Original Research Article

Forensic Linguistics of Formal Speech and Humor: A Comparative Analysis of Social Media Platforms and Film

Houtman[1]*, Mulyati[1], Mustofa[1], Fezzi Reri Viovitha[1], Eka Wulandary[2]

[1]Muhammadiyah University of Palembang, Indonesia
[2]STKIP PGRI Bandar Lampung

*Corresponding author: Houtman
Muhammadiyah University of Palembang, Indonesia

Abstract

This study investigates the linguistic characteristics, pragmatic functions, and legal implications of formal and humorous speech across digital media by employing a forensic linguistic and multimodal analytical framework. Drawing on data from the Indonesian comedy program *Lapor Pak!* and the Korean film *Vincenzo*, the research examines how formal and humorous utterances are constructed, interpreted, and potentially contested within online and audiovisual environments. The analysis focuses on the interplay between linguistic form, speaker intention, and contextual cues, as well as the extent to which multimodal elements—such as visual cues, sound effects, gestures, and cinematography—shape or intensify meaning. Findings reveal that formal speech, although structurally explicit, may still generate legal vulnerabilities when embedded in parody or institutional impersonation. Conversely, humorous speech, characterized by ambiguity, irony, and linguistic deviation, is prone to misinterpretation as defamation, hate speech, or harassment, particularly in digital settings lacking shared contextual knowledge. The study further argues that multimodality amplifies interpretive risks by reinforcing or altering the illocutionary force of an utterance. Overall, this research demonstrates the value of integrating pragmatic, discourse, and multimodal perspectives within forensic linguistic analysis to better understand how digital communication practices may trigger social and legal consequences. The findings contribute to the development of digital literacy, ethical communication guidelines, and more context-sensitive approaches to evaluating public speech in online environments.

Keywords: Forensic linguistics, Formal speech, Digital humor, social media, Multimodality.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has fundamentally changed the way humans communicate. Social media and films have become not only sources of entertainment but also public spaces where social interaction, ideological expression, and the dissemination of opinions occur. In this space, speech both formal and humorous has the power to shape perceptions, trigger reactions, and even lead to legal consequences. This phenomenon demands a more in-depth study of language as an object of law, particularly through a forensic linguistics approach.

Forensic linguistics is a branch of science that studies language in a legal context, including the analysis of speech that may violate social norms and laws (Coulthard & Johnson, 2010). In the digital context, speech conveyed through social media or films can become legal evidence, objects of interpretation, or even sources of conflict. Therefore, it is important to understand how formal speech and humor operate in the digital space, and how linguistic analysis can help identify the meaning, function, and potential legal violations of such speech.

This research aims to answer five main questions:

1. What are the characteristics of formal speech and humor used on social media platforms and in films in the context of forensic linguistics?
2. What are the potential legal violations arising from the use of formal speech and humor in social media and films?
3. How can forensic linguistic interpretation and analysis mechanisms be used to identify the meaning and function of these formal speech and humor?
4. What are the social and legal implications of the use of formal speech and humor found on social media platforms and films?

Citation: Houtman, Mulyati, Mustofa, Fezzi Reri Viovitha, Eka Wulandary (2025). Forensic Linguistics of Formal Speech and Humor: A Comparative Analysis of Social Media Platforms and Film. *Sch Int J Linguist Lit, 8*(10): 254-259.

254

5. How does Multimodality (the combination of speech and visual elements) influence the meaning and potential legal risks of the analyzed content?

This research aims to:
- Identify the linguistic characteristics of formal speech and humor in social media and films.
- Analyze potential legal violations based on the speech studied.
- Explain the mechanisms of forensic linguistic interpretation of digital speech.
- Examine the social and legal impacts of the analyzed content.
- Examine the role of Multimodality in strengthening or changing the meaning of speech.

Formal speech is typically associated with regular language structures, a high register, and a clear communicative function. In the context of social media and film, formal speech can appear in the form of official statements, institutional dialogue, or legal narratives. Conversely, humorous speech is often creative, ambiguous, and contextual. Humor can appear in the form of irony, sarcasm, parody, or wordplay, all of which can be misinterpreted or interpreted negatively (Dynel, 2014).

