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Defamatory post against a beverage brand: A forensic linguistic study

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ABSTRACT

A controversial post by an X user regarding the sweetness level of a beverage sparked significant debate on social media. Public opinion was divided; some criticized the user for employing coarse language, while others defended the tweet as a factual description that should be viewed as constructive criticism of the brand. As the tweet could be perceived as offensive to the corporate entity, it raised concerns regarding its potential classification as defamatory speech. This study aims to identify and analyze the defamatory expressions within the tweets by the account from the perspective of forensic linguistics. The primary data source for this study was a specific post regarding a beverage variant from a popular brand in Indonesia. Data collection employed the documentation method utilizing the note-taking technique. Potentially defamatory expressions were analyzed through the theories of syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and discourse. The data were analyzed using a descriptive-qualitative approach. The results indicate that the post specifically targeted the corporate entity, as evidenced by the syntactic construction. Furthermore, the diction and phrasing employed carried pejorative and negative connotations. Although the post stemmed from the user's unpleasant experience after consuming the beverage, it exhibited elements of reputational injury, libel, and insult directed at the company. Consequently, the utterance warranted classification as defamatory speech.

Keywords: brand defamation; forensic linguistics; language crime; social media; X

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cases involving speech-related offenses are becoming increasingly prevalent in Indonesia (Pertiwi, 2025). One notable instance involved an X account with the initial G, which published a controversial tweet on September 23rd, 2022. This tweet was posted in reaction to the user's experience tasting a beverage variant from the company Esteh Indonesia. The post elicited a wide range of perspectives, both positive and negative, from various parties. Some X users viewed the tweet positively, regarding it as a genuine form of criticism directed at the brand. However, negative reactions became dominant due to the selection of coarse language within the text. The tweet garnered significant attention from the company, evidenced by the legal action taken against the account owner. A legal summons was sent to the owner of G account on September 24th, 2022. The case was ultimately resolved with an apology from the account owner, which was subsequently posted on X (Hadiansyah, 2022). Although the case has been resolved, this study was conducted for academic purposes to analyze sentence types that may constitute language crimes and to provide a future reference for raising public awareness of responsible language use.

This phenomenon is intrinsically linked to linguistics. The text posted on the X platform contained a syntactic arrangement of words classified as coarse languages. Furthermore, the vocabulary employed carries negative semantic connotations. The utilization of these words and the subsequent interpretation of their meanings touch on various linguistic dimensions. Consequently, the writing produced by G serves as a legitimate object of linguistic study, specifically in forensic linguistics.

Forensic linguistics is a branch of linguistics that examines the relationship between language, law, and legal violations (Olsson, 2008). This is the intersection of law and linguistics (Pastika et al., 2025). Pastika (2021) explained that forensic linguistics is an area of language studies related to legal issues, functioning either as legal evidence or as legal discourse. As a subset of applied linguistics, forensic linguistics is the scientific study of to resolve forensic problems (McMenamin, 2002).

Aristotle posited that language is a tool for expressing human thoughts and feelings (Polansky & Kuczewski, 1990). This philosophical view serves as the foundation for human language use, including the tweet by G, as mentioned previously. In this context, language was used as an instrument to express annoyance, a form of human emotion. Human emotions can generate friction between individuals if the delivery method is not regulated. Such deliveries may take the form of defamation. Defamation is an expression encompassing reputational injury, libel, insult, and blasphemy (Furqan et al., 2022). As seen in this case, human thoughts and feelings packaged in a specific language usage cause social discord. Therefore, the study of language in such cases is necessary to verify this truth.

Wittgenstein, a pioneer of linguistic analysis, initiated a school of language philosophy known as the language game. The language game explains that every language possesses a system of word usage with its own rules according to its purpose. Consequently, language usage varies because, to achieve two or more specific goals, different language varieties are employed for each objective. Chaos arises when the rules of language intended for one purpose are used to achieve a different purpose (Bernadien, 2004).

Similarly, in the case of G's tweet, which offended the beverage brand, the text represents a phenomenon of self-expression using specific word arrangements to achieve a specific goal. This study analyzes the arrangement of words to clarify the perceptions of a public divided into positive and negative camps and to understand the true direction of the writing.

