

Language Usage in the Comments Section of Sexual Harassment News

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Keywords: Language Usage, Comments Section, Online Media, Appraisal System, CMDA

Abstract: Language usage flexibility is a common thing shown in the comment sections on various online media. This phenomenon emerges in the politeness of language usage in readers' responses. By using the Appraisal System and CMDA (Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis), this study aims at describing the meaning of chosen words by readers and revealing communication context in readers' responses to the Baiq Nuril case on Detik.com. The research data was from the top half of the readers' which had the highest level of popularity in the comments section. In addition, the data were taken from three popular news texts of Baiq Nuril case; the popularity is based on the highest number of readers' responses. As a result, this research found two things. First, the commenters used words that tend to judge and have a negative meaning. Second, the communication context in readers' responses toward sexual harassment news tend to intimidating, humiliating, and confrontational either the news' content or among the readers' responses. These results show that a controversial theme of a news text may lead to many negative responses.

1 INTRODUCTION

Readers started posting comments on online news articles in 1998 (Santana, 2011) and the trend spreads out thereafter. Comment section offers a free sharing space for either commentators or columnists (Singer & Ashman, 2009). Arguing, debating, agreeing, and disagreeing to a news text can be founded easily in the comment section of news sites. However, commenting in online media nowadays tends to pay less concern over using respectful language. Readers comment based on their own perception, yet, somehow, without thinking any further about how to share thoughts politely.

The internet has a great potential to empower minorities and people who feel oppressed, weak, disadvantaged, or discriminated against (Barak, 2005). Readers of online news are increasingly posting comments in response to news articles and the comments of other readers (Henrich & Holmes, 2012). In addition, a hot issue or a controversial theme becomes a way to show how internet unites people to react, comment, and do something towards the news (Larsson, 2018). The phenomenon shows how readers, as time goes by, have an open access to gather and post comments for whatever they think of

news. Therefore, to read at various types of responses in a comment section is easy, so do negative responses.

The case of sexual harassment to Baiq Nuril started in 2012. Baiq Nuril recorded her conversation with Muslim (as the principal of the school which she used to work back then). She decided to record it because Muslim called her several times to talk about his sexual activities. In addition, those calls lead to an affair rumour between them thereafter. Shortly, Baiq Nuril has to be sentenced to go into the jail while Muslim is free away from any sentence. The reason is indicated because Muslim is the first one who reported Baiq Nuril for her act to record and spread the recording. Now, in 2019, Baiq Nuril is wishing to the amnesty.

Any word in a language cannot be literally defined good or bad yet, perhaps, reflects what the value of an individual or a society is (Fromkin and Rodman, 1988). In other words, representational choices will always bring associations of values, ideas, and activities (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Appraisal analysis is a method used in the study of languages to construe interpersonal meaning (Martin & White, 2005). Rahimi, Fitrianti, & Sutopo (2019) state that the appraisal system is useful for readers to get a better understanding towards reaction and

emotion in a story. Wigunadi (2014) emphasizes that appraisal system makes interpersonal meanings so that stating ideas could be easy in the social relationship. Hence, appraisal analysis exists to recognize and understand what is implied in a response; how a person gives response to something.

Online interaction overwhelmingly takes place by means of discourse (Herring, 2004). People interacts by typing verbal languages, then reading as a text on gadget screen. However, the fact that the text comes from a typed verbal language is usually forgotten. It makes participants of online interaction, somehow, judging easily the meaning of others' thoughts without looking for aspects built. CMDA (Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis) offers categorizations of how an online interaction occurred. It helps elaborating the construction of discourse within online interaction. CMDA applied to four domains or levels of language, ranging prototypically from smallest to largest linguistic unit of analysis: 1) structure, 2) meaning, 3) interaction, and 4) social behavior (Herring, 2004).

