Forensic linguistic analysis of wills written by deceased lovers in Tana Toraja

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the content and linguistic elements of wills content by lovers who were found dead in Tana Toraja and analyze the factors that cause suicide. This research uses descriptive qualitative text analysis methods. The source of data was obtained from the wills of lovers who were found dead in Tana Toraja in the form of written data, excerpts, or entire documents containing a description of the letter. Data analysis is a reading technique, understanding of suicide cases, and linguistic analysis. The stages of data analysis are as follows: case studies deepening understanding, reading/studying data, marking keywords and ideas contained in the data, studying those keywords, trying to find themes derived from data, and writing down 'models' found based on coding that has been done. The content of the linguistic forensic text of suicide cases uses vocabulary that is unusual in the context, direct speech that refers to remorse, inferiority, warning, mentioning something necessary, desirable things, no hesitation in action, and Factors that cause suicide cases.

1.   Introduction

Language is an arbitrary system of sound symbols used by members of a society to cooperate, interact, and identify. The language spoken by language speakers has values and elements in the language. Not only in official forums but also in non-official forums or everyday life, both in written and oral form. Language is not only sorted according to its condition but also considers social norms and values in each pronunciation. This kind of language in the world of forensic linguistics tends to contain elements of criminality because it can indirectly cause harm to the speaker or opponent. Sometimes, a lot of language is present and developed in the realm of law. An assessment of the

veracity of a written or oral statement by a victim, witness, or suspect is essential in an investigation that has repercussions and implications in the criminal justice system.

Forensic linguistics is one of the branches of applied linguistics that is concerned with law. The linguistic levels that is closely related to forensic linguistics are acoustic phonetics, discourse analysis, semantics, pragmatics, and psycholinguistics. Pragmatics itself studies grammar starting from language sounds (phonology), words and their formation (morphology), and sentences and their use (syntax) to interpret the language (semantic); Pragmatics connects these grammatical units to interpret the meaning contained in them. The ability to use language following the context, at least influenced by five factors, including (1) who speaks with whom, (2) the context of a speech, (3) the purpose of a speech, (4) speech as a form of action or speech act, and (5) speech as a product of speech acts (Leech, 1993). Pragmatics itself includes several aspects of study in it, including implications, deiksis, presuppositions, and speech acts. In this case, pragmatic studies are used to find out and analyze the language elements in the examination minutes. Forensic linguistics is needed in various aspects related to language and law, language and legal processes, language as evidence, and research on teaching legal language. Seeing the current state of Indonesia that has been widely marked wrong by some people, forensic linguistics is considered necessary to be used by some linguists. The consideration is that this science is multi-disciplinary, namely linguistics and law. Forensic linguistics is one of the newer branches of linguistics. Forensic linguistics is a multidisciplinary science because its analysis can be seconded by other fields of science such as linguistics, legal sciences, psychological sciences, social sciences, and other fields of science that can solve a criminal problem. As mentioned by Olsson (2008: 3) forensic linguistics is the relationship between language and enforcement, problems, legislation, disputes, or processes in law that potentially involve some violation of the law or the necessity to obtain a legal settlement. In its history, this field has been called forensic linguistics since 1980. Forensic linguistics is a multidisciplinary science derived from linguistics and law that has been developed in America and Europe since 1997 (Momemi, 2011). Since then, linguists have offered their evidence in court to detect reality and more carefully judge a case.

Crimes formed through language are crimes that can be studied from a linguistic point of view. Such language crimes can be insults, threats, fraud, or pragmatic language. Even crimes such as theft, kidnapping, and murder involving language before the occurrence of the crime, can be considered language crimes. Forensic linguistics is usually used in analyzing crimes related to the use of language, both oral and written. In the case of forensic linguistics, text classification can be used to determine linguistic forms as evidence for investigating the function of the text (Rahmat, 2014). In this case, linguistic forensics is used to determine the causes of suicide. The role of linguists forensic linguists can speed up the uncovering of suicides. Coulthard and Johnson (2010) mentioned that forensic linguistics can focus its study on the language of legal processes and language as evidence, both oral and written.

Linguists can analyze the meanings of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences in wills left by individuals who have committed suicide. By examining the text from individual words to the broader context, linguists can assist law enforcement in understanding the motivations behind the suicide more quickly. Particular attention is given to unusual word choices or diction, as these can offer crucial insights. Forensic linguistics experts play a vital role in investigating suicide cases, helping to

reveal underlying causes. Suicide is a significant public health concern worldwide, affecting both children and middle-aged individuals (Wasserman et al., 2005). Indonesia, as a developing country, also faces this issue, with a growing trend of suicide among schoolchildren.