Scholars in forensic linguistics have increasingly addressed the complexities of determining defamation in digital environments. Hartini et al. (2020) described unpleasant acts on social media and linguistic impoliteness used by speakers that resulted in legal action. The data source for this study was unpleasant acts found across various social media platforms. The results indicated that interactions on social media violated three parameters of linguistic politeness: the scale of social distance, the scale of social status, and the scale of speech acts. Puspita and Nurunnisa (2025) assert that forensic linguists play a pivotal role in criminal investigations by scientifically interpreting the meaning of utterances and identifying the mens rea (intent) behind allegedly defamatory speech, particularly when ambiguous

language like sarcasm or irony is employed. This analytical framework is crucial when examining social media discourse, as demonstrated by [Syafuruddin et al. \(2024\)](#), who analyzed hate speech directed at the Esteh Indonesia X account and identified specific linguistic markers of insults, defamation, and provocation within netizens' comments. Expanding on the legal implications of such discourse, [Farah et al. \(2025\)](#) explored hate speech against public figures on Instagram, categorizing these expressions into legal violations such as defamation and unpleasant acts punishable under the Electronic Information and Transactions law. These studies collectively underscore the necessity of rigorous linguistic analysis in determining the legal status of controversial social media posts.

The present study differs significantly from previous studies, despite sharing a similar topic. The first difference lies in the study's object, which has not been analyzed in previous studies. The second difference lies in the manner in which the current study analyzed the data.

Despite the growing body of research on online hate speech and defamatory discourse, existing studies in forensic linguistics have predominantly focused on macro-level interpretations, such as pragmatic meaning, discourse function, and social context. While these approaches are valuable in explaining how meaning is constructed in digital communication, they often overlook the importance of systematically establishing micro-level linguistic evidence, including syntactic structure, lexical choice, and semantic features, as the foundation for legal interpretation.

The absence of detailed micro-linguistic analysis may weaken the evidential basis required to support claims of defamation, particularly in legal settings where arguments must be grounded in observable and verifiable linguistic features. This study addresses this gap by proposing an integrative analytical framework that begins with a micro-level linguistic analysis and subsequently connects these findings to macro-level interpretation through discourse and pragmatic analyses. Without such micro-level grounding, interpretations of online discourse risk remaining speculative rather than evidence-based.

Furthermore, because forensic linguistics is inherently interdisciplinary and relies on the application of multiple linguistic theories, this study contributes methodologically by combining several linguistic theories to strengthen the evidential value of language analysis. This approach provides a more robust foundation for future forensic linguistic studies and highlights the necessity of grounding legal interpretations in detailed linguistic evidence as a primary step in forensic examination.

Based on the background above, the primary objective of this study is to identify defamatory expressions in G's tweet that offended the brand, analyze the background of these defamatory expressions, and analyze the expression as a whole as a form of defamation. The scope of this research encompasses expressions containing defamation in the form of words, phrases, and sentences within the examined tweet.

Research on forensic linguistics is compelling because it represents a contemporary linguistic topic in which cases remain consistently relevant. This study is expected to be beneficial as a reference for analyzing other cases of hate speech. Furthermore, this study is expected to serve as a mechanism of social control, encouraging the public to be more cautious and conscious of their self-expression.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Forensic linguistics employs a diverse range of theories to support its analysis. These theories encompass grammar, conversation analysis, cognitive linguistics, speech acts, phonetics and phonology, lexis, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and text analysis ([Coulthard et al., 2017](#)). This study analyzed the data through the lens of syntactic, semantic, discourse, and pragmatic theories. Syntactic theory is utilized to identify the functional roles of words within a tweet. Semantic theory is employed to analyze the meaning of a tweet. Discourse analysis theory explains textual cohesion. Finally, pragmatic theory is applied to determine the intent and purpose of a tweet.

This study did not apply a specific forensic linguistic theory because within forensic linguistics, defamation is not treated as a distinct linguistic theory but rather as a category of legally relevant speech acts that can be analyzed through established linguistic frameworks. As shown in the forensic linguistic

literature, defamation is examined alongside other speech acts, such as threats and perjury, relying on discourse, semantic, and pragmatic analysis to determine its evidential value (McMenamin, 2002).

The syntactic theory employed is the structural analysis of functional roles by Chaer (2009). Functional roles in a sentence relate to the function of a word within a single sentence structure. Chaer explains that the subject and object perform roles such as agent, patient (target), product, experiencer, instrument, comitative, source, range, or measure. The predicate functions as a process, event, state, possession, identity, or quantity. The adjunct functions as an instrument, place, time, origin, possibility, or necessity. This theory aids in the categorization of word functions, thereby facilitating subsequent semantic and pragmatic analyses.