Based on the previous explanation, it can be concluded that looking for how language is used in comments section on online news texts, at least, concerns two things: chosen words in phrases and communication context within comment section. To focus the research, there are two questions as follows:

1. What are the readers' responses to the news?
2. What is the communication context occurred in the comments section?

2 METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative descriptive method by analyzing readers' responses in the comments section of three news texts. This study aims at describing the meaning of chosen words made by readers and revealing communication context in readers' responses to the Baiq Nuril case on Detik.com. The readers' responses, as the data, were taken from three popular news texts of Baiq Nuril case (T1: *Perekaman Perilaku Mesum: Nuril Dibui 6 Bulan, Kepsek Naik Jabatan*; T2: *Vonis Mengejutkan MA yang Penjarakan Perekam Perilaku Mesum Kepsek*; T3: *MA Jatuhkan Vonis 6 Bulan Bui: Nuril Bikin Keluarga Kepsek Malu*). The popularity of the chosen news texts is based on the highest number of readers' responses. Therefore, the readers' responses were the only data to discover how the meaning of words and what the communication context actually

occurred there. The research data was from the top half of the readers' which had the highest level of popularity in the comments section; there are 69 comments. In detail, 257 clauses were analyzed in this study (Text 1: 88 clauses, Text 2: 82 clauses; Text 3: 87 clauses).

There are two focuses on this study: how readers response the news and what the communication context happens in readers' responses. To know the response, the meaning of chosen words were analyzed by using appraisal system (Martin and White, 2005). Appraisal system is used to analyze semantically an interpersonal meaning. By using appraisal system, each response was divided into clause. Then, it was categorized into attitude, graduation, and engagement. At the end, clauses were classified into positive and negative meaning based on the chosen words' meaning of each clause. Then, to know the communication context, the readers' responses were analyzed by using CMDA (Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis) from Herring (2004). The communication context in CMDA means the reflection of situational factors in online communication which concern about the levels of formality. By using CMDA, the communication context was described by looking into five categories to the responses: personal or general, the participant characteristics, the aim, theme/topic, and tone (activity, norm, and language form).

3 ANALYSIS

3.1 The Readers' Responses

Table 1: The attitude's number in texts.

		Attitude		
		Affect	Judgement	Appreciation
T1	C	19	46	23
	P	21,59%	52,27%	26,14%
T2	C	23	48	11
	P	28,05%	58,54%	13,41%
T3	C	11	66	10
	p	12,64%	75,86%	11,50%
Σ		53	160	44

Notes:

T1: Text 1; T2: Text 2; T3: Text 3

C: Clauses; P:Percentages; Σ: Summary

Table 1 shows the number of attitudes found in the three news texts (T1, T2, and T3). The result shows that readers' responses in comment section tend to be

more judgemental than affective or appreciative. The judgemental clauses are founded for 46 clauses or 52,27% (T1), 48 clauses or 58,54% (T2), and 66 or 75,86% clauses (T3). In summary, the *judgement*, the highest, is founded 160 clauses. The second is *affect* (53 clauses) while *appreciation* are the least of all (44 clauses).

As it can be seen that the judgemental clauses are the most dominant type of clauses occurs in the news text, it shows how readers responses' attitude toward sexual harassment case of Baiq Nuril. The *judgement* can be divided into social sanction and social esteem. The illustration can be seen as below:

Clause 10

Baiq Nuril	memang <u>salah</u>	secara ITE.
<i>Baiq Nuril indeed wrong based on Information and Electronic Transaction regulation</i>		
	<i>Judgement propriety [ethics]</i>	

Clause 94

Secara moral sih	kepseknya	<u>salah</u> .
<i>The Principal is morally wrong</i>		
		<i>Judgement propriety [ethics]</i>

Clause 174

Hakimnya	kok	<u>aneh</u> .
<i>The judge seems weird</i>		
		<i>Judgement capacity</i>

Note: *The judge is strange.*

The word 'salah' (wrong) (clause 10 and clause 94) shows that social sanction in the comment section truly happens. *Judgements of sanction* have to do with 'veracity' (how truthful someone is) and 'propriety' (how ethical someone is). (Martin and White, 2005). Then, the word 'aneh' (weird) at clause 174 indicates that social esteem happens in the comment section. Martin and White (2005) states that judgements of esteem have to do with 'normality' (how unusual someone is), 'capacity' (how capable they are) and 'tenacity' (how resolute they are). In detail, clause 174 describes a thought that the judge's decision for Baiq Nuril tends to harm and defend her. Therefore, the commenter evaluates the judge's work.