In forensic linguistics, speech analysis focuses not only on language structure but also on social context, speaker intentions, and perlocutionary impact. Pragmatic theory (Grice, 1975; Searle, 1969) is used to understand the intent and effect of speech, while critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995) helps uncover the power relations and ideologies contained within speech. Multimodality (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) is an important element in digital content analysis because visual elements such as facial expressions, background music, and cinematography can strengthen or change the meaning of speech.

This research is highly relevant to the current social and legal context. Many cases of legal violations on social media stem from speech deemed insulting, provocative, or hateful. Furthermore, films, as cultural products, can also influence public perceptions of certain institutions, ethnicities, or moral values. By adopting a forensic linguistics approach, this research contributes to a fairer, more contextually grounded understanding of public speech.

Academically, this research expands the scope of forensic linguistics to the realm of entertainment and digital media. In practice, the results of this research can be used by content creators, educators, law enforcement, and the general public to understand the boundaries between lawful expression and unlawful conduct in digital communication.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with critical discourse analysis and multimodal analysis within a forensic linguistics framework. The goal is to identify the characteristics of formal and humorous speech and evaluate its potential for legal violations and social implications.

Forensic linguistics 255nalyses language in a legal context, including speech on social media and in films (Sariono et al., 2024). The research data consists of speech from the social media platform YouTube (examples of the analysis are the "Lapor Pak!" program) and dialogue from the film (the film Vincenzo) containing formal and humorous elements.

The research data were collected using purposive sampling: data selection based on relevance to formal/humorous speech and legal potential; documentation (screenshots, film transcripts, metadata [account, time, context]); and interviews (if necessary) with legal or forensic linguistics experts.

The analysis was conducted in five stages according to the problem formulation:

a. Analysis of Formal and Humorous Speech Characteristics
- Using pragmatic theory (Grice, 1975; Searle, 1969) and linguistic register.
- Classification based on sentence structure, style, and social function.
- Formal speech and humor have different social functions, but both can trigger legal interpretations depending on the context (Utami, 2024).

b. Identification of Potential Legal Violations
- Analysis of speech acts based on Austin and Searle's theory.
- Mapping against legal articles: defamation, hate speech, pornography, etc.
- Provocative speech on social media can have legal implications, especially if it causes negative social impacts (Ambarwati, 2024).

c. Forensic Linguistic Interpretation Mechanisms
- Using a critical discourse analysis approach (Fairclough, 1995).
- Interpretation of implied meaning, ambiguity, and speaker intentions.

d. Social and Legal Implications Analysis
- Case study of viral content that resulted in legal reporting.
- Evaluation of the impact on reputation, public opinion, and legal proceedings.

e. Multimodality Analysis
- Using multimodal analysis theory (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).
- Evaluate the interaction between text, images, sound, and visual expressions.

Multimodality can strengthen the meaning of speech and increase legal risks if visual elements support negative interpretations (Sariono *et al.,* 2024).

4. Research Instruments
- Linguistic analysis checklist: to identify types of speech.
- Multimodal analysis template: to record visual elements and their relationship to speech.
- Legal matrix: to match speech with potential legal violations.

5. Data Validity
- Source triangulation: social media vs. film.
- Theoretical triangulation: pragmatics, discourse, law.
- Expert discussion: validation of interpretation with linguistic or legal experts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of Forensic Linguistic Analysis: Report, Sir! & Vincenzo

1. Characteristics of Formal Speech and Humor
Report Sir!
- Formal speech is used parodically, imitating the communication style of the police institution with an official register but spiced with hyperbole and absurdity.
- Humor is verbal and situational, often based on puns, ambiguity, and syntactic deviations (Fitriani *et al.,* 2023).
- Example: "Ready, Commander!" is repeated in various absurd contexts, creating a comic effect while obscuring the utterance's original function. Vincenzo
- Formal speech appears in legal and mafia contexts, with complex and strategic sentence structures.
- Humor is dark and ironic, often arising from the contrast between violence and exaggerated emotional expressions.
- The mixture of Korean and Italian creates a humorous effect while strengthening characterization.