On January 30, 2023, teenagers from Tana Toraja South Sulawesi were shocked by the action of a young man who committed suicide, identified as JP (15 years old) and R (17 years old), It was later found that JP hanged himself, but JP was found dead in his boarding house in Mamullu Village, Makale District at around 09.00 WITA on Monday, January 30, 2023. Receiving the news, the other couple, R, had come to the crime scene, and then she was also desperate to do the same thing with JP. After returning from the crime scene in a different place, it was found that R was also dead. The victim took her own life due to profound devastation following JP's departure. The victim had also penned a letter before the incident. During a visit to the scene where JP had died, his partner, R, came across the letter left by JP, visibly moved to tears upon reading its contents. This R had come to the scene of the crime when JP was found hanged dead. Seeing JP's letter addressed to R, at that time, R was seen crying. He returned to his boarding house in Ariang Village, Makale District, after being carried out by the crime scene. However, not long after, R was also found hanging dead and left a letter for his lover JP and his family.

Suicidal attempt and suicide are two quite different things but have a complex relationship; both are part of suicide intent. Regarding suicide ideation, as well as suicide plans, both are part of suicidality commonly known as suicidal behavior (Chehil & Kutcher, 2012). Bridge, Goldstein, and Brent (2006) argue that suicidal ideation refers to thoughts about hurting or killing oneself. One of the suicide theorists, Durkheim, has classified the types of suicide as egoistic, anomic, altruistic, & fatalistic. In addition, he also believes that the biggest cause of suicide is the influence of social integration (Durkheim, 1987). Suicidal behavior is a social reality which, of course, is one of the phenomena that must be explored. Seeing the rampant phenomenon of suicide that occurs among students, this study aims to explore the ideas and attempts (ideation and attempt) of suicide in students. The measurement of suicidal ideas and attempts is past, meaning that the individual has thought or attempted to commit suicide.

Linguists can analyze the meanings of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences in wills left by individuals who have committed suicide. By examining the text from individual words to the broader context, linguists can assist law enforcement in understanding the motivations behind the suicide more quickly. Particular attention is given to unusual word choices or diction, as these can offer crucial insights. Forensic linguistics experts play a vital role in investigating suicide cases, helping to reveal underlying causes. Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of forensic linguistic analysis in various contexts, such as the examination of suicide notes and legal documents. For instance, Coulthard and Johnson (2007) highlighted how linguistic analysis can identify psychological states and intentions in written texts, while Grant (2016) emphasized the importance of linguistic evidence in criminal investigations. Suicide is a significant public health concern worldwide, affecting both children and middle-aged individuals (Wasserman et al., 2005). Indonesia, as a developing country, also faces this issue, with a growing trend of suicide among schoolchildren.

The abovementioned factors set the stage for the formulation of key research questions in this study. Firstly, the inquiry seeks to elucidate the contents and linguistic features present within the wills

of the two deceased individuals discovered in Tana Toraja. Secondly, the investigation aims to uncover the factors contributing to instances of suicide through the lens of forensic linguistics. These questions are pivotal in shedding light on the circumstances surrounding the tragic demise of the individuals involved and exploring the intricate dynamics at play in such cases.

2. Method

The research method employed in this study is a qualitative descriptive approach, utilizing content analysis techniques to provide an in-depth understanding of the language used in the data. This approach allows for a detailed examination of the content and context of the written material. Data collection is carried out using a listening method complemented by advanced recording techniques to ensure accurate capture of the spoken content during investigative interviews.

For data analysis, the study employs basic analytical techniques to dissect and interpret the language used in the minutes of the examination. This involves a detailed examination of direct elements within the text, including speech acts and linguistic features, to understand their implications and meanings. Analytical methods focus on identifying patterns, themes, and specific language use related to the subject matter of the investigation.

The theoretical framework guiding this study includes pragmatic theory and forensic linguistic theory. Pragmatic theory is applied to analyze how context influences the interpretation of speech acts and the intended meanings behind the language used. Forensic linguistic theory is used to examine how language can serve as evidence in legal contexts, particularly in understanding the implications of the language used in investigative interviews.

The primary object of this study is the minutes of examination, which document the speech acts presented by investigators and interviewees during the investigative process. These minutes are a form of written language that captures the verbal interactions and can provide insights into the communication dynamics and the intentions of the participants. The analysis of these minutes aims to uncover underlying linguistic patterns and issues related to the investigative process, contributing to a better understanding of how language functions in forensic settings.

