

Research Article

Social Media Celebrity and Abusive Language: An Empirical Investigation

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Abstract.

Different characteristics of social media users give rise to different languages when they (netizens) write comments on social media, ranging from polite ones to harsh. The case of one of the Indonesian celebrities who reported her spouse to the police for domestic violence brought up various comments. Netizens immediately commented, some even using abusive language. This study aims to determine the categorization of abusive language levels in posts on official Instagram accounts of celebrities who have X and Y accounts by applying the positivism paradigm using content analysis research methods and quantitative approaches. The samples collected were all comments on both accounts up to Saturday, January 7th, 2023. The results showed that on account Y, 34% of comments did not contain abusive language, while on account X, it reached 42%. The most abusive language on account Y was related to names involving animals, astral creatures/beings, and body parts, with a count of 23% each. Meanwhile, on account X, the most abusive language involved unpleasant and unethical conditions, with a count of 12% and 11%, respectively. Efforts to address this issue are needed to create a safer and more civilized online environment.

Keywords: social media, celebrities, netizens, comments, abusive language
Form

1. INTRODUCTION

Abusive language is often used freely by netizens to express their feelings through comments on social media. Less binding laws make the use of abusive language customary. One of the cases that triggered both polite and rude comments on social media was a case of violence allegedly committed by an Indonesian artist against his wife. The domestic violence case reached a climax when the artist's wife withdrew the police report. Hearing this information, haters flocked to bombard their Instagram accounts with scathing, insulting, and provocative messages. They did so partly because they felt cheated or "pranked" as if what happened was a mere charade to increase the prestige of the artist couple. In fact, this celebrity couple is predicted to be the

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“best couple” by their fans. Some people, especially women, became angry and raged on the Instagram accounts of the two celebrities because what they had done was not in accordance with the truth the fans believed in. This then led to bullying and abusive words against the artists by followers and viewers on their personal and official Instagram accounts, which have millions of followers. In this study, the various comments will be categorised according to the language they are written in.

Research on abusive language has become an important topic in various disciplines, including communication, psychology, sociology, and language sciences. This research helps understand the phenomenon of using abusive language, the motivation behind it, its impact, and how to overcome or reduce this kind of behavior. Previous research that has been conducted using qualitative research type is about Analysis Of Abusive Language Imitated By Adolescents From Tiktok Social Media In Mojoarum Village, Gondang District, Tulungagung Regency, the results show that the abusive language spoken by children in Mojoarum Village is very varied. It can be classified into five types of harsh language spoken by them. The five forms of coarse language are conditions, animals, astral beings, an object, and body parts [1]. Another study on the use of language on other social media focuses on the Analysis of the Use of Netizen Sarcasm Language Styles on Instagram Social Media conducted by Ulfatun Hasanah et al, the results of the study show that the analysis of the use of netizen sarcasm language styles on Instagram social media found a lot of comments containing sarcasm language with various forms. Of the 51 data that have been found and analyzed by researchers, there are 9 forms of sarcasm language from 10 forms proposed by Keraf, including 29 forms of conveying opinions, 6 forms of conveying questions, 4 forms of statements of equality, 3 forms of conveying affirmations, 3 forms of conveying orders, 2 forms of conveying information, 2 forms of conveying greetings, 1 form of conveying information and 1 form of conveying prohibitions [2].

Indonesian netizens are known to have a bad reputation on social media. On the weekend of February 2021, Microsoft released the “Digital Civility Index” which shows the level of civility of internet users or netizens throughout 2020. The result is really concerning. The level of civility of Indonesian netizens is very low, ranking 29th out of 32 countries in Asia. Meanwhile, in Southeast Asia, the level of the Digital Civilization Index in Indonesia is ranked the worst. The Microsoft report is based on a survey of 16,000 respondents in 32 countries conducted between April and May 2020. Indonesia’s score did increase by eight points from 67 in 2019 to 76 in 2020, but Indonesia remains the country with the least civilized netizens in Southeast Asia [3].

The bad reputation that Indonesians have on social media is due to their language and speech when commenting on social media. Speaking good and correct language is a communication tool, a major part of which must be owned by humans to be able to say what they want to other humans. Language is a permanent law for communicating, self-evidence, and a medium of cooperation used by humans [4]. The openness of media and information in social media also triggers the high tendency of people to commit hate speech; this is possible because of the availability of comment facilities that cause the relationship between writers and readers to be reciprocal and easy to comment on each other [5].

Netizens today are seen as a group of people who label themselves as “all righteous” because they feel the most righteous when giving comments, criticisms, views, and even provocative and abusive language. Ordinary people may not often receive hate comments or criticism, but for “public figures”, having such bad treatment will greatly disrupt not only their personal lives but also their jobs as celebrities, influencers, artists, government officials, and so on.