Table 2: The graduation's number in texts.

		Graduation	
		Force	Focus
T1	C	67	21
	P	76,14%	23,86%
T2	C	69	13
	P	84,15%	15,85%
T3	C	58	29
	p	66,67%	33,33%
Σ		194	63

T1: Text 1; T2: Text 2; T3: Text 3

C: Clauses; P:Percentages; Σ: Summary

Table 2 describes the number of *graduation* found in the three news texts (T1, T2, and T3). For *force*, there are 67 clauses (76,14%) founded in T1, 69 clauses (84,15%) in T2, and 58 clauses (66,67%) in T3. For *focus*, there are 21 clauses (23,86%) founded in T1, 13 clauses (15,85%) in T2, and 29 clauses (33,33%) in T3. The result shows that readers prefer forcing to focusing in using language. In total, the form of *force* is founded in 194 clauses while the form of *focus* is founded only in 63 clauses. The number of *force* appearance in this study indicates that the commenters want to either intensify or quantify their point of view. Yet, there is only quantify in this study. The illustration can be seen as below:

Clause 28

Detik juga kadang kalau buat judul begitu	sih
<i>Detik sometimes make that kind of title</i>	
	Force: intensify

Clause 109

Hebat	benar	keadilan di negeri ini
<i>The justice in this country is so great</i>		
	Force: intensify	

Clause 184

Sudah	jas-jelas	yang buka aib si kepsek sendiri kok malah korban pelecehan yang dihukum
<i>It has already been clear that the principal disgraced himself, how could the victim of abuse who got punished</i>		
	Force: intensify	

The word 'sih' in clause 28 based on KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia) – Indonesian Dictionary is used to emphasize. In this clause, the

placement of this word wants to emphasize the reader's disagreement of the news' title which is leading to controversy (*Perekaman Perilaku Mesum: Nuril Dibui 6 Bulan, Kepsek Naik Jabatan; Recording The Perverted Action: Nuril was Sentenced to 6 Months, The Principal Got Promotion*). Clause 109 and clause 184 show an intension of readers to judge the law. The word 'benar' (so; truly) in clause 109 wants to intensify the word 'hebat' (great) that heads for 'keadilan di negeri ini' (the justice in this country). While the word 'jelas-jelas' (clear) point out the word 'sudah' (already) which is intended to make clear 'yang buka aib si kepek sendiri kok malah korban pelecehan yang dihukum' (the principal disgraced himself, how could the victim of abuse who got punished). As can be seen from these three illustrations, most people prefer using, at least, a forcing word than a focusing word to show a point of view in order to clear their position in a comment or a statement.

Focus is used to make a scalable phenomena that cannot be clearly bounded in experiential perspective; either more or less precisely determined by experiential taxonomies based on some combination of sufficient and necessary conditions (Martin and White, 2005). *Focus* tends to make a statement more straight to the point; either right or wrong, yes or no, etc. The illustrations of *focus* in this study can be seen as follow:

Clause 12

Jadi kesimpulannya pejabat yang menaikkan pangkat	Tidak ada	Etikanya.
<i>So, the conclusion is that the official who gives the promotion has no ethics</i>		
<i>Focus: sharpen</i>		

Clause 102

Supaya jangan cepat menyebarkan hal-hal yang	berpotensi	melanggar hukum.
<i>That do not quickly spread things that have the potential to break the law</i>		
<i>Focus: soften</i>		

Clause 177

Kalau	((Muslim)) tidak genit	kan masalah ini tidak terjadi
<i>If (Muslim is) not flirty, this problem doesn't occur</i>		
<i>Focus: sharpen</i>		

The word 'tidak' (no; not) as a denial form in clause 12 is intended to show straightly forward to the focus in etikanya' or 'ethics' (clause 12). In addition, the word 'tidak' (no; not) in clause 177 sharply shows a dislike form to 'kan masalah ini tidak terjadi' or 'this problem does not occur'. The word 'berpotensi' or 'potential' in clause 101 is used to show the intention of the reader who makes this comment, that is the act of Baiq Nuril that records and tells the recording to her friend is potentially break the law and it is potentially not a right thing to do.

