

# Analysis of Form and Theme of Hate Speech Against President Joko Widodo on Social Media:

## A forensic linguistic study

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**Abstract**—This research analyzes hate speech against President Joko Widodo on social media. The analysis is aimed at revealing the forms and themes of hate speech addressed to President Joko Widodo by means of a forensic linguistic approach. The present study collected data consisting of various speeches categorized as hate speech posted by netizens on social media, particularly Facebook in the period of 2016-2018. The data analysis technique employed in this research was the qualitative content analysis introduced by Mayring as a procedure to analyze objects in the form of transcripts, including hate speech on social media. The results of analysis show that most hate speeches were expressed directly and contain attitude lexis representing the mental condition of the speaker who hates President Joko Widodo. Meanwhile, themes of hate speech addressed to President Joko Widodo were as follows: (1) Joko Widodo's identity, (2) Joko Widodo's relationship with Megawati, (3) Joko Widodo's relationship with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), (4) Joko Widodo's support for China, and (5) Joko Widodo's policies that suppressed Islamic groups.

**Keywords**—hate speech; Joko Widodo; social media; forensic linguistics

### I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of politics, social media plays a major role in taking a candidate running in an election to a victory. In the United States, Barack Obama's success in winning the Presidential Election was thanks to his campaigns on Facebook that reached voters in the country. In addition, Donald Trump's unexpected victory against Hillary Clinton was said to be due to Facebook's alleged bias toward Trump's campaign-related contents. His victory as the 45th USA President when a hoax favoring Trump went viral. Zeynep Tufekci, an associate professor in the University of North Carolina, said a fictitious story claiming that Pope Francis supported Trump broke out. The story was shared more than a million times and was estimated to be read by more than 10 million people in the US on social media. The hoax that went viral on the NewsFeed gave an advantage for Trump as a candidate, who, at that time, was rolling out his campaigns. Meanwhile, another hoax about a private e-mail scandal involving Hilary Clinton, who at that time served as the US Secretary of State, was accessed for 215

million times, reportedly causing her failure to be elected as the first US female president [1].

In Indonesia, hate speech and hoax have become major issues that potentially harm the democracy in the country. Hoax and hate speech on social media frequently become sources of conflicts. Hoax and hate speech are usually out of control ahead of elections. In Indonesia, the hoax and hate speech phenomena started from netizens' fads spread massively during the 2012 Jakarta Election, which peaked during the 2014 Presidential election. Each candidate during the 2014 Presidential Election started using the power of mass on the Internet, by forming a special team to manage and spread information. Each candidate's campaign team even hired an international social media consultant.

As the election year in 2019 approaches, the hate speech and hoax phenomena on social media are expected to escalate. President Joko Widodo (widely known as Jokowi) is one of the targets of hate speech expressed by Indonesian internet users. As an incumbent who is preparing for a re-election for the period of 2019-2024, Jokowi is a *sitting duck* of hate speech. Various motives behind hate speech against President Jokowi include business-related ones, such as to increase visitor traffic, and political motives to destroy Jokowi's positive image. Hence, this paper will not focus on revealing the motives or interests that drive people expressing hate speech against Jokowi on Social Media. Instead, this research will observe hate speech as linguistics data worth analyzing, particularly by means of the forensic linguistics framework. Therefore, this paper will report analysis results related to the form and theme of hate speech addressed to President Jokowi on social media.

### II. SOURCE OF DATA

The data of this research includes speeches categorized as hate speech posted on social media, particularly Facebook, in the period of 2016-2018. Therefore, it must be emphasized that the data are limited to verbal data (speech) posted on Facebook.

### III. METHOD

This research employed qualitative paradigm based on a procedure and text analysis of ground theory that was developed by Strauss & Corbin and Glaser [2,3]. The qualitative research paradigm was employed because this research is aimed at interpreting the hate speech phenomenon addressed to President Jokowi on social media. In addition, the data analysis technique employed in this research was the qualitative content analysis introduced by Mayring as the procedure to analyze objects in the form of transcripts [4].

### IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory used as the conceptual framework for this research is the speech act theory developed by Austin and Searle [5,6]. In addition, the appraisal theory developed by Martin is also referred as an analysis tool to discuss the hate speech phenomenon on social media [7].