In Indonesia, the online defamation law in the ITE Law has been stipulated in Article 27 paragraph (3), which is not an ordinary offense in terms of the essence of defamation and historical aspects. It is explained that defamation is an act of attacking a person's good name or honor that has an impact on defaming or damaging the name of a person or parties who are harmed. The content and context of speech or writing addressed to a particular party is an act of “attacking” the good name understood by the victims, as they are the ones who feel insulted, humiliated, and harassed [6]The truth is that there are still many utterances in communication that do not have the value of politeness, violate the principles of courtesy, and even use harsh language that is scattered on social media [7].

High-profile cases on social media, including cyberbullying and verbal abuse committed online against certain individuals or groups, have sparked widespread debate and controversy. One of the cases that triggered both polite and rude comments on social media was a case of violence allegedly committed by an Indonesian artist against his wife. The domestic violence case reached a climax when the artist's wife withdrew the police report. Hearing this information, haters flocked to bombard their Instagram accounts with scathing, insulting, and provocative messages. They did so partly because they felt cheated or “pranked” as if what happened was a mere charade to increase the prestige of the artist couple.

In fact, this celebrity couple is predicted to be the “best couple” by their fans. Some people, especially women, became angry and raged on the Instagram accounts of the two celebrities because what they had done was not in accordance with the truth the fans believed in. This then led to bullying and abusive words against the artists by followers and viewers on their personal and official Instagram accounts, which have millions of followers.

Abusive language has become an increasingly disturbing problem on social media today. Netizens often freely comment using abusive words to express their feelings. This is partly due to the lack of strict regulations on the use of abusive language on social media platforms.

The aim of this research is to identify and analyze the usage of abusive language in social media comments by netizens, particularly on accounts Y and X. It involves classifying abusive language into various categories, such as language involving the names of animals, unpleasant conditions, unethical behavior, conditions not approved by God/religion, and more. Measuring the extent to which abusive language is used in comments made by netizens on accounts Y and X. This is expressed in the form of percentages for each category of abusive language, which aids in assessing the extent of abusive language within this context. Attempting to understand the differences in the use of abusive language between accounts Y and X. This includes comparing the percentages of usage for various categories of abusive language and exploring potential distinctions in the types of offensive comments that appear on each account.

By identifying usage patterns of abusive language, this research provides insights into the potential impact of using offensive language in online communication. It can help in understanding the social, psychological, and cultural consequences associated with abusive language, raising awareness about the issue of abusive language on social media, and encouraging actions to reduce or prevent its usage. With an understanding of usage patterns and levels, further actions such as improving platform moderation or launching public awareness campaigns can be considered. This research offers a profound understanding of the use of abusive language on social media and can serve as a basis for taking actions aimed at creating a safer and more civilized online environment.

2. METHODS

The research paradigm in this study is positivism. The positivism paradigm is a paradigm that is organized to combine deductive logic and empirical observations of individual behavior, which is useful in probabilistically finding or obtaining confirmation of causation that can be used to predict general patterns of human activity[8].

The research method used is the content analysis research method. Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) in the context of their use [9]. Specifically focusing on the analysis of comments posted on social media. Content analysis is a research technique that allows for inferences that are replicable and valid from text to its context of use. It involves systematic categorization and analysis of textual data to extract meaningful insights, adopting a quantitative approach. The goal is to measure the prevalence of the use of offensive language in social media comments. This approach involves measuring the extent to which offensive language is used and determining patterns and differences in its use between accounts Y and X.

The approach used in this research is quantitative. This quantitative research can be constructed as a research strategy that emphasizes quantification in collecting analysis data with a deductive approach. Therefore, quantitative research is an investigation of social problems based on theory testing consisting of variables measured by numbers and analyzed by statistical procedures to find whether the predictive generalization of the theory is true [10]. Population and Sample: The population consists of all comments made on accounts Y and X. The sample includes all comments posted up to a specific date (January 7, 2023). The total number of comments in the population for account X is 134,080, and for account Y is 3,760. The data coding process involves systematic categorization of comments based on whether they contain offensive language and, if so, which category it falls under. Coders assist the researcher in the coding process. Reliability tests are used to assess the consistency and agreement between the researcher and coders in coding the data. This ensures that the categorization of comments is consistent and reliable among different coders.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Currently, netizens often freely use abusive language to express how they feel in the form of comments on social media. The lack of binding laws makes the use of abusive