2. Potential Legal Violations
Report Sir!
- Potential legal violations arise if the parody is deemed an insult to state institutions.
- Some segments may be interpreted as defamation or insult to state symbols if not understood as satire. Vincenzo

- Although fictional, the use of verbal and visual violence can generate controversy if associated with the glorification of crime or ethnic stereotypes.
- Dialogue containing threats or insults can be analyzed as hate speech in certain legal contexts.

In the Indonesian context, the ITE Law and the Criminal Code are the primary sources for assessing potential legal violations of public speech (Ambarwati, 2024).

3. Mechanisms of Interpretation and Forensic Linguistic Analysis
- Pragmatic analysis is used to identify the speaker's intent (illocutionary force) and its impact (perlocutionary effect).
- Critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995) helps uncover power relations and ideology in speech, particularly in Vincenzo, which critiques the legal system and corruption.
- Multimodal context (intonation, facial expressions, background music) is crucial in determining the true meaning of humor or sarcasm.

4. Social and Legal Implications
Report Sir!
- Can strengthen public legal literacy through humor, but also carries risks if the audience fails to distinguish between satire and fact.
- Potential misinterpretation can trigger legal reporting or social conflict. Vincenzo
- Sparks social discussions about justice, vigilante justice, and the ethics of power.
- Potential risks arise if the audience imitates the style of verbal violence or perceives it as legitimate.

5. The Role of Multimodality
Report Sir!
- The use of police uniforms, sound effects, and facial expressions enhances the humor and sarcasm.
- Multimodality increases the potential for multiple interpretations and legal risks if the visuals support negative meanings. Vincenzo
- Cinematography, classical music, and slow motion enhance the irony and dramatization of violence.
- Visual elements reinforce the meaning of the narrative and can influence the audience's perception of the morality of the main character's actions.

Multimodality can enhance or obscure the meaning of the narrative, making it important in forensic linguistic analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

The following is a visual comparison table between the Lapor Pak! sketch and the film Vincenzo based on five aspects of forensic linguistic analysis:

Forensic Linguistic Comparison Table: Lapor Pak! vs. Vincenzo

Analytical Aspects	Lapor Pak! (Indonesia)	Vincenzo (Korea)
Types of Speech	Formal parody and verbal humor	Formal strategic and dark humor
Humor Strategy	Puns, syntactic deviations, absurdity	Irony, emotional contrast, language mixing
Potential for Legal Violations	Parody of state institutions can be interpreted as insults	Glorification of violence and ethnic stereotypes can cause controversy
Interpretation Mechanism	Pragmatic and multimodal analysis (intonation, expression, costume)	Critical and multimodal discourse analysis (music, cinematography, expression)
Implications and Law	Public legal literacy increases, but risks misinterpretation	Discussion of the ethics of justice and vigilante justice, risks of imitating violence
Role of Multimodality	Comical visuals enhance the effects of humor and ambiguity	Dramatic visuals enhance the irony and intensity of the speech

DISCUSSION
Discussion of Analysis Results
1. Characteristics of Formal and Humorous Speech
The formal speech in both shows demonstrates differences in function and style. Lapor Pak! uses formal speech as parody, imitating institutional communication styles for humorous purposes. Meanwhile, Vincenzo delivers a formal speech in the context of law and the mafia, a realm fraught with strategy and power. The humor in Lapor Pak! is verbal and lighthearted, while in Vincenzo it is dark and ironic, often emerging from the contrast between violence and emotional expression.

These differences demonstrate that speech characteristics are strongly influenced by genre, culture, and communicative purpose. In the context of forensic linguistics, it is important to understand that humor is not merely entertainment; it can be a tool for social criticism or even a trigger for legal conflict if misinterpreted.