3. Results and discussion

The content of suicide will consist of three things, namely: the purpose of the will / the address of the will, the content of the message, and resignation, despair, which refers to the reference to suicide. The address of the will is addressed to both parents (mother, father), brother (brother, sister), and friends (schoolmates and special friends, girlfriends). The mailing address and the content of the message addressed to people close to the victim's life, disclosed directly to the addressee and according to his relationship, the level of familiarity of the author with the address;   Mentioning what the address needs to do or do to what the person who committed suicide wants, the author of the suicide will does not hesitate. The suicidal person sees and realizes that, of course, the action taken is not good; the length of the will is no more than 300 words, and the situational context of suicide wills is unclear (Osslon, 2008: 149).

JP's will for R:

Untuk R tersayang.

Maaf jika aku banyak mengecewakanmu, dan maaf jika saya terlalu memaksamu, maaf juga karena aku belum bisa membahagiakan mu lagi.

Terkadang saya minta maaf pada seseorang bukan karena aku salah, tapi karena saya tak ingin menyakiti orang yang aku sayang. Saya tau kata maaf ini tidak kan mampu menebus kesalahanku yg pernah terjadi, namun saya tak akan putus asa untuk meminta maaf kepadamu sampai kau memaafkanku.

Maafkan saya bila saya telah banyak mengukir luka dihatimu, maaf pula jika saya telah banyak meneteskan air mata yg keluar dari matamu. yang saya lakukan hanya bisa meminta maaf bila aku tidak bisa memahamimu, memahami keinginanmu.

Tapi yang perlu kamu tahu bahwa hanya kaulah yg ingin kujadikan satu-satunya menjadi pendamping hidupmu, dan benar-benar menyayangimu. Sekali lagi saya minta maaf buat kesalahanku yg tidak musukai dalam hidupku dan yg pernah terjadi.

R's will to his family and JP:

Mamak ku tersayang, Maaf mak kalau aku banyak salah dan tidak pernah dengar apa kata mamak dan maaf jika aku harus pergi karena aku tidak mau kehilangan cewek yang sangat kusayang. jadi aku lebibaik pergi bersamanya.

Dan teruntuk papak ku tersayang

maaf jika aku perna menyakiti perasaan mu dan aku minta maaf atas perbuatan yang telah kulakukan kepadamu pak

Teruntuk kakak ku dan adek ku tersayang

maaf jika aku perna menyakiti hati mu dan berusahalah bahagiakan mamak dan papak. Aku akan pergi persama cewek ku yang selalu ada buat ku susah maupun senang. Aku sayang kalian berempat.

Selamat tinggal.

The content of the will message revolves around: a sense of remorse about the wrong the victim has done to his lover. Feelings of inferiority because the victim feels unable to be happy and seems forced in his relationship. In the second stanza, which expresses a sense of protection and great care for the feelings of his lover, he cannot bear to hurt the heart of his beloved whom he loves so much. JP seems to force R to continue his relationship even without the blessing of his parents.

(Data 1)

Tapi yang perlu kamu tahu bahwa hanya kaulah yg ingin kujadikan satu-satunya menjadi pendamping hidupmu, dan benar-benar menyayangimu. Sekali lagi saya minta maaf buat kesalahanku yg tidak musukai dalam hidupku dan yg pernah terjadi.

From the above passage in the last stanza of the will, JP expressed his affection for his lover and JP's hope that he should have made his lover the last person in his heart and in his life towards the household but all this was not achieved until JP breathed his last

R's will to his family and JP:

(Data 2)

Mamak ku tersayang, Maaf mak kalau aku banyak salah dan tidak pernah dengar apa kata mamak dan maaf jika aku harus pergi karena aku tidak mau kehilangan cewek yang sangat kusayang. jadi aku lebibaik pergi bersamanya.

Isi Surat Wasiat Dua Sejoli Yang Ditemukan Tewas Di Tana Toraja (zonakata.com)

The first stanza of R's letter is about apologies and regrets to his biological mother because R feels that he is a child who has made many mistakes and does not obey what his mother suggests. R's expression also discusses how much R loves JP so much that he is willing to follow his lover to commit suicide. Linguistic forensic text forms i.e. phrases, groups of words, clauses or sentences that refer to resignation despair.

(Data 3)

Dan teruntuk papak ku tersayang

maaf jika aku perna menyakiti perasaan mu dan aku minta maaf atas perbuatan yang telah kulakukan kepadamu pak

The content of the above letter in the second verse shows his regret and apology because, during his life, the victim hurt his father's heart and felt that he had wronged his parents.

