

Communicating in Cyberspace

(Study of Culture and National Character)

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Abstract: This research aims to directly observe the use of language in cyberspace, especially the social media facebook; discover the rule of bahasa Indonesia used in the world of facebook; describe the use of language in the world of facebook; and classify the data used in facebook. The data that have been analyzed were then associated to the culture and character of nation. The method used in this research was descriptive method. The result of analysis showed that: (1) There were variations of language that are always disclosed/said in facebook. (2) There were many comments in facebook that used the language of insinuation or sarcasm when commenting a subject matter. (3) The use of words or diction showed or described how the characteristic contained in the users of facebook was not in accordance to the culture and character of Indonesia. (4) The lack of politeness in language displayed in the comments of facebook. (5) The lack of rules of Bahasa Indonesia that were displayed when criticizing or judging a subject in facebook

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1. Introduction

Language indicates nation. This proverb should still be imprinted in every heart of Indonesians. This proverb contains a very deep meaning, which is, only from the language, people could already see our identity as a nation. Language is used as a tool of communication by humans to establish a good relationship verbally as well as written.

Nowadays, communication in social media such as facebook, is one of the alternatives chosen by people. This is quite reasonable, because other than it is easy to do, it is also not troublesome and affordable. It is understood that nowadays, people in Indonesia, especially in cities in their daily activities, are never separated from communication devices equipped with internet connection.

Communication in social media seemed to go intimately, so that it uses informal language. It usually starts with beginning introduction and continues until forming a community. This community then continues communication in the real world. However, it is also common that communication in social media can create discord, feud, even fight between communities, in which the communication that already happened had offended feelings, race, or religion. There is only one essence, that the language that had been used had not uphold the general norms applicable in the life of the nation.

The interest of the author is to see how far is the impact of the usage of language in social media in cyberspace towards the character of nation. At one side has positive impact, however on the other side has negative impact even into the real world and the person forgets about his/her identity as an Indonesian. A question arose to the author, are the words that are used still in the reasonable limit or are indeed already inappropriate to be written in communication even only in cyberspace.

2. Method

The method used in this research was descriptive method, which was describing directly the communication conducted between social media communities in facebook. The steps that were done include monitoring and observing the up to date condition of *facebook*, including postings and comments, and then interviewing the users of *facebook* from various circles. There were ten respondents involved in the interview. The researchers were directly involved in this research. The obtained data were then selected and analyzed.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Communicating in Cyberspace

Based on the information given by the respondents of cyberspace and *facebook* social media users, overall, almost referring to the opinion of the same argumentation. In average, the respondents use the communication tool handphone, providing the feature to explore the cyberspace and social media. Various activities used by the respondents in utilizing *facebook*, for example chatting with old friends, online shopping, game, upload photo, and posting and reading news.

From the respondents' information, it can be known that the users of *facebook* in average can get actual news as well as information about what is happening internationally. The users of *facebook* got the chance to comment each other. Generally the languages used in *facebook* are languages in daily interaction. Those respondents did not decline that in their comments, they often use less polite language and even leading to harsh if the published news or information are not in line with expectations. The respondents explained that there are several harsh comments, but there are also polite comments.

The advantages of *facebook* or social media are generally able to strengthen the relationship of relatives far away, dig information faster, and more efficient in communicating. Whereas the disadvantage is that there are no filter from *facebook* itself to filter harsh words. These disadvantages are quite agreed by cyberspace users. One disadvantage that surely could not be denied is the lack of age limitation for *facebook* users. Therefore, starting from children, adolescents, until adults could be in a forum without filtration of a problem topic discussion. Furthermore, the respondents could not deny that the users of *facebook* are free to comment as they like. This was feared to be seen and followed by children.

3.2. Linguistics and Politeness in Cyberspace

3.2.1. Analysis of Linguistic Politeness

In the comment space, the *facebook* society in their comments are often throwing words or languages that may violate the values of politeness. Various expression of emotions in comments can be stated through any ways, such as insinuation, remarks, high emotion, until sarcastic words in which the tone is very harsh and inappropriate to be said. In this part, the author divided the analysis of linguistic politeness in the comments above into two types, which are: (1) insinuation, and (2) sarcasm.

The following are the example of insinuation and harsh cursing which was taken from the comments published on 6 July at 14.46 in the *Facebook Fanpage* titled "Poetry of Agreement with Jokowi-JK". In that news, poem recitation by one of the supporters of both candidates was delivered during the campaign on 5 Juli 2014 in Stadion Gelora Bung Karno, Senayan, Jakarta. Uniquely, the comments written or argued by the readers of *Facebook* sometimes are not synchronized with what was reported. Many of those comments ended up with debates, teasing each other, sneering. Many of the comments that are said, if viewed from the perspective of linguistic will result in sentences or ideas that are ineffective. Other than that, the ideas that was brought up also trigger controversy and conflict. This also indicates that even in cyberspace, horizontal conflicts are prone to happen between the users of cyberspace users.

