Language Crime Practices: Cyberbullying in *TikTok* Comment Section (Review) – A Forensic Linguistics Analysis

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Abstract

The practice of language crimes has become a rampant phenomenon amid current information technology developments. The impact that can be caused by language crimes on social media may not be felt physically, but directly affect the victim's mentality. This research aims to investigate the form and pattern of cyberbullying as a practice of language crimes committed by Tiktok residents to one of the young tiktokers, namely Fujianti Utami on the Tiktok @fujiiian account. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method, forensic linguistic review. Documentation techniques were used to collect and analyze the data based on the Milles & Huberman analysis model of speech, which indicated the presence of language crime practices. The results of this study show that the number of harassment bullying speeches collected (387), it is known that the most common bullying pattern carried out by TikTok residents on @fujiiian accounts is head act (219) and the least pattern is supportive move (mitigating) – head act-supportive move (mitigating), as many as (5). Although language crimes are criminal acts, they cannot be processed legally. This is because bullying on social media is a complaint that will only be processed if the party who feels aggrieved files a report to the police.

Keywords: languages crime, cyberbullying, forensic linguistics, social media.

1. Introduction

Advancements in technology have brought about significant changes in people's lives, particularly in the way they interact with each other. Various social media platforms enable direct connections among individuals. However, the sense of connectivity facilitated by social media does not always stem from genuine emotional relationships built through acquaintances, friendships, familial bonds, or other deeply-rooted connections. Instead, it can be based on mere interest in content, curiosity, or unfounded animosity. In this regard, human interaction on social media can create an environment conducive to the development of cyberbullying (Liang, 2024).

Tiktok is a widely used social media platform that initially targeted teenagers in Indonesia. However, its user base has expanded to include people from all age groups. TikTok is an application for creating and sharing videos (Maharani & Gusnita, 2024), but it has also become a platform that has the potential to facilitate cybercrimes involving language offenses across all age groups. Unfortunately, cybercrimes can affect people of all ages, from adults to teenagers and even children.

Tiktok users should be aware of the legal and ethical boundaries when using social media. These include prohibitions against slander, violations, bullying, and spreading false information (Hakim et al. 2024). Unfortunately, many social media users underestimate the impact of cyberbullying on its victims. The use of hurtful language on social media can have serious psychological effects on the victims, such as depression and even suicidal thoughts (Nahla, Setiawan, & Nabila 2024). Unlike real-life bullying, cyberbullying leaves the victim with nowhere to seek refuge, as it can follow them anywhere due to its digital nature.(Mubaroq, Huda, & Weliangan, 2024).

The issue of language crime, such as cyberbullying, is a significant problem that highlights the injustice and inequality in today's digital world. Many people often rush to interpret and judge a post or content without fully understanding the context (Saribu & Simanjuntak, 2024). According to (Martha, 2024) at least three main factors contribute to cybercrime; 1) The widespread use of technology has changed human behavioral patterns rapidly; 2) Ignorance of the legal risks involved in using social media; 3) A decline in social control, leading individuals to pursue their goals or pleasures without regard for applicable norms to achieve their goals or pleasures without violating applicable norms.

In both the real and virtual worlds, a person's behavior can be different. This idea has been termed the *Space Transition Theory* by K. Jaishankar (Ihsan et al. n.d.). Some individuals feel secure expressing their opinions in cyberspace. However, there is a thin line between expressing opinions/comments and committing language crimes. According to Draa dan Syedne (2009); (Eliya, Santoso, & Taufiqurrahman, 2023), forms of cyberbullying can include: 1) flaming (spreading disputes); 2) harassment (harassment); 3) denigration (slander); 4) impersonation (fake accounts/imitation); 5) trickery (deceit); 6) outing (secret gathering); 7) exclusion (ostracism); and 8) cyberstalking (cyberstalking).include; 1) flaming (spreading dispute); 2) harassment (harassment); 3) denigration (slander); 4) impersonating (fake accounts/imitation); 5) trickery (deceit); 6) outing (secret gathering); 7) exclusion (ostracism); and 8 cyberstalking (cyberstalking).