#### A. Speech Act

Austin's thought summarized in *How to Do Things with Words* have been important foundations that influence pragmatic research to this date [5]. The book that contains detailed analysis results of daily language (ordinary language) has changed the course of linguistics studies which at that time was dominated by the logical positivism group.

There are two important parts of Austin's thoughts that will be revealed in this section, namely the dichotomy of constative-performative speeches and the Speech Acts theory. Austin was a language philosopher who was thorough and meticulous in dissecting pragmatic language. According to Austin, when conversing or communicating in all situations, not only we state a sentence but also do an action. The philosophical background of this theory is against the school developed by the logical positivism philosophers saying that a speech or statement has meaning, so long that it describes a factual situation and positively corresponds a reality [5].

The formula proposed by the logical positivism philosopher's states that whether a statement is true or false must be verifiable. Otherwise, the speech is a pseudo-statement. Austin calls the formula as a descriptive fallacy. In fact, there are many speeches that do not describe factual situations but remain meaningful since the speech corresponds a certain action.

A sentence being uttered, in fact, does not only describe one thing but also does an action. When a speech is uttered, the speaker is required to do what he says. Austin, with a moralist philosophy background, intended to shift the logical issue to an ethical one. Therefore, a logical language is deemed to have failed and is not able to resolve the problems with diverse and expressive ordinary language.

What was the most important thing for Austin was a daily communication process that causes a speech to have an effect on the listener and change the social reality. Behind a spoken language, there are power, subjective experience, and morality. A language is not only driven by knowledge or statement that can be verified based on a factual situation, namely right or

wrong. In this stage, Austin categorized speeches into two types, namely constative and performative speeches.

Austin's classification of the two speech types was very appealing and well-known during his time, as previous philosophers' works were still focused on classifying language into meaningful and meaningless categories. Meanwhile, Austin had left the idea behind and no longer limited language analysis to sentence meaning. Austin started thinking about other factors that may have influences on a word. The understanding of the difference between constative and performative sentences is important since we occasionally do not realize when to use a constative speech and in what condition a performative speech must be used.

#### B. Appraisal System

Parameters that can be used to determine whether a word or a sentence is categorized as speech that contains an insult or defamation are those based on the analysis of speech meaning/intention. As we know, meanings are categorized into explicit and implied ones. To reveal an implied meaning in a certain language needs a tool of analysis which is capable of deconstructing a meaning in plain view.

In a linguistic research, a theory used to reveal an implied meaning is often based on a critical linguistic paradigm, namely, among others, the *appraisal system* theory. An appraisal is a tool of analysis to reveal an interpersonal meaning by focusing on the evaluation of attitude in a text (or speech). The strength of the feeling involved in a text and how the feeling is sensed by a reader is apparent from the language being used [7].

In the appraisal theory, an attitude is related to a social interaction. The focus in the appraisal is an attitude and value being negotiated with the readers. One of the most important aspects of the appraisal theory is the source of opinion that will naturally occur. *An appraisal is concerned with evaluation: the kinds of Attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feeling involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned* [7]. There are three aspects being focused on in the appraisal system discussion, namely *attitude*, *amplification*, and *source of attitudes*. The three aspects are explained below.

1) *Attitude*: is related to the evaluation of objects, one's character, and feeling. Attitude is divided into three foundations, namely the evaluation of Affect (one's feeling), judgment (one's character), and Appreciation (the value of an object).

a) *Affect*: is related to one's feeling. An evaluation that relates to writers/readers is their emotional judgment toward someone, an object, or something that is happening. Affect can be expressed by a verb related to mental processes such as to love/to hate, to frighten/to reassure, to interest/to bore, to enrage/to placate. In addition to emotive verbs, Affect can also be expressed by adverbs, usually adverbs of manner, such as happily/sadly. Lastly, Affect can be expressed by an adjective of emotion, such as happy/sad, worried/confident, angry/pleased, keen/uninterested. Affect can be divided into two categories: positive and negative. This is related to bad

and good tributes related to an attitude and emotion. Affect can also be expressed in two ways, namely in explicit and implicit manners. One's feeling expressed directly consists of emotional state and physical expression. Feelings expressed directly are indicated by the use of emotion-related words. One's feeling expressed in an implied manner consists of extraordinary behavior and metaphor. Feelings expressed in an implied manner are shown by unusual behavior in expressing emotion, such as a change in tone of voice and body language. In studying an unusual behavior, a researcher often knows that there is something irregular but is not too sure what is the feeling that one intends to express. Therefore, this requires a psychological approach.