The semantic theory utilized is Leech's (1981) theory of meaning, which categorizes meaning into seven types: conceptual, connotative, affective, stylistic, reflective, collocative, and thematic meanings. This classification assists in comprehending the words found in the tweet, particularly in distinguishing between positive and negative interpretations. Furthermore, to achieve a holistic understanding, an operational semantic approach is applied to ascertain word meaning in actual usage (Pateda, 2010).

The discourse analysis theory utilized in this study is the theory of cohesion by Halliday and Hasan (1994). This theory helps identify references within a tweet, ensuring a cohesive understanding of the text. Halliday and Hasan (1994) divide cohesion into two types: grammatical and lexical. Grammatical cohesion consists of reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. Lexical cohesion includes repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, and collocation.

The pragmatic theory applied is the context of situation theory by Halliday and Hasan (1985). The context of situation consists of field, tenor, and mode. Field refers to the topic of the text. Tenor refers to the participants involved in the text. Mode refers to the channel of communication and the function of the text. In analyzing the mode, Searle's (1969) speech act theory was applied too. This theory is employed in this study to provide the background context for the tweet and to determine its function.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is classified as library research utilizing a descriptive-qualitative approach. The primary data source for this research is the tweet posted by an X account with an initial of G on September 23rd, 2022. This data is classified as qualitative data because it takes the form of written text (Aminuddin, 1990; Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). The data was selected because this study employed a single instrumental case study design (Yin, 2014), in which one tweet serves as the primary unit of analysis for in-depth forensic linguistic examination. The data was selected purposively based on three criteria: (1) the tweet explicitly references a corporate entity, (2) it contains evaluative and potentially injurious language, and (3) it generated public controversy accompanied by a documented legal response. Another reason for selecting this data is to examine the veracity of the alleged defamatory expression, as the viral tweet was deemed damaging, resulting in the account owner receiving a legal summons from the concerned company. Conversely, many parties supported the account owner, viewing the tweet as factual criticism that should function as constructive feedback for improvement.

Data were collected using the documentation method and note-taking technique. Sugiyono (2019) explains that the documentation method is a means of collecting data and information from books, archives, documents, writings, photographs, and reports that support the research. The note-taking technique is a data collection technique involving the recording of relevant findings from data sources (Mahsun, 2017). Data were retrieved directly from the X platform via a G account. Screenshots of problematic tweets related to the beverage brand were collected. Words or sentences that potentially served as evidence of defamatory speech were recorded for analysis based on the theories applied in this study.

To ensure data validity, this study relied on publicly accessible and socially significant data. The selected tweet formed part of a widely circulated online discourse and was cross-verified through multiple publicly available Indonesian news sources. The use of publicly archived data minimized the

risk of data manipulation and ensured that the linguistic material reflected authentic communicative practices. No alteration, fabrication, or reconstruction of the data was performed.

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The descriptive method is an analytical method that depicts and elaborates on phenomena through scientific procedures in a systematic, factual, and accurate manner (Sutedi, 2009). A qualitative approach was utilized because the research data and analysis do not take the form of numerical arrangements, but rather word arrangements (Sudaryanto, 1993). The data findings were analyzed from syntactic, semantic, discourse, and pragmatic perspectives.

The analytical procedure followed a systematic framework of (1) identification of linguistic units (clauses, lexical items); (2) syntactic and semantic analysis to determine referents and evaluative meaning; (3) discourse analysis to establish cohesion and target identification; and (4) pragmatic analysis to interpret communicative intent and illocutionary force. This stepwise analytical workflow enabled theoretical triangulation across multiple linguistic levels to ensure that the analysis from all the used theories narrowed down to the same conclusion.

The presentation of the analysis is delivered using the informal method. The informal method refers to the presentation of data analysis results using verbal descriptions rather than symbols or formulas (Sudaryanto, 1993). The structure of the analysis begins with evidence of G's tweet, followed by syntactic, semantic, discourse, and pragmatic analyses.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study finds that the tweets posted by the G account on X constitute defamatory speech, as evidenced by the use of negative language. This finding is supported by the detailed analysis below regarding language usage in tweets from syntactic, semantic, discourse, and pragmatic perspectives (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. The Defamatory Post against a Beverage Brand