The pattern of narrative bullying can take various forms including: 1) threatening; 2) forcing; 3) scaring; 4) demeaning; 5) harassing; 6) humiliating; 7) bullying; 8) annoying; and 9) disturbing (Mei et al. 2024). Language crimes in cyberspace can also be observed from a forensic linguistic perspective. Forensic linguistics considers language as legal evidence by focusing on the linguistic context present (Kusumawardhani, 2024). Cases of language crimes often involve public figures. One such case is that of Fujianti Utami on his TikTok account @fujiiian. Bullying against Fujianti often occurs in the comments section of his TikTok account. Discussion of Fujianti and her personal life frequently includes bullying. This undoubtedly affects his psychological well-being as a young person. Accordingly, this research aims to identify criminal language practices in the form of cyberbullying in the comments section of Fujianti Utami's TikTok account.

The study examines language crime practices, specifically cyberbullying in the comment section of TikTok. This forensic linguistic study has been conducted by various researchers, including; 1) Harsh comments (Hate Speech) on Indonesian social media: Forensic Linguistic Approach by (Mubarok et al. 2024); 2) Forensic linguistic analysis of legal effects on social media in the North Sumatra region by (Hadi, Ginting, and Perangin-angin 2023); 3) Netizen

language crimes in the Lesti Kejora domestic violence case by Rezky Billar on the Lambe Turah Instagram Period October 2022: forensic linguistic study by (Butsainah, Mahsun, & Asyhar, 2024); 4) Hate speech through Instagram comments as political violence by (Putri & Rahayu, 2024); 5) Law and trust in the police: an interrogation study in a forensic linguistics perspective by (Waljinah et al. 2024).

This research takes a unique approach by examining the phenomenon of language-based bullying, particularly in the comments section of Fujianti Utami's work, as a problem. It sheds light on the bullying patterns prevalent among TikTok users, especially targeting young content creators, which has not been extensively covered in previous studies.

2. Methods

In this research, qualitative descriptive methods were used with a forensic linguistic approach to interpret cyberbullying as a form of language crime committed by TikTok users against Fujianti Utami on his TikTok account @fujiiian. The forensic linguistic approach involved analyzing linguistic details to identify potential legal implications (Nyoman et al. 2024) arising from social interactions in public spaces. Additionally, a pragmatic approach was used to determine whether the speech being studied could be considered a crime with legal consequences. This approach considers not only the form of the speech but also its function and social meaning.

The data for this research was collected from the TikTok social media platform, specifically from the account of a young user named Fujianti Utami. The data was collected from comment in video uploads on the @fujiiian account, spanning from June to July 2024. From the numerous bullying incidents, the researchers randomly selected several cases to be the focus of the research. These cases were chosen due to the widespread coverage of the bullying experienced by Fuji after a photo of him with a sales promotion girl (SPG) in a mall began circulating. This particular case garnered significant attention and led to various hurtful comments from TikTok users.

In this research, data collection techniques involved document analysis. This included reviewing, dissecting, and coding content from the social media platform TikTok, specifically focusing on instances of bullying (Yasin, Garancang, & Hamzah, 2024). The obtained data was then classified and analyzed according to the research objectives, using the Miles & Huberman analysis model, which includes reduction, presentation, and conclusion.

3. Results

In this research, speech acts are closely related to the theory of language crime or cyberbullying on social media. Cyberbullying is a linguistic phenomenon that occurs when speech acts using language media have a real impact on the victim, both physically and psychologically. Speech is generally divided into three categories: locution (proposition or content of speech), illocutionary (speech acts that contain certain power or intent), and perlocutionary (speech effects). This research identifies four types of speech patterns: Head Act (the essence of speech), Head Act – Supportive Move (the essence of the speech with internal modification), Supportive Move – Head Act (internal modification of the essence of speech), and Supportive Move – Head Act – Supportive Move (internal modification of the core speech being modified again).