*b) Judgment:* Is a normative assessment of human behaviors in relation to rules or behavior conventions. In other words, judgment is related to ethics, religious beliefs, moral, legal regulations, and other existing regulations. Similar to the attitude which is expressed positively or negatively, directly or indirectly, judgment can be assessed in such a manner, but judgment is related to existing social norms. Judgment involves an evaluation whether something is legal/illegal, moral/immoral, polite/impolite, so that moral or legal-related words, such as immoral, virtuous, lewd, sinful, lascivious, innocent, unjust, fair-minded, law-abiding, murderous, cruel, brutal, dishonest will surface. Judgment can be divided into personal judgment consisting of admiration or criticism, and moral judgment consisting of praise or condemnation.

*c) Appreciation:* Is an evaluation of objects, including an attitude toward TV shows, films, books, CDs, paintings, sculptures, houses, public buildings, parks, drama, recital, parade, any kinds of performances and shows, feelings to a park, and scenery. Just like Affect and judgment, Appreciation evaluates an object as positive or negative. In addition, a relationship between humans and an abstract life quality will also be evaluated similarly to an object. In appreciation a judgment of a human being can be conducted as follows: She is beautiful. The sentence is not a judgment since, even if the aspect being evaluated is human, what is judged cannot be categorized as wrong or right, and beautiful is not morally right or wrong.

*2) Graduation (amplifying attitude):* Is how the attitude is being implemented, and one thing that they need to pay attention in relation to the attitude is its (gradable) nature. Amplifying attitude is divided into two categories, namely the force that relates to the power of words, which is related to the tone of voice and the intensifiers (word strength), attitudinal lexis (words with attitude), metaphor, and swearing. Both are the focus related to the word refining and sharpening.

*3) Engagement (source of attitude):* Related to the sources of attitude that are divided into two categories, namely heterogloss that is related to the source of attitude that comes from those other than the writer and monogloss which is related to the source of attitude that only comes from the writer. In terms of heterogloss, sources of attitudes do not only come from the writer. Therefore, it is imperative to analyze heterogloss using projection source, modality, and concession.

## V. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

### A. Data Analysis

The followings are the corpuses identified as hate speech against President Jokowi on Facebook.

*1) Hate speech related to Jokowi's identity:* The corpuses in following extracts 1 and 2 are hate speech related to President Jokowi's identity expressed by a Facebook user with an initial of ANN and another Facebook user with an initial of HD, each of them were posted on March 23, 2017, and November 10, 2017, respectively.

Extract 1: Having a sex worker as a birth mother... That's how stupid Jokowi is in covering up the identity of his birth mother, who was a Gerwani member!!!

In extract 1, it is obvious that a Facebook user ANN hates President Jokowi for his identity. The speech contains *condemnation* addressed to Jokowi for having a sex worker as her mother. It was a hoax. Therefore, the speech can be categorized as a slander. In addition, Facebook user ANN *accuses* President Jokowi of having a birth mother who was a member of the Indonesian Women Movement (Gerwani). In addition, *goblok* (idiot) in the speech is an offensive word used to insult someone and as an expression of dislikeness.

In terms of the speech form, the hate speech in extract 1 is a direct and explicit speech showing the speaker's negative attitude towards President Jokowi. In addition to hate speech in extract 1, hate speech against Jokowi's identity is also shown by extract 2 below.

Extract 2: Jokowi the liar is a Chinese, whose real name is Herbertus Handoko, and his Father's name is Oey Hong Liong

Extract 2 represents *judgment* and *accusation* that Jokowi is a fraud. In this case, President Jokowi is also accused of being a Chinese descendant and having a father named Oey Hong Liong. The speech represents Facebook account owner HD's dislikeness towards President Jokowi by posting a slander saying that Jokowi is a Chinese descendant. In terms of the speech form, extract 2 is categorized as a direct speech showing a negative attitude towards President Jokowi.