Table 3: The engagement's number in texts.

		Engagement	
		Monogloss	heterogloss
T1	C	88	-
	P	100%	-
T2	C	80	2
	P	97,56%	2,44%
T3	C	85	2
	p	97,70%	2,30%
Σ		253	4

Notes:

T1: Text 1; T2: Text 2; T3: Text 3

C: Clauses; P: Percentages; Σ: Summary

Table 3 gives information about the number of graduation found in the three news texts (T1, T2, and T3). For *monogloss*, there are founded 88 clauses (100%) for T1, 80 clauses (97,56%) for T2, and 85 clauses (97,70%) for T3. *Heterogloss* only found in T2 (2 clauses or 2,44%) and T3 (2 clauses or 2,30%). The result shows that the commenters prefer monogloss style to heterogloss style in delivering their responses. It means that the commenters stated their opinions about the news based on what they thought without referring anyone else's statement. In total, the form of *monogloss* is founded in 253 clauses while the form of *heterogloss* is founded in only 4 clauses. The illustration of both *monogloss* and *heterogloss* can be seen below:

Clause 43

Seperitnya	kepseknya punya kerabat yg kuat di pemerintahan.
<i>It seems like the principal has strong relatives in the government</i>	
Monogloss	

Clause 100

Saya	turut prihatin bu.
<i>I do sorry, Madam</i>	
Monogloss	

Clause 184

Karena ((Nuril)) diisukan selingkuh
<i>Because ((Nuril)) is rumored to cheat</i>
Heterogloss

Clause 185

Dia	merekam untuk jawab isu selingkuh tidak benar
<i>She did recording to prove that the cheating is not true</i>	
Heterogloss	

The word ‘sepertinya’ or ‘it seems that’ (clause 43) and the word ‘saya’ or ‘I’ (clause 100) are clearly showing the clauses truly come from the readers themselves and without referring other’s point of view as can be seen in clause 185 by stating its pronoun (Dia: She). Clause 184 is not stating explicitly the reference, yet the meaning of this clause shows it. This clause seems like has zero pronoun, yet the pronoun ‘Nuril’ is actually eliminated. Based on what the news talk about, it can be concluded that this statement (clause 184) is for Baiq Nuril.

3.1.1 The Positive and Negative Clauses

Table 4: The positive and negative clauses’ classifications.

	Attitude					
	Affect		Judgement		Appreciation	
	+	-	+	-	+	-
T1	5	12	8	39	12	12
T2	8	16	14	34	4	6
T3	1	10	3	63	5	5
Σ	14	38	25	136	21	23

Notes:

T1: Text 1; T2: Text 2; T3: Text 3

Σ: Summary

Table 4 gives an account of the classification of positive and negative comments in the three news texts (T1, T2, and T3). In total, the *positive affect* comments are 14 clauses while the *negative affect* comments are 38 clauses. Then, the *positive judgement* clauses are 25 clauses and the *negative judgement* clauses are 136 clauses. The last, the *positive appreciation* clauses are 21 clauses while the *negative appreciation* clauses are 23 clauses. The result shows that readers’ responses mostly state negative comments. For those three texts, the highest number found is using negative judgemental clauses for commenting the news text. These are the examples:

Clause 101 – positive affect

Tapi ini juga untuk	Pembelajaran
<i>But this is also for learning</i>	
Positive; affect	

Clause 18 – negative affect

Sayang	jaman JKW hukumnya sangat parah sampai ke titik nadir
<i>It's a shame that the JKW's era is so bad that it reached its lowest point</i>	
Negative; affect	