The main message of a bullying speech is called the Head Act, which is indicated by specific language devices known as Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs). The Supportive Move in a speech consists of supporting evidence that bolsters the Head Act. Supportive moves can be mitigating or aggravating. Mitigation softens or weakens the speech's bullying aspect, while aggravation strengthens the bullying story. The collected speech data reveals 387 instances of bullying speech. According to Willard (2006), harassment involves offensive messages, harsh words, and repeated insults (Sukma et al. 2021).

Based on the analysis of 387 instances of bullying speech, the most frequently used pattern on the @fujiiian TikTok account is head action (219 instances). On the other hand, the least common pattern is supportive move (mitigating) - head act - supportive move (mitigating), with only 5 instances. You can visualize this data in the graph below:

Fig. 1. Patterns of bullying speech

"The following are different patterns of bullying speech that can influence the level of violence in speech:1) Supportive Move (Aggravating) - Head Act - Supportive Move (Aggravating); 2) Head Act – Supportive Move (Aggravating); 3) Supportive Move (Aggravating) – Head Act; 4) Supportive Move (Mitigating) – Head Act – Supportive (Aggravating); 5) Upgrader (Head Act); 6) Head Act – Supportive Move (Mitigating); 7) Supportive Move (Mitigating) – Head Act; 8) Supportive Move (Mitigating) – Head Act - Supportive Move. In our data on harassment speech, we found these patterns.

Tabel 1 *Data on Bullying Speech Patterns*

Data	Pola Tuturan	Ucapan
Data 209	Supportive move (agrravating) – head act – move (aggravating).	*"Banyak tingkah **sudah magrib** tapi banyak gaya"*
Data 8	Head act – supportive move (mitigating).	*"**Uti magrib** jangan lupa magriban"*

Data 11	Head act – supportive move (mitigating).	**"ASTAGA MAGRIBBBB BANGETTT** <u>BENER KATA NOVI SARTIKA"</u>
Data 25	Supportive Move (Aggravating) – Head Act.	<u>*"mau diapain saja*</u> **ya tetap magrib"**
Data 68	Supportive Move (Aggravating) – Head Act.	<u>*"ini bukan magrib lagi*</u> **tapi malam 1 suro"**
Data 108	Supportive move (aggravating) - head act - supportive move (aggravating)	*"****cantikan aliyah oyy*** *tinggi semampai* ini **mah botol yakult"**
Data 74	*Head act.*	**"Vibes ani-ani"**
Data 86	*Head act.*	**"Fuji magrib banget"**

Based on the bullying pattern exhibited by the TikTok user @fujiiiian, the account contains elements of insults, racism, and other unpleasant actions conveyed through repeated harsh comments.

Data 209 involves a type of speech that both supports and worsens bullying behavior. The supporting speech reinforces the racist remarks directed at the victim. The speaker starts with the phrase " *"<u>Banyak tingkah</u> **sudah magrib** <u>tapi banyak gaya</u>"*. In this context, " *"<u>Banyak tingkah</u> **sudah magrib** <u>tapi banyak gaya</u>"* is interpreted as a sarcastic comment about Fuji's non-white skin, as perceived by TikTok users.

The communication style in **Data 11 and 8** are supportive and mitigating. The language used is not particularly forceful, employing subtle phrases such as " **Uti magrib** <u>jangan lupa magriban</u>" which serves as an encouraging reminder. This supportive approach diminishes the impact of the previous speech in "Uti Maghrib." As a result, Data 8 is more indicative of sarcasm than insults. Similarly, in Data 11, the speech is supportive and mitigating, and it is not too forceful as it employs supportive mitigation through argument justification. This creates the impression of supporting others' contentious arguments without introducing more serious arguments.