*2) Hate speech related to Jokowi-Megawati relationship:* Extract 3 below shows hate speech addressed to President Jokowi in relation to his relationship with Megawati Soekarnoputri.

Extract 3: [He is] an old witch puppet who does stupid things she told him to #nasty

The speech in extract 3 contains the writer's negative attitude that *flouts* President Jokowi as a puppet of an *old witch* referred to Megawati Soekarnoputri. The *base* word placed at the beginning of the sentence clearly shows the writer's intention to flout President Jokowi. Therefore, extract 3 is categorized as an explicit hate speech.

3) *Hate speech related to Jokowi and the Indonesian communist party:* A hate speech addressed to President Jokowi related to his relationship with the Indonesia Communist Party is shown by the following extract.

Extract 4: [He is] friendly to a communist party, yet [he is] mean to his own people... That's how stupid our President is.

The sentence in extract 4 contains an allegation implying that Jokowi is on the wrong side. In this case, Jokowi's friendliness in welcoming emissaries of the Chinese Communist Party at the State Palace, while being mean to his own people, is considered as a stupidity. Extract 4 contains an allegation of Jokowi's paradoxical attitude towards his own people. The implicature of this sentence represents a meaning that President Jokowi has a close relationship with the Chinese Communist Party, which historically was close to the Indonesian Communist Party.

4) *Hate speech related to Jokowi's close relationship with China:* Hate speech addressed to President Jokowi in relation to his policies that are deemed to favor China is shown in the following extract.

Extract 5: The president's promises stink. [He told us] to work yet [he] hires foreigners #JokowiBastard

Extract 5 contains a hate speech scolding Jokowi for breaking his promises. In this case, Facebook account owner GN views that President Jokowi has allowed *aseng* workers (a reference to workers from China) to enter Indonesia. This is viewed to be a proof that President Jokowi broke his promises to secure job opportunities for native Indonesians. In terms of the form, the sentence in extract 5 is a directly expressed hate speech. In contrast with extract 5, the following extract 6 contains a hate speech expressed indirectly.

Extract 6: Japan offered cheaper high-speed trains, [which is] not jointly financed, yet [he] chose Chinese high-speed trains with high interests. My president is so smart.

Extract 6 contains an implicit hate speech expressed by Facebook account owner RS address to President Jokowi. In this case, the Facebook account owner views that the government decision favoring China's high-speed train project, which costs more than that offered by Japan, was a "smart" decision. However, the praise expressed by Facebook account owner RS was satirical.

5) *Hate speech related to Jokowi's attitude not favoring Islam:* Hate speech addressed to President Jokowi for not favoring Islamic groups is shown in the following extract.

Extract 7: People spreading [religious] teachings at mosques are captured. When priests talk politics in churches, the Stupid President does nothing

Extract 7 is a direct speech that explicitly expresses a Facebook account owner's hate against President Jokowi. The speech contains an allegation addressed to President Jokowi for not favoring Islamic groups, while on the other hand being friendly to non-Islamic groups. Extract 7 contains a word used to insult President Jokowi as a *stupid* president.

### B. Findings

The analysis of data on hate speech addressed to President Jokowi resulted in a finding that direct (explicit) speeches are more commonly found than the implicit ones. This represents that the level of violent language among Facebook users is at the alarming state. Language modesty and social appreciation towards other people, particularly to a state leader, are no longer apparent in their language being used on social media. In addition, hate speech against Jokowi is realized in the following acts: 1) insulting, 2) blaming, 3) accusing/slandering, and 4) denouncing.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the study, the author draws the following conclusions.

Social interactions by the means of digital communication, such as social media, have been increasingly popular. Social media serves a function as a means for Indonesians to channel their language activities without a systematic control. As a result, the language being used on social media frequently fuels social issues among the society.

Digital communication offers swift dissemination of information and helps users to spread positive information. On the other hand, negative information, such as hate speech, disseminated through digital communication means, has turned into a serious threat that may disrupt the harmony of community.

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