language customary. The findings of this study show that the highest percentage level is actually in the category that does not identify abusive language at all. On account Y, the category of comments with no indication of abusive language was 34 percent, while on account X it was 42 percent. The most abusive language on account Y is in the category of abusive language involving animal names, astral beings, and body parts, with a total of 23 percent each. The next position is occupied by the category of abusive language involving unpleasant conditions at 17 percent, followed by the category involving someone's unethical conditions at 9 percent; the category involving sexual activity at 7 percent; the category involving conditions that are not approved by God or religion at 6 percent; the category of abusive language involving professions at 4 percent; the category involving conditions related to unfavorable circumstances at 3 percent; and the last two are categories of abusive language involving conditions related to objects or things and the addition of the suffix -mu to a word that is meant to be insulting at 2 percent and 1 percent, respectively. The category of abusive language involving animals as seen in the account @d*****i is "BUBAR ANJING (JUST DIVORCE YOU F***K)", and in the account @y*****h which is identified as a fake account with the word "anying (f***k)". The category of abusive language involving unpleasant conditions is seen in the account @r*****7 "A (the artist's name being disguised) is said to be a 'love slave', and the account @m*****0 states "moron, you just make a scene with the ridiculousness of your decisions and life".

On account X, the most abusive language conditions are in the categories of abusive language involving unpleasant conditions and conditions of someone being unethical at 12 percent and 11 percent, respectively, followed by each category that occupies a percentage of less than 10 percent. For the abusive language category, the lowest percentage is in the category involving conditions related to unfavorable circumstances, at 3 percent.

In the highest category, namely unpleasant conditions, some of the accounts below state, for example, "Bannciiiiiiii (pansy!!!)" (comment from account @r*****_). This comment falls into the category of unpleasant conditions related to sexual deviance experienced by someone [11]. A combination of two different categories can be found in the comment "Use your brain! Threw a billiard ball at a pregnant woman.... Crazy" (comment from account @a*****s). Brain is a category of abusive language involving body parts and a category of abusive language involving unpleasant conditions.

The category of abusive language involving the condition of someone being unethical is seen in several comments such as "Tukang JAJAN (man slut/stud) like you doesn't

TABLE 1: Frequency and Percentage of Abusive Language Category on Account Y.

Account Y			
No	Abusive Language Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	No abusive language	1,278	34%
2	Unpleasant conditions	653	17%
3	The condition of someone being unethical	345	9%
4	Conditions that are not approved by God/religion	231	6%
5	Conditions associated with unfavorable circumstances	127	3%
6	Animal names	872	23%
7	Astral creatures/beings	856	23%
8	Object or thing	87	2%
9	Body part	876	23%
10	The addition of the suffix -mu to a word that is meant to be insulting	33	1%
11	Sexual activity	265	7%
12	Profession	134	4%

deserve a wife like A. Just go away and take the disease and problems with you” (comment from account @s*****a). *Tukang Jajan* is included in the category of abusive language, which is indeed included in unethical words because *Tukang Jajan* here is not interpreted in accordance with actual reality. In general semantic theory, words are considered abstractions of reality. Therefore, this theory holds that words should be as close as possible to the reality they reflect [12]. *Tukang Jajan*, in this comment, likens B’s (the artist’s name is disguised) behavior to his involvement in the alleged infidelity case. Some of the negative comments to B indicate the category of abusive language involving someone’s unethical condition, as found in the account @a*****a saying “kang banting (someone who likes to do violence), kang selingkuh (someone who always cheats) is back again....he does it again ☹️” and “parasitt (human parasite) returns” (comment from account @a*****a). There are also comments that involve three categories: first, abusive language involving someone’s unethical condition; second, abusive language involving profession; and third, abusive language involving conditions that are not approved by God/religion as seen in the comment on account @n*****2 commenting “When did you cheat again..and ngelonte again?”. Cheating is a word that is categorized as someone’s unethical behavior because there is a violation of the rules regarding marriage and *Lonte* (prostitution) is a profession that violates positive law