Data 25 and Data 68 exemplify the use of Supportive Move (Aggravating) - Head Act speech. The head act form is particularly potent as it employs supportive aggravation to reinforce the speaker's head act. In Data 25, head acts are exemplified by the words " *"<u>mau diapain saja</u> **ya tetap magrib**," which are preceded by the supportive words "whatever you want to do." This intensifies the speaker's speech. In Data 68, the data indicate supportive aggravation with "it's not sunset anymore, <u>*ini bukan magrib lagi*</u> **tapi malam 1 suro"**. Both instances involve acts of humiliation (body shaming) by employing the phrases "maghrib" and "midnight one suro" as representations of Fuji's skin color. It's important to note that Fuji's skin color is not as dark as sunset or the night of Suro.

In this example, **Data 108** involves speech that both supports and aggravates, specifically through acts that support harassing gestures. The speakers in this data use comparisons with others to carry out harassing speech acts. For instance, the phrase " ***cantikan aliyah oyy*** <u>tinggi semampai</u> ini **mah botol yakult** " employs a supportive yet aggravating form by prompting the speaker to compare themselves with others. This phrase is further strengthened by an explanatory sentence that describes the comparative form of beauty of the person being spoken to. Moreover, the main gesture in this data is represented by the phrase "This is a Yakult bottle," where the comparison of a Yakult bottle is used to symbolize the body shape of the speech partner who is not very tall. Consequently, this data can be interpreted as a form of bullying due to the comparisons or body shaming involved.

In Data 74 and 86, there are instances of bullying speech characterized by a confrontational pattern. Declarative sentences are used in both instances to mock the victim. In both cases, the speaker intends to offend the listener by using the phrases "vibes ani-ani" dan "magrib banget". These phrases carry connotations that belittle the speaker, making both utterances insulting and offensive.

4. Discussion

The findings of this research indicate that social media can be a platform for the deliberate development of language crimes that follow trends. Many cases of bullying are caused by the unrestricted use of social media without considering ethics and the impact on the victim. ITE Law No. 11 of 2008 should effectively protect the rights of every social media user so that everyone can feel safe, even in cyberspace.

In the TikTok Fuji comments section, several forms of bullying are repeatedly carried out by the same people. Further investigation is needed to understand the motives of the bullies. According to Rigby (Asnawi 2019), bullying is driven by a desire to hurt others. If the same person repeatedly engages in bullying, it is important to understand their motives to prevent them from continuing without remorse.

Social media bullying can manifest in various ways, such as insults, slander, and racism. As per Article 310 (1) of the Criminal Code, insults are considered defamatory, while Article 311 (1) addresses the criminal act of slander. Perpetrators can be charged with slander when they falsely accuse the victim of something. In a recent case, Fuji was subjected to insulting comments about their appearance on TikTok, with users often using the term "magrib" to describe their darker complexion.

These actions are considered language crimes and could lead to legal consequences. The insults do not only violate Fuji's rights but also have the potential to harm their reputation as a public figure. If reported, the TikTok users responsible for the bullying could face legal repercussions. Social media bullying is a punishable offense, and authorities will take action if the victim reports the incident.

5. Conclusions

According to the research findings, there is a pattern of harassing speech in the TikTok comments on Fujianti Utami's account, with a total of 387 instances. The patterns identified include various sequences of supportive and aggravating moves, head acts, mitigating actions, and upgraders. These bullying narratives on TikTok can have significant psychological effects on the victims. The content of the comments includes pejorative words, vulgarity, negative connotations, body shaming, and racism.

Please remember the following: The content created by TikTok users may contain elements that could lead to legal consequences. Bullying on social media can involve insults, slander, and racism. Insults are considered a form of defamation under Article 310 (1) and slander is regulated under Article 311 (1) of the Criminal Code. If the victim, Fuji, reports the incident to the authorities, the actions of TikTok users could lead to legal consequences. Social media bullying is a prosecutable offense, and it will be addressed if the victim reports the matter.

In the realm of education, this research emphasizes the importance of digital literacy for all groups, particularly school children and teenagers who are vulnerable to bullying. It also highlights the significance of language competence in enabling social media users to make wiser comments.

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