

Language, Social Media and Citizens in the Covid Pandemic 19

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Abstract— The Covid-19 pandemic caused a big wave that resulted in changes in various sides of life in the world, including the use of language on social media by netizens. Therefore, the purpose of writing this article is to explain the use of language on social media by netizens in the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the relationship between language, social media, and netizens in the Covid-19 pandemic. The data in this study are the language and content of utterances used by netizens on social media in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic. Sources of data in this study are uploads related to the Covid-19 pandemic on the social media of Indonesian citizens, including the Indonesian government. Data were analyzed through sociolinguistic and pragmatic studies. Based on the results of the analysis, was found the use of direct and indirect forms of speech, as well as the forms of locutions, illocutionary, and perlocution. Then, it can be concluded that language with its diversity is a tool for netizens in conveying their aspirations for the information submitted by the government regarding the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. Social media is one of the media that plays an important role during the Covid-19 pandemic in spreading important messages to hoax messages. Citizens and the government must be wise in using language on social media so that the message they want to convey can be absorbed by the community optimally.

Keywords— social media, net citizen, sociolinguistics, pragmatics

I. INTRODUCTION

Language and society are two things that influence each other so that events that occur in society will easily affect language. Social media as a medium of communication for the millennial community is a forum for the dynamics of language and society. Interaction in social media can affect society, including it can also affect a person's mental health [1]. Thus, the dynamics of language are implemented in social media as a space for communication and social interaction in modern society, also known as net people.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused a big wave that resulted in changes in various sides of life in the world, including the use of language on social media by netizens. The existence of social media is a tool for the community to communicate. Many direct interaction activities have been replaced by social media so that social media is a place for language dynamics.

Especially at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in a *lockdown* and *physical distancing* to overcome the spread of this virus, social media is increasingly being used by the community to channel their instinctive needs as social beings. Social media has played a central role in further medical education and the dissemination of scientific information [2]. Restrictions on physical contact between humans that were imposed to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus resulted in several activities involving large numbers of people being transferred into the virtual realm.

In Indonesia and almost all countries in the world, during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic or mid-2020, formal education activities were carried out online by utilizing social media. Social media is not only used as a means of communication but also to carry out educational functions. Likewise with some workers, according to the type of work, work is carried out from the home to limit crowding which can be assumed to increase the risk of transmission of the virus.

Dissemination of information in the form of outreach in the field is also diverted by disseminating information through virtual media such as social media which are mostly used by the public, in addition to SMS, radio, and television. Various information in the form of appeals, announcements, or public service advertisements is conveyed massively through social media. Social media is used intensively to disseminate important information related to Covid-19 and also other important things. Therefore, the purpose of writing this article is to explain the use of language on social media by netizens in the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as language relations, social media, with netizens in the Covid-19 pandemic. The theoretical benefits of this research can enrich sociolinguistic and pragmatic studies, as well as regarding the use of language on social media. Furthermore, practically, the results of this research can also be used by related agencies (such as the Health Office) in making appeals on social media.

This research will show the form of language use on social media during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research is important because social media is the main source of media for delivering information in the Covid-19 pandemic. [3] Through social media, information can spread in a very short time, even counting a second.

II. METHODS

The data in this study are the language and content of utterances used by citizens on social media in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic. Sources of data in this study are uploads related to the Covid-19 pandemic on the social media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) of Indonesian citizens, including the Indonesian government. The selection of social media, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, is based on the tendency of Indonesian citizens to use social media. The three social media are the social media most used by netizens in Indonesia. Access to data is also more open than other social media such as WhatsApp. The method used in data analysis is the contextual method. Contextual method is matching data with extralingual according to study [4].

Data were analyzed through sociolinguistic and pragmatic studies qualitatively, without calculating the quantity of the data. Sociolinguistics is a science used to study the relationship between language behavior and social behavior [5]. From the thought that language is a social phenomenon, language and its usage are determined by linguistic factors and nonlinguistic factors such as social factors and situational factors [6]. The language and utterances obtained will be analyzed with theories in sociolinguistic and pragmatic studies. Furthermore, it examines the relationship between language, netizens, and social media through linguistic studies as part of social society. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies the structure of language externally, namely how linguistic units are used in communication. So, the meaning that is studied pragmatically is the meaning that is (*context-dependent*) or in other words, examines the meaning [7].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the analysis, netizens can explain the use of language on social media in the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the relationship between language, social media, and netizens in the Covid-19 pandemic. The use of language analyzed in this article is about the form of speech in pragmatic studies. Thus, the forms of speech used are found, among others, direct and indirect speech, as well as forms of locus, illocution, and perlocution.

Many direct speeches were found, among others, "*Come on, wear a mask!*", "*Come on, fight Covid-19 by complying with the Covid-19 program!*", "*Let's fight Covid-19!*", And "*Don't forget to wash your hands!*". Direct speech when news sentences (declarative), interrogative sentences (interrogative), and command sentences (imperative) function conventionally [7]. That is, when the news sentence is used to announce something (information), the interrogative sentence is used to ask something, and the command sentence is to ask, invite, and beg.

Meanwhile, indirect speech acts are when news sentences and interrogative sentences are used to instruct (not under their conventional function). Indirect statements found include, "*Together with Covid-19 opponents with the 3M Disilpin 1. Wearing a mask, 2. Washing hands, 3. Keeping your distance.* ", "*Your mask is my spirit, my mask is your spirit* ", "*Health Protocols for Eid Al-Adha Prayers. Prayer places must be cleaned and disinfected before the implementation* ", and others. In this data, news sentences are also used to invite or rule.