4.1. Syntactic and Semantic Analysis

In this specific analysis, syntactic and semantic theories are employed. Both theories assist in elucidating the existence of the object of study through the linguistic features that construct it. There are six clauses identified in G's tweet: (1) *abis minum es teh indonesia yang chizu red velvet pertama kali dan terakhir kali* 'finished drinking Esteh Indonesia's Chizu Red Velvet for the first and last time', (2) *anjing, lu gila yak* 'dog (damn), are you crazy', (3) *itu bukan minuman, tai, tapi gula 3kg dikocok sama sp bahan kue* 'that isn't a drink, shit, but 3kg of sugar shaken with SP cake emulsifier', (4) *tolol bet, siapa sih yang bikin ni minuman* 'so stupid, who made this drink', (5) *bangsaat, bangkrut ae lu mending* 'bastard, you would be better off going bankrupt', and (6) *daripada bocah kena diabetes massal* 'rather than kids getting mass diabetes'.

Clause (1) functions as a denotative experiential statement, indicating that the speaker has consumed the product and decided not to do so again. The omission of the subject, termed as ellipsis, implies a first-person perspective, while the object explicitly identifies the beverage variant, establishing

the referential target. Subsequent clauses shift from description to evaluation. Clause (2) introduces explicit insult markers *anjing* 'dog' and *gila* 'crazy', which carry connotative meanings of annoyance and negative judgment rather than literal reference. Clause (3) intensifies this evaluation through hyperbolic and metaphorical construction *bukan minuman... tapi gula 3 kg...* 'not a drink... but 3 kg of sugar', which semantically redefines the product in a derogatory manner. This exaggerated comparison implies excessive sweetness while simultaneously degrading the product's identity.

Clauses (4) and (5) further escalate the negative evaluation by combining insult expressions of *tolol* 'dumb' and *bangsat* 'bastard' with a directive proposition, *bangkrut ae lu mending* 'you would better be bankrupt'. This shifts the expression from mere criticism to a hostile offensive marker directed at the producer. Clause (6) extends this argument through a consequential claim *bocah kena diabetes massal* 'kids get mass diabetes', which introduces a negative hypothetical outcome attributed to the product.

Across these clauses, evaluative meaning is consistently constructed through the use of insult markers, hyperbole, and negative lexical choices. Syntactically, the repeated use of the second-person reference *lu* 'you' and the demonstratives *itu* 'that' and *ini* 'this' ensures that these evaluations are directed toward an identifiable target. Semantically, the predominance of connotative and exaggerated expressions indicates that the tweet is not merely descriptive but functions as a sustained negative assessment of the product and its producer.

Based on the explanation of the six clauses above, elements of annoyance are symbolized by the use of words such as *anjing*, *tai*, *tolol*, and *bangsat*. Additionally, words containing negative elements such as *gila* and *bangkrut* are present. The functional roles of the subjects and objects in the clauses of this tweet predominantly feature the roles of patient and experiencer, which stand as targets. This indicates that the tweet was not written to explain the account owner's perspective but rather to project an opinion onto the target of the tweet.

4.2. Pragmatic and Discourse Analysis

In this section, discourse and pragmatic theories are employed to examine the veracity of the defamatory utterance based on the above analysis. This examination is conducted by analyzing the textual cohesion and reconstructing the background context of the tweet.

The cohesion of a tweet can be examined using grammatical and lexical cohesion markers. In this tweet, grammatical cohesion markers such as reference, ellipsis, and conjunction were identified. The references in these data are endophoric, as the referents for the linguistic units occur within the text itself. The specific instances of reference are as follows: (4-1) *abis minum es teh Indonesia yang chizutweeter velvet pertama kali daEs tehakhir kali. anjing, lu gila yak, itu bukan minuman* 'Finished drinking Esteh Indonesia'that s Chizu Red Velvet for the first and last time. Damn, you are crazy, that is not a drink.

The reference in the data above is endophoric anaphora because the referent exists within the text and precedes the referring linguistic unit. The reference *lu* 'you' refers to *Es teh Indonesia* mentioned previously; thus, it is classified as anaphora. Through this reference, the tweeter asserts that Esteh Indonesia is "crazy" for committing an error that leads the account owner to declare that their product is not a beverage: (4-2) *abis minum es teh indonesia yang chizu red velvet pertama kali dan terakhir kali. anjing, lu gila yak, itu bukan minuman* 'Finished drinking Esteh Indonesia's Chizu Red Velvet for the first and last time. Damn, you are crazy, that isn't a drink'.

