of humor discourse to entertain themselves during the pandemic season. They actually contain a lot of character education values. The values of character education that are spread in humorous discourses on social media can be used as a medium for character building for students. The following are the values of character education contained in the humor discourse with the theme of Covid-19.

#### 3.3.1 Religious Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explication</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(10)Baru mau ke jalan yang benar eh jalannya ditutup, ada PPKM</td>
<td>Picture of someone who wants to pass through the road but the road is closed due to the lockdown policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Halaman Facebook @PPKM, 2021)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) A: “Assalamualaikum Ustad” B: “Wa’alaikumsalam” A: “Ustad, surat apa yang kita baca agar terhindar dari virus Corona? B:Baca Surat edaran Walikota/Bupati” (akun Twitter @memelord, 2020)</td>
<td>Picture of a conversation in a chat application about someone asking a cleric</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data (10) contains religious character values which are indicated by the *jalan yang benar*, meaning a life decision that is chosen based on the instructions that have been set in a belief or religion. After making this decision, usually someone will act or have good behavior according to what religion teaches.

Data (11) contains religious characters which are indicated by the words *Surat* (chapter) and *ustad* (cleric). The two words relate to a religious book or scripture. Speaker A’s belief in avoiding the Corona virus through a verse in the book shows that he is a religious person.

#### 3.3.2 The Value of Love for the Motherland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explication</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(12)Jika kamu ingin membantu Indonesia tetapi passion kamu rebahan, ini kesempatan kamu (<a href="http://www.mata-mata.com">www.mata-mata.com</a>, 2020)</td>
<td>One of the efforts to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus is to do activities at home, which can be by simply lying down</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Covid-19 virus has made the government make several policies to stop the spread of the virus. One of the policies is to urge people to stay at home and not to leave the house for things that are not important. However, not all people follow this recommendation. Data citation (12) is a form of love for the homeland. This attitude was shown by the Indonesian people through activities of lying at home to break the chain of transmission of the Covid-19 virus, namely by obeying government regulations to end the pandemic in this country. The text section “If you want to help Indonesia” shows an attitude of love for the homeland.
3.3.3 Caring for cleanliness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explication</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(13) Tapigapapa, untuk pertamakalinya kita semua jadi rajin bebersih diri seperti orang beriman (Akan Twitter @nanidiot)</td>
<td>One of the efforts to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus is to maintain personal hygiene and cleanliness. Wash their hands with clean water and soap at all times and keep their environment clean and healthy. So, the existence of this virus has taught cleanliness to humans. In Islam, cleanliness is said to be part of faith.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The quote in the data above shows the value of caring for cleanliness. Changes in people's lifestyles during a pandemic are different than from before the pandemic. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many people wash their hands with clean water and soap at all times and keep their environment clean and healthy. So, the existence of this virus has taught cleanliness to humans. In Islam, cleanliness is said to be part of faith.

3.3.4 Discipline

Quote “Sekarang PPKM ada levelnya kaak Bon Cabe aja! udah buruan makan waktu kita tinggal 5 menit” shows the character of a disciplined attitude, including discipline when eating. The goal is to minimize the possibility of transmission of the Covid-19 virus. Eating time in public places is limited to 20 minutes.

The research conducted by Sabardila on the impact and influence found in television shows is a positive impact and a negative impact. Television programs have character education values that have the potential to be used as a medium for socializing character education values for elementary school children aged 6-8 years. [24]. Discourse that also has character education value is news discourse. News discourse contains many expressions of multidisciplinary wisdom that can be used as aspects of character education for the successors of the Indonesian nation [25].

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the meaning relation in humor discourse is shown through the existence of lexical and grammatical ambiguity meanings. Lexical ambiguity includes polysemy and homonymy. Polysemy in this study were found in five data: (1) the word tahu with ambiguous meaning of ‘knowing’ and ‘tofu, a type of food’, (2) putu, meaning ‘a type of cake’ and ‘grandchildren’, (3) paku, meaning ‘a type of plant’ and ‘nails’, (4) naga, meaning ‘a type of fruit’ dan ‘dragon snake’, (5) molen, ‘cement mixer’ and ‘a type of food’, (6) matatahari, meaning ‘a brand of mall’ and ‘the sun’, (7) cair meaning ‘can be cashed out’ and ‘liquid in nature, like water’. Homonymous words or phrases that used abbreviations or acronyms: (1) PPKM (2) surat, dan (3) jalan.

The grammatical ambiguity in this study utilized aspects of amphibiology, idioms, and proverbs. Amphibology phrases included: (1) corona negatif, (2) istri positif, (3) tahu sumedang. Idiom was found in the phrase ada mulut. Ambiguous meaning is the key in order to produce humor, namely through word play. The use of proverbs as a technique to generate humor in discourse is rarely used.

The value of character education contained in the Covid-19 humor discourse included religious values, caring for cleanliness, and love for the homeland.

REFERENCES