2. Potential for Legal Violations
Both shows have different potential for legal violations. Lapor Pak! is at risk if its parody of state institutions is interpreted as insulting or defamatory. On the other hand, Vincenzo has the potential to generate controversy due to its depiction of violence, verbal threats, and ethnic stereotypes.

In forensic linguistic analysis, the potential for legal violations depends not only on the content of the utterance but also on the social context, public interpretation, and the applicable legal framework. Therefore, the analysis must consider the pragmatic aspects and perlocutionary impact of the utterance.

3. Mechanisms of Interpretation and Forensic Linguistic Analysis
Interpretation of the utterances is conducted through pragmatic and critical discourse analysis. In Lapor Pak! pragmatic analysis helps identify humorous intent and potential ambiguities, while critical discourse analysis reveals the ideology behind the institutional parody. In Vincenzo, critical discourse analysis is more dominant because the utterances often criticize the legal system and corruption.

Multimodality is an important element in interpretation, as visual elements such as facial expressions, background music, and cinematography can reinforce or alter the meaning of the utterances. In a forensic context, multimodal analysis helps reveal speaker intentions and potential social impacts.

4. Social and Legal Implications
The social implication of Lapor Pak! is improving legal literacy through humor, but it also poses risks if viewers fail to distinguish between satire and fact. Legal implications arise if the content is deemed offensive to certain institutions or individuals.

Meanwhile, Vincenzo raises discussions about justice and the ethics of power. However, there is a risk of viewers imitating verbal violence or vigilante actions if they perceive it as legitimate. This demonstrates that entertainment content can influence public perceptions of law and morality.

5. The Role of Multimodality
Multimodality strengthens the meaning of speech and increases the potential for multiple interpretations. In Lapor Pak! police costumes, sound effects, and facial expressions enhance the humor and sarcasm. In Vincenzo, dark cinematography and dramatic music enhance the irony and intensity of the speech.

In forensic linguistic analysis, Multimodality must be treated as an integral part of speech, as visual elements can influence legal and social interpretations. Therefore, the analysis must holistically encompass the interaction between text and visuals.

Based on the research and discussion conducted, the following points can be generally stated.

1. Forensic Linguistics as a Tool for Reading Digital Speech

Forensic linguistics has evolved from simply analyzing legal documents to becoming a crucial tool for understanding the dynamics of digital communication. In the context of social media and film, speech functions not only as a means of expression but also as a legal object with social and criminal consequences. This research demonstrates that a forensic linguistic approach can unravel the meaning, intent, and impact of seemingly lighthearted speech, such as humor, and even seemingly neutral speech, such as formal speech.

2. Formal Speech and Humor: Two Poles with Equal Risk

Formal speech is often considered neutral and safe, but in certain contexts—such as parodies of institutions or authoritative statements—it can lead to interpretations that trigger legal reporting. Conversely, humorous speech intended to entertain can easily be misinterpreted as insults, hate speech, or harassment, especially if it lacks clear contextual markers.

This research confirms that both formal and humorous speech carry equal legal risks, depending on the context, audience, and delivery medium.

3. Social Media and Film: A Complex Multimodal Space

Social media platforms and films present speech in multimodal forms—combining text, sound, images, facial expressions, and visual effects. This Multimodality enriches meaning but also widens the scope for interpretation. In a forensic context, this requires an analytical approach that is not only textual, but also visual and contextual.

The example of "Lapor Pak!" demonstrates how verbal humor, combined with costumes and visual expressions, can reinforce or obscure the intent of a speech. Meanwhile, "Vincenzo" demonstrates how cinematography and music can amplify irony and social criticism in formal speech.

4. The Importance of Legal Literacy and Digital Pragmatics

This research also highlights the importance of legal literacy and digital pragmatics for society. Many cases of legal violations on social media occur not due to malicious intent but due to a lack of understanding of ethical and legal boundaries in communication. Therefore, understanding the principles of forensic linguistics can be an effective preventative tool. 3. Social Media and Film: A Complex Multimodal Space

Social media platforms and films present speech in multimodal forms—combining text, sound, images, facial expressions, and visual effects. This Multimodality enriches meaning but also widens the scope for interpretation. In a forensic context, this requires an analytical approach that is not only textual, but also visual and contextual.