The reference in the above data is classified as anaphora because the position of the referent precedes that of the referring unit. The word *itu* 'that' refers to the phrase *chizu red velvet*, which is a beverage. This reference is further reinforced by the denial phrase *bukan minuman* 'not a drink,' implying that *itu* refers to the beverage object. Through this reference, the account owner claims that the Chizu Red Velvet variant from Esteh Indonesia is not a beverage, despite the fact that it is genuinely a beverage. This demonstrates deliberate denial.

(4-3) *abis minum es teh Indonesia yang chizu red velvet pertama kali dan terakhir kali. anjing, lu gila yak, itu bukan minuman, tai, tapi gula 3kg dikocok sama sp bahan kue, tolol bet, siapa sih yang bikin ni minuman, bangsaat, bangkrut ae lu mending daripada bocah kena diabetes massal.* 'Finished drinking... who made this drink...'. The reference in the data above is anaphoric because the referent precedes the referring unit. The word *ni* is a

clipping of the word *ini* 'this', referring to the phrase *chizu red velvet*, similar to data (4-2) above. This reference is reinforced by the position of the word within the phrase *ni minuman* 'this drink', which explicates the beverage object. Through this reference, the account owner expresses frustration regarding the Chizu Red Velvet beverage and its creator, Esteh Indonesia.

(4-4) *abis minum es teh Indonesia yang chizu red velvet pertama kali dan terakhir kali. anjing, lu gila yak, itu bukan minuman, tai, tapi gula 3kg dikocok sama sp bahan kue, tolol bet, siapa sih yang bikin ni minuman, bangsaat, bangkerut ae **lu** mending daripada bocah kena diabetes massal.* 'Finished drinking... you'd be better off going bankrupt...'. The reference in the data above is indicated by the bolded word *lu* 'you', which refers to the phrase '*es teh Indonesia*' in the text. Since the referent appears before the referring expression, the nature of the reference is anaphoric. In this data, the account owner expresses a directive utterance toward Esteh Indonesia to close their business.

Ellipsis markers in this tweet are found in the following data: (4-5) *anjing, lu gila yak, itu bukan minuman, tai, [Ø] tapi gula 3kg dikocok sama sp bahan kue* 'dog (damn), are you crazy, that isn't a drink, shit, but 3kg of sugar shaken with SP cake emulsifier'. Ellipsis occurs in the compound sentence above, specifically the omission of the linguistic unit *itu* 'that,' which serves as the subject of the sentence. The unit is omitted in the clause *tapi gula 3 kg dikocok sama sp bahan kue* 'but [it is] 3 kg of sugar shaken with cake emulsifier', which should formally read *tapi itu adalah gula 3 kg dikocok sama sp bahan kue*. Consequently, the noun phrase *gula 3 kg dikocok sama sp bahan kue* '3 kgs sugar mixed with cake emulsifier' refers back to the word *itu* 'that'. Based on the explanation in data (4-2) regarding reference, this data signifies that the tweet owner asserts that the *chizu red velvet* variant from Esteh Indonesia is not a beverage, but merely a mixture of excessive sugar and cake emulsifier.

The conjunctions included in the text are as follows: (4-6) *abis minum es teh Indonesia yang chizu red velvet pertama kali **dan** terakhir kali* 'Finished drinking... for the first and last time'. The conjunction in the data above is indicated by the word *dan* 'and'. This word functions to connect two propositions into one. There are two propositions in the sentence above: (1) finished drinking Esteh Indonesia's *chizu red velvet* (for the) first time and (2) finished drinking Esteh Indonesia's *chizu red velvet* (for the) last time. This conjunction signifies the event and the decision of the tweeter. The event is marked by the first proposition, while the decision is marked by the second proposition. This data contains a narrative of regret.

(4-7) *anjing, lu gila yak, itu bukan minuman, tai, **tapi** gula 3kg dikocok sama sp bahan kue* 'Damn... that isn't a drink... but 3kg of sugar...'. The conjunction in the data above contrasts two propositions. Proposition (1) is the clause *itu bukan minuman* 'that is not a drink' and proposition (2) is *gula 3 kg dikocok sama sp bahan kue* '3 kg of sugar shaken with cake emulsifier'. The comparative conjunction *tapi* 'but' explains the negation of proposition (1). This conjunction alters the identity of the beverage object into merely a mixture of sugar and emulsifier.