(News link: <https://www.facebook.com/DennyJAWorld/posts/617091061720380>)

3.2.1.1. Insinuation

From the discourse mentioned above, appeared several insinuations, and the following are several comments that the author categorized as insinuation. From the commenter named Sultan Cilik Kondang, his/her feelings towards a presidential candidate was shown which seemed to be praises or support towards one of the presidential candidates of the Indonesian Republic. However, if seen and read critically, it could be known that those comments were insinuations. Those insinuations were varied, starting from the comments that felt subtle, until insinuations that felt very frontal and harsh. Here are the examples of subtle insinuation.

- (1) *Does not like to and never break official oath in the name of God and the holy book in solo as well as jakarta*
- (2) *Likes to make visits and make good image by bringing tens of reporters to immediately be covered.*
- (3) *Does not like to show off his achievement even in the debate session because he does not have the ambition to win.*
- (4) *Comes from poor family and his property assets are now only tens of million, not yet trillions.*

Other than that, there are also insinuation comments that are a bit harsh, such as,

- (1) *Looks innocent but has a noble heart that likes to harass his opponent sometimes, not often*
- (2) *Master 10 languages including bahasa basi (stale language)*

3.2.1.2. Sarcasm

The commenter under the name Rediya Nehru, wrote differently from the previous author. His/her comment was more to the point in expressing thoughts, even issuing quite harsh words such as "deceitful, slander, lie, hoax, provoke". Other than that, there is also a word in which the writing use capital letters entirely. The use of capital letters is an emphasis or marking a spiking emotions from the commenter. The use of capital letters is also a sign that the commenter is in the state of anger. The comment is shown below.

"Deceitful slander lie hoax gelembuk solo provoke suspicious angry DELETE now".

Another example is the comment under the name of Irfan Susanto which actually seemed simple. However,

there are things that felt harsh if it is seen more carefully. The commenter expressed "sane people choose no. 2". The commenter implied that the people who do not agree or do not choose number 2, then the elector of number 1 is indicated as insane by the commenter. This is a very harsh language and impolite, seeing that almost half of the people in Indonesia did not choose candidate number 2.

3.2.2. Culture and Character in Cyberspace

3.2.2.1. Culture

Based on the analysis of linguistic politeness above, it can be concluded that the comments towards the news more emphasized on sarcasm. This indicated that the value of linguistic politeness of the society generally in this cyberspace communication has started to erase the value of politeness that should be applicable in any situation. With those harsh languages that were brought up showed that communication in cyberspace did not pay attention to the linguistic politeness.

The social media *facebook* itself is not actually native of Indonesian culture. *Facebook* entered Indonesia very quickly and rapidly because it entered through the media Internet. The development of *Facebook* in Indonesia was then integrated with the activities of the people in Indonesia. Even if *facebook* itself does not come from the nation and culture of Indonesia, the easy usage and applicability by anyone makes *facebook* easily integrated with the Indonesians and the eastern culture. With the existence of *facebook*, Indonesians can easily see the concrete and physical form of the foreign culture. So that many youngsters and teenagers imitate and followed what they saw and read in *facebook* in daily life.

3.2.2.2. Character

All kinds of insults, curses, debates that happened in the cyberspace between commenters are common. The identity of Indonesia which is friendly and polite seems to be the opposite with what could be seen every day in *facebook* especially if pros and cons in a case and problem happen. This surely caused the formation of a negative character and can cause disharmonization between different groups that differ in opinion. It can be imagined how bad if every individual or group that have different opinion always end up in insults and curses to fellow citizens. This is surely not a good and correct thing if allowed to pass and stays like that for who knows how long.

The use of insulting phrase that leads to harsh insult that is inappropriate to be said is a reflection of the character that is far from noble character. That negative character was seen from the use of harsh words addressed to certain people that were not in accordance to the opinion. This is surely a shared problem and should be solved starting from themselves.

4. Conclusion

The author concluded that there are variation of language that are always expressed/said in the world of *facebook*. Other than that, there are a lot of comments in *facebook* that use insinuation language or even language that is in the category of sarcasm when commenting a main matter discussed. In this research, it can be found the lack of linguistic politeness displayed in the comments of *facebook* because almost all the users did not pay attention to politeness of language when criticizing a subject in *facebook*. Lack of rules of Bahasa Indonesia displayed when criticizing or judging a subject in *facebook* showed the way of thinking and character that are not in accordance to the culture and characteristic of Indonesia that are known to be friendly and polite.

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