Clause 130 – positive judgement

Kepseknya	juga harus dihukum biar adil
<i>The principal must also be punished to be fair</i>	
Positive; judgement	

Clause 86 – negative judgement

Sesama	penjahat	saling melindungi
<i>Fellow criminals protect each other</i>		
negative; judgement		

Clause 180 – positive appreciation

Allah SWT	Maha Adil
<i>Allah the Almighty is the Righteous</i>	
Positive; appreciation	

Clause 251 – negative appreciation

Semoga bapak/ibu hakim	mendapatkan keadilan dari Sang Maha Adil.
<i>May the judge gets justice from the Righteous one</i>	
Negative; appreciation	

The word ‘pembelajaran’ in clause 101 means that the sentence made to Baiq Nuril can be considered to be a learning for everyone either the recording act by Baiq Nuril, the sexual harassment content talked by Muslim, or the sentence made by judges. By showing the positive feeling toward the situation that happened to Baiq Nuril, hence, this clause is determined to positive affect. Then, the word ‘sayang’ in clause 18 is used as both a regret form and a disappointment form to the government. Regarding to this form, clause 18 is classified into negative affect. Next, the word ‘adil’ in clause 130 is used to emphasize that Muslim as the principal also needs to be sentenced in order to give justice for both part (Baiq Nuril and Muslim). The meaning of ‘adil’ (justice) that finally makes this clause categorized into positive judgement. Move to clause 86 that is

grouped to negative judgement because of the word 'penjahat' that similar to 'a criminal'. In clause 180, the word 'Maha Adil' (infinite justice) which refers to 'Allah SWT' (The God) as the actor makes this clause is classified into positive appreciation. It is considered as a belief to God's existence. The last, the word 'keadilan' (justice) in clause 251 has a similar function to clause 180 that to show a belief to God's existence. Yet, the clause 251 has more intention to not appreciate the sentence made by judges so that the clause seems like a pray for judges to have a justice from God. Hence, this clause is grouped to negative appreciation.

Table 5: The Ratio of positive and negative clauses.

	Clauses	
	+	-
T1	25	63
T2	26	56
T3	9	78
Σ	60	197
P	23,35%	76,65%

Notes:

T1: Text 1; T2: Text 2; T3: Text 3

C: Clauses; P: Percentages; Σ: Summary

Table 5 gives the numbers of positive and negative clauses' ratio occur in each text. In total, positive clauses in T1, T2, and T3 are 60 clauses (23,35%). The positive clauses in this study are the clauses which present no judging, no intimidating, and any harassing words. The clauses are in a form of respect and appreciation. Besides, negative clauses are founded in 197 clauses (76,65%). The negative clauses in this study are the clauses which present judging, intimidating, and harassing words. In some clauses, they tend to blame. Hence, based on the result shows in Table 5, it can be clearly seen that the number of negative comments is higher than positive comments. It indicates that people tend to comment negatively in a news about sexual harassment text than positive ones. The object of the comments could be the online media or the actors in the case as can be seen as follow:

Clause 36 – commenting the media

Detik	ngapain juga bahas kenaikan pangkat kepala sekolah.
<i>Detik, why are you also bringing up the promotion of the principal?</i>	
Actor; the media	

Clause 178 – commenting the judges' work in giving sentence

Hakimnya	buta mata hatinya.
<i>The judge is blind-hearted.</i>	
Actor; judges	

Clause 92 – commenting Baiq Nuril's act to record her conversation with Muslim

Lantas apa tujuan	dia	merekam pembicaraan dengan kepeksnya?
<i>So what was her purpose to record the conversation with her principal?</i>		
Actor; Baiq Nuril		

Clause 206 – commenting Muslim's sexual harassment talk to Baiq Nuril

Lha	kepeksnya	gak tau malu.
<i>The principal has no shame.</i>		
Actor; (principal)	Muslim	

Clause 36 tends to blame the media about releasing the news of Muslim's promotion in his work while Baiq Nuril's case is going on at the supreme court. Then, clause 178 points out the judges' work that lack of conscience in giving the sentence. Next, clause 92 underlines the act of Baiq Nuril who records her conversation with Muslim. The clause is stated to question the reason of Nuril's act. The last, clause 206 states a blame to Muslim that do something embarrassing. These illustrations lead to a conclusion that each person has different point of view to a sexual harassment news, in this case Baiq Nuril. In addition, eventhough the ratio of negative comments is higher than positive comments, it still has different focus to be commented.