(4-8) *bangkerut ae lu mending **daripada** bocah kena diabetes massal.* 'You'd be better off going bankrupt rather than kids getting mass diabetes'. The conjunction in the data above compares two propositions, ultimately indicating a recommendation. Proposition (1) is *bangkerut ae lu mending* 'you'd be better off going bankrupt', and proposition (2) is *bocah kena diabetes massal* 'kids getting mass diabetes'. Both propositions have negative effects. Proposition (1) suggests going bankrupt or closing the business, while proposition (2) presents a conditional scenario: if Esteh Indonesia remains open and serves beverages with excessive sugar, consumers will contract diabetes. In this data, the tweet owner suggests that Esteh Indonesia should close and cease serving consumers.

Based on the grammatical cohesion markers above, it can be stated that the account owner's tweet is cohesive, with very clear references. Therefore, the negative statements explained in the semantic analysis explicitly refer to Esteh Indonesia and the *Chizu red velvet* beverage variant.

The lexical cohesion markers found in this study are antonymy and repetition. Lexical cohesion markers function to demonstrate semantic relationships between elements. The following data contains lexical cohesion markers: (4-9) *abis minum es teh Indonesia yang chizu red velvet **pertama** kali dan **terakhir** kali.* 'Finished drinking... for the first time and last time'. The data above contains antonyms in the words *pertama* 'first' and *terakhir* 'last'. These antonyms serve to state the action and decision of the tweeter. The

word *pertama* implies that the action had not been done before. The word *terakhir* implies that the action will not be done again. The phrase *terakhir kali* ‘the last time’ contains a negative element, meaning the refusal to drink the chizu red velvet variant from Esteh Indonesia again. This becomes increasingly negative because the phrase *pertama kali* ‘for the first time’ appears in the same sentence, implying regret for having tried the variant.

(4-10) *anjing, lu gila yak, itu bukan minuman, tai, tapi gula 3kg dikocok sama sp bahan kue, tolol bet, siapa sih yang bikin ni minuman* ‘Damn... that isn't a drink... who made this drink?’. The data above contains a repetition cohesion marker indicated by the word *minuman* ‘beverage,’ which appears twice in the tweet. This repetition serves to emphasize that the topic of the tweet is a beverage from Esteh Indonesia.

Based on the 10 data points on cohesion above, it can be concluded that the tweet containing negative words targeting Esteh Indonesia was motivated by the taste of the beverage. The topic of the tweet explicitly states the owner's opinion regarding the chizu red velvet beverage from the brand Esteh Indonesia, which was felt to be too sweet and dangerous. This flavor profile caused the account owner to feel annoyed with the company that authorized the sale of the beverage. This annoyance escalated to the point where the account owner declared that they would never buy the drink again, uttered coarse words, and demanded that the company close its business.

Regarding the participants, the tweet involved the account owner, G, and the brand. The account owner plays the role of complainant. Brand plays the role of the complaint's target. The relationship between the two parties is distant/foreign, as they are not bound to one another personally. The account owner is the consumer of the brand. This distant relationship may be a factor in the selection of a negative language.

Next analysis is from context of situation theory. The analyses of field and tenor have already been elucidated in the preceding paragraphs. As explained by Halliday (1994, p. 22), mode refers to the channel of communication and the function of the text. G's tweet was conveyed in written form on the social media platform X. The construction of language in written form implies an element of intentionality, as the language user has the opportunity to review their writing prior to publication.

Within the post, the functions of the language employed are expressive and directive. The expressive function contains negative expressions filled with exaggerated information. Through words such as *anjing* ‘dog’, *tolol* ‘stupid’, *tai* ‘shit’, and *bangsat* ‘bastard’, the author conveys complaints and annoyance regarding Esteh Indonesia. The account owner utilizes the figure of speech of hyperbole to characterize the drink from the brand. This hyperbole is found in the clause *itu bukan minuman, tai, tapi gula 3 kg dikocok sama sp bahan kue* ‘that implies it is not a drink, but 3 kg of sugar shaken with cake emulsifier’. The mention of three kilograms of sugar constitutes an exaggerated expression because the 650 ml plastic cup utilized by Esteh Indonesia cannot physically accommodate 3 kg of sugar. In terms of physical volume, 1 kg is roughly equivalent to 1000 ml. This calculation exceeds the volume capacity of the Esteh Indonesia cup, implying that it is impossible to contain 3 kg of sugar in a single cup. Furthermore, a beverage must fundamentally consist of water or a liquid. Meanwhile, in the account owner's claim, the variant consists only of sugar and cake emulsifier. Consequently, this claim is a hyperbolic expression demonstrating extreme annoyance.