The speech used consists of locus, illocution, and perlocution. According to Searle, the act of locus is a speech act to express something [7]. This speech act is also known as *the act of saying something*. Locus of speech acts is speech acts that are relatively easy to identify because the identification tends to be done without including the context of the speech. Furthermore, illocutionary acts are speech acts which in addition to function to say something, also to do something. The act of illocution is also called *the act of doing something*. To identify illocutionary acts, one must first consider who the speakers and interlocutors are and when and where the speech events took place. Then, a perlocutionary act is a speech act that has a power of influence (*perlocutionary force*) or effect. This effect or influence can be intentionally or unintentionally created by the speaker. Speech acts whose utterances are intended to influence the interlocutor are called perlocution acts. This speech act is also called *the act of affecting someone*.

So, the utterances found in this study were in the form of locutions and illocutionary forms and all of them were perlocutionary speech acts. All speech acts used in information regarding the handling of Covid-19 on social media are local speech acts, namely speech acts whose intentions are under what is conveyed in plain view. However, there are also forms of speech that have other purposes than the written intentions in the speech.

The speech "*Your mask is my spirit, my mask is your spirit*", does not only intend to tell about masks and enthusiasm but intends to invite netizens to use masks to comply with the protocol for handling the Covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, the "*Health Protocol for Eid Al-Adha Prayers, Places of Prayer Must Be Cleaned and Disinfected Before Implementation*", which is not only to notify but also to give instructions so that officers at the place of worship implement health protocols. In general, telling information on social media is a form of action. perlocution. This speech is intended to influence the netizen to follow the message conveyed in the speech. Apart from that, we also found the use of rhymes which are pragmatically an act of locus, illocution, and perlocution. The rhymes are as follows:

*Pergi ke pasar beli ikan patin
Ketemu cewe parasnya mempesona
Cuci tangan secara rutin
Agar terhindar dari Corona*

The Pantun was published by the Public Relations Division of the Police. The pantun contains information about the Covid-19 handling protocol, namely washing hands regularly to avoid transmission of the Coronavirus. However, pragmatically, the contents of the pantun are not only informing but also ordering and influencing citizens.

The various forms of speech in conveying information found in social media are language dynamics aimed at a better life. Social media is one of the media that has played an important role during the Covid-19 pandemic in spreading important messages. However, it is also inevitable that social media is also the most practical media in spreading hoax messages and pornographic content which is very damaging to teenagers. In ScanSafe's monthly "Global Threat Report", it was found that up to 80% of blogs contain sensitive content and 74% contain pornography in the format of images, videos, and language [8]. In other research,

researchers found that the use of language in the discourse about Covid-19 in the onset of the pandemic resulted in the emergence of Sinophobia [9].

This requires firmer and more practical policies from the government and policymakers to cut hoax messages on social media. The seven pragmatic meanings of Covid-19 hoaxes are (1) the pragmatic meaning of straightening information, (2) the pragmatic meaning of confirming information, (3) the pragmatic meaning of spreading noise, (4) the pragmatic meaning of insulting information, (5) the pragmatic meaning of patronizing the public, (6)) the pragmatic meaning of confusing information, and (7) the pragmatic meaning of provoking the public [10]. Policymakers must be quicker in overcoming hoax messages that easily circulate on social media. People using social media come from different educational, occupational, cultural, age, and economic backgrounds with access to interaction anytime and anywhere without any restrictions.

Although in Indonesia there is a Law on Information and Electronic Transactions (abbreviated as UU ITE) or Law number 11 of 2008 - Law that regulates information and electronic transactions, or information technology in general, hoax messages cannot be stopped. This law has jurisdiction that applies to every person who commits a legal act as regulated in this Law, whether in the territory of Indonesia or outside the jurisdiction of Indonesia, which has legal consequences in the jurisdiction of Indonesia and/or outside the jurisdiction of Indonesia. and detrimental to Indonesia's interests.

Citizens and the government must be wise in using language on social media so that the message they want to convey can be absorbed by the community optimally. The production of language from citizens who come from various social backgrounds is a phenomenon in the language of modern society which is very important to continue to be studied. Moreover, in a pandemic Covid-19, the internet is one of the important factors in ensuring the continuity of community social interaction through existing social media. Various important information spreads faster if it is spread through social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.) rather than television and radio. Social media has become an important tool in communication in disasters and health crises [11].

Information related to the Covid-19 pandemic, both regarding the number of victims, socialization of handling, and government policies in handling it, as well as other issues related to this pandemic, spread very quickly through social media rather than radio and television. This is caused by far more social media users than radio and television users. The speed of updating information is even faster through social media.

The shifting of information sources in society is an inevitable phenomenon but must be controlled wisely. Thus, social media is an important factor in the dynamics of modern language, linguists and policymakers must be sensitive to the symptoms of language on social media. So, language, social media, and netizens have a reciprocal relationship in the Covid-19 pandemic. Social media is a forum for conveying information conveyed through language

to netizens. For this reason, policies are needed that strengthen the wise use of language and information on social media.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that the use of language on social media by netizens in the Covid-19 pandemic, especially regarding the form of speech, was found in the form of direct and indirect speech; as well as locutions, illocutions, and perlocutions. Then, it can be concluded that language with its diversity is a tool for netizens in conveying their aspirations for the information submitted by the government regarding the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. Social media is one of the media that plays an important role during the Covid-19 pandemic in spreading important messages to hoax messages. Citizens and the government must be wise in using language on social media so that the message they want to convey can be absorbed by the community optimally.

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