The example of "Lapor Pak!" demonstrates how verbal humor, combined with costumes and visual expressions, can reinforce or obscure the intent of a speech. Meanwhile, "Vincenzo" demonstrates how cinematography and music can amplify irony and social criticism in formal speech.

4. The Importance of Legal Literacy and Digital Pragmatics

This research also highlights the importance of legal literacy and digital pragmatics for society. Many cases of legal violations on social media occur not due to malicious intent but due to a lack of understanding of ethical and legal boundaries in communication. Therefore, understanding the principles of forensic linguistics can be an effective preventative tool.

5. Academic and Practical Contributions

Academically, this research expands the scope of forensic linguistics to the realm of entertainment and digital media. Practically, the results of this analysis can be used by:

- Content creators to understand safe boundaries in their work.
- Educators to teach digital communication ethics.
- Law enforcement to assess speech contextually and fairly.
- The general public needs to raise awareness of the potential risks of seemingly trivial speech.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that formal speech and humor in social media and films are not neutral entities. Both have the potential for complex meanings, significant social impacts, and real legal risks. Through a forensic linguistic approach that combines pragmatic analysis, critical discourse, and Multimodality, we can uncover the intentions, functions, and consequences of speech circulating in the digital public sphere.

The sketch "Lapor Pak!" and the film "Vincenzo" serve as concrete examples of how entertainment content can become objects of forensic linguistic study. Both demonstrate that humor and formality can be vehicles for social criticism, but can also generate controversy if not understood contextually.

Research Implications
1. Academic Implications
- Expands the scope of forensic linguistics to the realm of entertainment and digital media.
- Demonstrates the importance of multimodal analysis in understanding the full meaning of speech.

- Offers an analytical model that can be applied to various types of digital content.

2. Practical Implications
- For content creators: it is important to understand the ethical and legal boundaries of conveying humor or criticism.
- For educators and academics: the results of this study can be used as teaching materials for digital literacy and communication ethics.
- For law enforcement: a forensic linguistic approach can help assess speech fairly and contextually.
- For the general public: raises awareness that speech in the digital space has social and legal consequences.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ambarwati, D. A. P. (2024). *Analisis linguistik forensik ujaran provokasi pelajar penyebab tawuran*. Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.https://repositori.kemendikdasmen.go.id/20235/95/69.%20Revisi%20Makalah_Devi%20Ambarwati%20P_ANALISIS%20LINGUISTIK%20FORENSIK%20UJARAN%20PROVOKASI%20PELAJAR_sunting.pdf
- Coulthard, M., & Johnson, A. (2010). *An Introduction to Forensic Linguistics: Language in Evidence* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Dynel, M. (2014). Isn't it ironic? Defining the scope of humorous irony. *Humor*, 27(4), 619–639.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Longman.
- Fitriani, A. A., Kusmana, A., & Triandana, A. (2023). *Analisis Deviasi Linguistik pada Acara Komedi "Lapor Pak!" di Trans TV*. Universitas Jambi. https://123dok.com/document/yj7x2885-view-analisis-deviasi-linguistik-acara-komedi-lapor-trans.html
- Grice, H. P. (1975). *Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), Syntax and Semantics* (Vol. 3, pp. 41–58). Academic Press.
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sariono, A., et al. (2024). *Linguistik forensik: Analisis ujaran dalam media sosial*. CV. Eureka Media Aksara.
- https://repository.unej.ac.id/bitstream/handle/123456789/124717/FIB_LINGUISTIK%20FORENSIK-halaman.pdf
- Utami, A. R. (2024). *Tuturan defamasi di media sosial: Kajian linguistik forensik* [Tesis, Universitas Hasanuddin].
- https://repository.unhas.ac.id/id/eprint/41702/2/F012221005_tesis_29-09-2024%201-2%28FILEminimizer%29.pdf
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. Sage Publications.