The directive expression in this tweet is identified in the clause *bangkrut ae lu mending daripada bocah kena diabetes massal* ‘you would be better off going bankrupt rather than kids getting mass diabetes. This clause is classified as directive because it carries the semantic force of a command. The command in question is for Esteh Indonesia to close its business to prevent the public from contracting diabetes by consuming Chizu Red Velvet.

4.3. Legal Implication based on Indonesian Law

The forensic linguistic analysis of the tweet reveals the presence of specific linguistic features that correspond to elements of potential criminal liability under Indonesian law, particularly the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (Republik Indonesia, 2024) and the Indonesian Penal Code (Republik Indonesia, 2023). These implications can be broadly categorized into two domains: (1) insult and defamation, and (2) the dissemination of false information.

First, the use of pejorative lexical items, such as *anjing* ‘dog’, *tolol* ‘dumb’, and *bangsat* ‘bastard’, constitutes linguistic evidence of expressions that may be interpreted as attacking honor or reputation. Under Article 27A of Law No. 1 of 2024, the distribution of electronic information containing insulting content may give rise to criminal liability. From a linguistic perspective, these expressions do not function descriptively but rather operate as evaluative and offensive markers directed toward an identifiable target. This supports the interpretation that the utterance fulfils the subjective element of insult as regulated in Article 433 paragraph (2) of the Indonesian Penal Code, which addresses defamation conducted through publicly written or mediated communication. In the Indonesian legal context, the use of coarse or abusive language is often considered indicative of intent to demean or *mens rea*, thereby reinforcing the interpretation of the utterance as an act of insult rather than a neutral expression of opinion.

Second, the statement referring to 3 kg of sugar represents a shift from an evaluative expression to a form of factual assertion. Linguistically, this construction functions as a hyperbolic yet declarative claim regarding the composition of the product. Given that such a claim is not empirically verifiable and is likely to be misleading, it may fall within the scope of Article 28 paragraph (1) of Law No. 1 of 2024, which prohibits the dissemination of false or misleading information that may result in consumer harm or damage. Furthermore, within the framework of the Indonesian Penal Code, such a statement may be interpreted in relation to Article 434 paragraph (1), which concerns defamation involving unsubstantiated allegations. In this context, the inability to substantiate the claim may strengthen its classification as a form of libel due to false information. Overall, the linguistic evidence demonstrates how specific lexical choices and propositional content within the tweet may contribute to its interpretation as both an act of insult and the dissemination of potentially misleading information, thereby establishing its relevance within the framework of Indonesian legal provisions.

Notwithstanding the potential legal implications identified above, it is important to note that the case was ultimately resolved outside formal legal proceedings. Although a formal warning was initially issued, the dispute did not progress to litigation. Instead, the matter was concluded through a public apology from the consumer, indicating a mutually acceptable resolution between the parties.

This outcome demonstrates that, despite the presence of linguistic elements that may fulfil the legal criteria for defamation or the dissemination of false information, disputes arising from digital communication do not invariably culminate in judicial processes. In the Indonesian context, such cases may also be addressed through non-litigation mechanisms, including informal settlements and mutual agreements, particularly when both parties are willing to resolve the matter amicably. This highlights the practical dimension of forensic linguistic analysis, in which legal implications coexist with alternative pathways of dispute resolution.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding analysis, the tweet by the account owner regarding the brand constitutes defamatory speech. The tweet contains elements of reputational injury, as a beverage business was characterized as a source of diabetes, libel regarding the composition of the ingredients, and insult manifested through a directive to cease business operations. This is substantiated by the linguistic construction of the tweet, which specifically targets the brand augmented by negative descriptors and predicates found within the clauses of the text.

Other instances of defamatory speech serve as viable subjects for future forensic linguistic research. Consequently, researchers interested in forensic linguistics are encouraged to investigate other cases of defamation and analyze them using linguistic theories distinct from those used in this study. Such endeavors will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding and development of forensic linguistic scholarship.

Ethical Approval

Formal ethical approval was not required for this study as it analyzes publicly accessible social media data; however, the identity of the account holder has been disguised to protect privacy.

Informed Consent Statement

Not Applicable

Author's Contributions

Not Applicable

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting this study's findings are included within the article.

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Notes on Contributors

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