(Data 4)

Teruntuk kakak ku dan adek ku tersayang

maaf jika aku perna menyakiti hati mu dan berusahalah bahagiakan mamak dan papak. Aku akan pergi persama cewek ku yang selalu ada buat ku susah maupun senang. Aku sayang kalian berempat. Selamat tinggal.

This last stanza is addressed to the victim's brothers, namely his brother and sister. The content includes an apology from the victim for his brother, which is then followed by the victim's request that his brother keep his parents happy even though the victim is no longer in the middle of their lives.

(Data 5)

Aku akan pergi persama cewek ku yang selalu ada buat ku susah maupun senang

The above sentence shows that the victim has made his decision unanimously and confidently to end his life. The victim wants to be with her lover until death picks her up. The victim's love for her lover is unusual for logical thinking. The victim considers that her lover always accompanies both difficult and happy, always with victim which makes the victim unable to survive anymore after knowing her lover committed suicide.

(Data 6)

Aku sayang kalian berempat.
Selamat tinggal.

The final sentence in the victim's letter conveys a poignant sentiment of affection towards her family, expressing her gratitude and love for her parents and siblings despite the circumstances. This expression of care and farewell, encapsulated by the word "goodbye," reflects a deep emotional struggle and a sense of unresolved sorrow. Such expressions are indicative of the complex emotional state experienced by individuals facing severe distress. Research has shown that symptoms of depression often emerge from a pervasive pattern of multiple contributing factors, including relational issues, academic stress, substance abuse, and physical health problems (Mehlum, 2016). These factors can exacerbate feelings of hopelessness and lead to a distorted perception of one's circumstances. For instance, Mehlum (2016) identifies that personal issues and external pressures frequently intertwine, creating a cumulative effect that intensifies emotional pain and suicidal ideation. In the case of the victim, the letter's farewell can be seen as a reflection of her internal conflict and despair, which are symptomatic of a broader pattern of psychological distress. Understanding these underlying issues through forensic analysis can provide deeper insights into the victim's emotional state and the contributing factors leading to their decision, underscoring the need for effective intervention and support systems to address such pervasive problems.

The suicide of the two individuals can be attributed to a severe love crisis, compounded by familial disapproval. JP's relationship with R was significantly strained when his brother forbade him from meeting her, particularly when JP expressed a desire to share a living space with R. This prohibition likely intensified JP's emotional turmoil, leading to feelings of isolation and despair. According to previous research, familial disapproval and relational conflicts can significantly contribute to psychological distress and suicidal ideation (Eslava et al., 2023). For instance, studies have shown that pressures from family and societal expectations often exacerbate feelings of hopelessness and

lead individuals to consider suicide as a way to escape their perceived problems (Kendall-Tackett, 2007). The lack of support and understanding from loved ones can deepen feelings of despair, as evidenced in cases analyzed by forensic linguistics (Coulthard, 2007). The tragic end of JP and R highlights the importance of addressing mental health issues and relational conflicts to prevent such outcomes. Forensic linguistic analysis of their wills may offer valuable insights into their psychological state and the contributing factors to their decision, emphasizing the need for comprehensive support systems to address emotional and psychological distress.

3.   Conclusion

This study provides a detailed forensic linguistic analysis of the will left by a student who committed suicide. The analysis reveals several distinctive linguistic features in the will: the use of vocabulary that is unusual within the context, the incorporation of "dead" vocabulary reflecting a finality or sense of resignation, and direct speech addressed to specific individuals, indicating the author's relationship with the addressees. Additionally, the will includes mentions of necessary or desirable things and demonstrates a lack of hesitation in action, with the text being notably brief, approximately 300 words. However, the situational context surrounding the suicide is not clearly articulated in the will.

The study identifies family factors and relationship problems as primary contributors to the student's decision to commit suicide. These findings underscore the importance of understanding the emotional and relational contexts that may influence such drastic decisions. By examining the linguistic elements of the will, the study offers valuable insights into the psychological state of the individual and the contributing factors to their distress.

Despite the insights gained, this study has limitations, including its reliance on a single case, which may not represent broader patterns in suicide-related wills, and the lack of situational context in the note, which limits understanding of the circumstances leading to the suicide. Additionally, the subjective nature of interpreting linguistic features could influence the findings. However, the study's implications are significant: forensic linguistics offers valuable insights into the emotional and psychological states of individuals through their written texts, enhancing the interpretation of suicide notes and related documents. The findings suggest that addressing familial and relational issues, along with mental health support, could help prevent suicides. Future research should involve larger samples and more detailed contextual analysis to better understand the factors contributing to suicide and the role of forensic linguistics.

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