The readers' responses to the news texts about Baiq Nuril case are diversified actually. Instead of what the true story behind the case is, the readers have their own perception to it. It is proved by the result of engagement at table 3 which shows the number of monogloss statements founded is higher than heterogloss ones. In addition, the varied statements are also presented at table 1 (the number of attitude found in news texts). However, stating a comment cannot be separated to how the message delivers. In this case, the graduation found in clauses for each comment has shown that the readers' responses

toward the news texts are mostly using *force* language than *focus* language. In other words, the readers delivers their statements by affirming.

In summary, these all explanations bring to a conclusion that participants in this study clearly show their tendencies in commenting the news events of Baiq Nuril case. The tendencies are supporting Baiq Nuril or blaming her. The chosen words in stating their thoughts can be proves that every participant has his or her own thought toward the case –either positive or negative. Hence, appraisal system proves that emotions are elicited by evaluations of events and situations (Roseman & Smith, 2001). In addition, Weber (2013) found in his study that the higher frequency (clearly determinable beginning and end) the news events is, the lesser relevant might be the knowledge stated is. So that, the understanding of an event is influenced because it provides a personal point of view and hence letss more users to demonstrate their views - regardless of actual knowledge levels. Therefore, the diversity in the readers' responses to the news is a natural thing.

3.2 The Communication Context

Table 6: The Communication Context.

Code	Category	Notes
S1	Personal or public	There are 69 comments from 69 different participants. The comment section in this media is public access. Everyone can leave a comment and reply in his or her. In addition, because of its public access, people do not need to log in first or type their emails.
S2	The characteristic of the participants	The responses are all in Bahasa Indonesia and it is stated based on what the readers think about the news; the ideology of readers.
S3	The aim	To show the update of sexual harassment news.
S4	Theme/topic	Sexual harassment to Baiq Nuril.
S5	Tone	Tense and emotional.
	Activity	Tends to confrontative to both the news itself and the other readers' responses.

	Norm	Tends to tense and exaggerate other responses.
	The language	Tends to use informal language.

Note:

S (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5): Situation

Herring (2012) states that CMDA (*Computer Mediated Discourse Analysis*) is classified into two categories: media context and communication context. In this study, the focus is the communication context only. Based on table 6, it can be clearly seen that the communication context in comment section is tense, emotional, tend to confrontative, and exaggerate other responses. The use of informal language in the comment sections shows that commenters tend to write what they say; it contains features of orality. By using informal language, the participants seems like easily to share their opinions about the news. Moreover, the situation now even makes them easier to post a comment. For sure, they have to log in before posting comments, yet there is no proved-validity for their identities in the internet. They can make an email easily and they can post comments without posting their photo profiles on their account. In other words, people can make a lot of emails and they can manipulate their information at the same time. Unfortunately, the validation of someone's personal information on the internet, especially online news sites is poor. It makes them feel free to give their opinions whatever it is without considering the proper words they in their comments. Hence, many comments are founded intimidating, humiliating, and confrontational to either the news' content or among the readers' responses.

4 CONCLUSION

The result in this study describes two things. First, the readers' responses to the news mostly tend to judge and have negative meaning. Simply stated, at least, there is one negative word in each clause that has negative meaning. Hence, the number of negative clauses found has a higher number than positive one. Second, the communication context occurred in the comment sections from three online news texts about sexual harassment to Baiq Nuril is confrontative either to the news or the other responses. Hence, it can be concluded that language usage in the comment section of a sexual harassment news texts tend to be intimidating, humiliating, and confrontational.

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