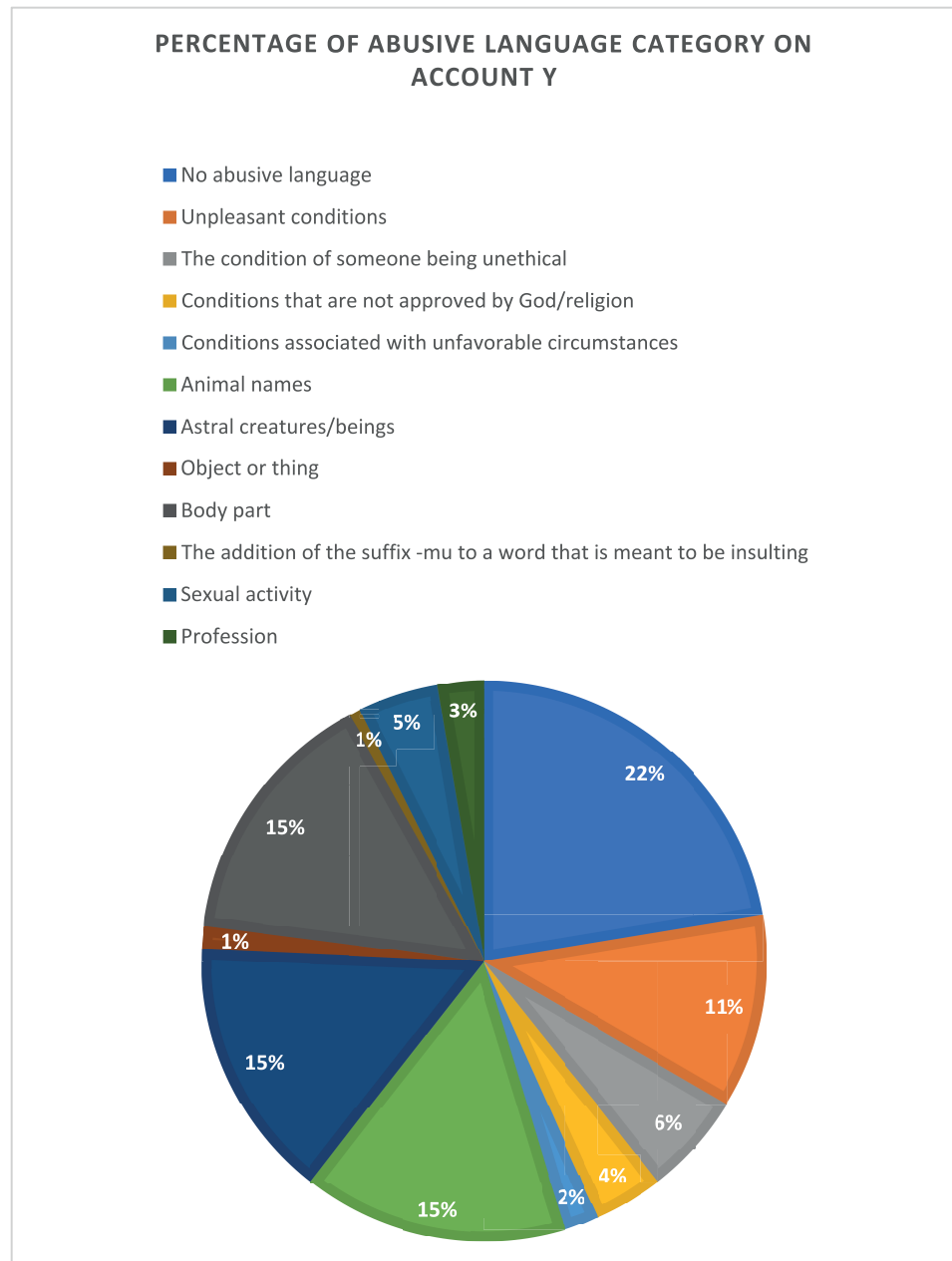


Figure 1: Percentage of Abusive Language Category on Account Y.

in Indonesia and is not in accordance with religious teachings since the word Lonte is equivalent of the word prostitute which means selling himself commercially. Next is the category of abusive language involving sexual activity as conveyed by the account @f*****q which is indicated as a fake account typing “modal kontol doang (all he got was his d**k)”. For the lowest level, namely the category of abusive language involving unfavorable circumstances, the comment is “Trash” (@a*****n).

TABLE 2: Frequency and Percentage of Abusive Language Category on Account X.

Account X				
No	Abusive Language Category	Frequency	Percentage	
1	No abusive language	56.275	42%	
2	Unpleasant conditions	15.988	12%	
3	The condition of someone being unethical	14.872	11%	
4	Conditions that are not approved by God/religion	5.764	4%	
5	Conditions associated with unfavorable circumstances	2.348	2%	
6	Animal names	9.783	7%	
7	Astral creatures/beings	6.759	5%	
8	Object or thing	6.578	5%	
9	Body part	4.589	3%	
10	The addition of the suffix -mu to a word that is meant to be insulting	7.689	6%	
11	Sexual activity	8.976	7%	
12	Profession	5.673	4%	

4. CONCLUSION

Abusive language is now frequently used by netizens to express their feelings through comments on social media platforms. Due to the lack of stringent laws and regulations, the use of foul language has become a common practice. The research findings indicate that a significant percentage of comments fall into a category that cannot be clearly identified as abusive language. On account Y, the highest percentage of abusive language is found in the category involving animal names, celestial beings, and body parts, each accounting for 23%. The next highest percentage is related to abusive language about unpleasant conditions at 17%, followed by language that involves someone’s unethical behavior at 9%. On account X, the highest percentage of abusive language is associated with comments about unpleasant conditions and unethical behavior, each accounting for 12% and 11%, respectively. Other categories have lower percentages.

Within abusive language related to unpleasant conditions, some comments encompass sexual deviance and the use of coarse language to describe someone’s behavior. In abusive language related to someone’s unethical behavior, there are comments that degrade individuals based on their morality or conduct.

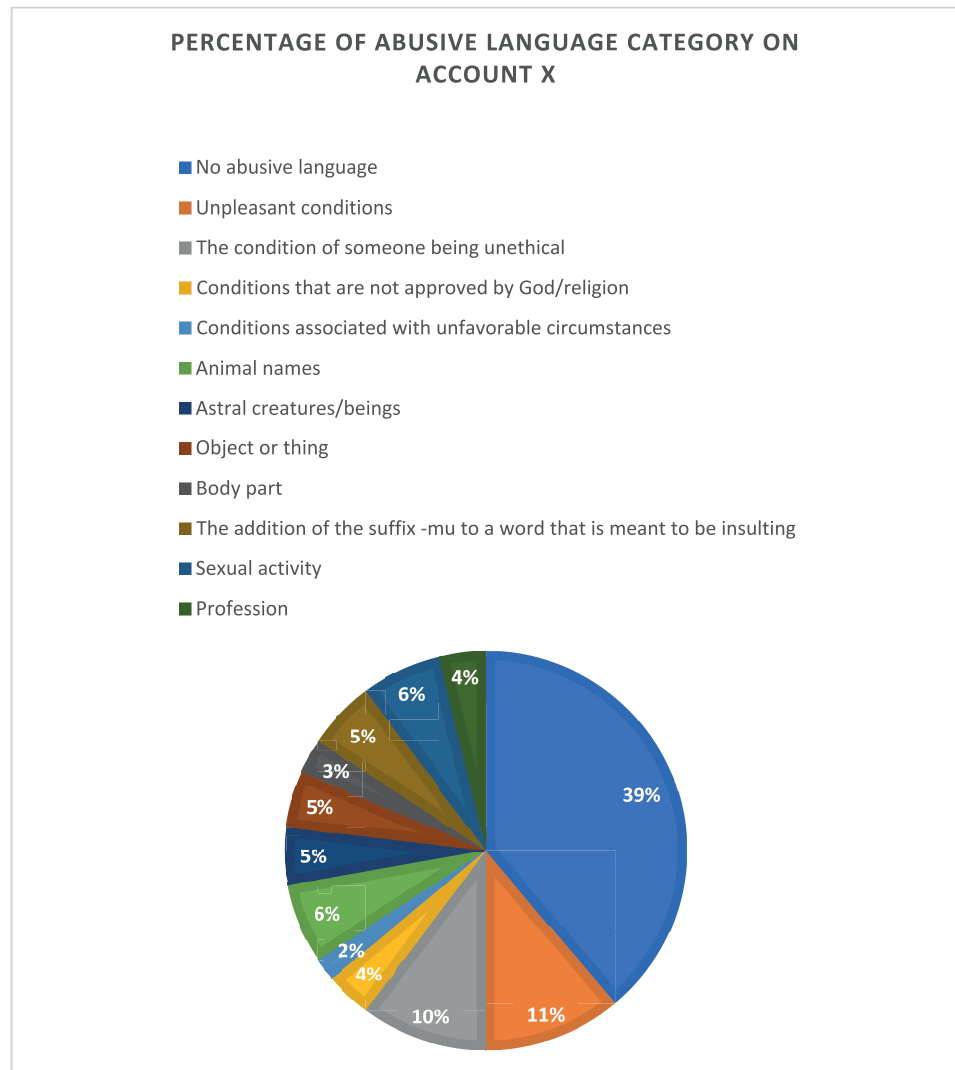


Figure 2: Percentage of Abusive Language Category on Account X.

From this results of research, we can conclude that abusive language is frequently used in social media comments, although there are variations in the type and level of abusive language used between different accounts. This suggests the need for further action to address the issue of abusive language in social media and encourage better ethics in communicating online. In addition, stricter regulations and increased awareness of the consequences of using abusive language on digital platforms are essential to reduce character defamation and maintain dignity in digital communication.

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