



Forensic Linguistic Analysis of Defamation in Everyday Life

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Oct 3, 2024

Revised Nov 7, 2024

Accepted Dec 19, 2024

OnlineFirst Dec 25, 2024

Keywords:

Defamation
Forensic Linguistics
Pragmatic Context
Sentence Structure
Word Choice

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study integrates forensic linguistic analysis of word choices, sentence structure, and pragmatic context in both direct and digital communication to explore defamation cases. It examines the motives, impacts, and dynamics of language in such cases through interviews with victims, perpetrators, legal experts, and document analysis. The study connects forensic linguistics with law and communication ethics to foster cross-disciplinary understanding and offer practical guidelines for handling and preventing defamation, while promoting responsible communication.

Methodology: Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the study collects data via in-depth interviews, direct observation, and legal document analysis, including court decisions and police reports. Data analysis involves reduction, categorization of linguistic aspects (word choice, sentence structure, pragmatic context), and interpretation based on forensic linguistics and legal theories, with triangulation for validation.

Main Findings: The findings reveal that defamation often involves linguistic elements that can be analyzed for legal processes. Digital media plays a significant role in spreading defamation, highlighting the need for better regulation and education. The impact on victims is multidimensional, affecting psychological, social, and economic aspects. Through forensic linguistic analysis, the study contributes both theoretically and practically to resolving defamation cases fairly and effectively.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This research offers a novel, multidisciplinary approach to defamation, analyzing both direct and digital communication. It provides a holistic view of linguistic, legal, and ethical aspects, offering practical solutions for media regulation, ethical communication education, and psychological support for victims.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Defamation is a legal issue that often occurs in everyday life, both through direct communication and digital media. The development of technology and social media has further expanded the scope of this problem, considering that each individual can easily convey information widely. However, on the other hand, differences in perception in the use of language often become a challenge in determining whether a statement is truly defamatory. This encourages the need for in-depth studies, one of which is through forensic linguistic analysis[1]-[3].

Forensic linguistics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on the analysis of language in a legal context. In defamation cases, this science plays an important role in identifying the intent, meaning, and impact of the statement in question [4], [5]. For example, whether the statement contains elements of insult, slander, or baseless accusations. By using linguistic methods, this analysis can help in providing relevant evidence in the legal process, both to assess the perpetrator's intentions and the impact on the victim [6]-[8].

In everyday life, many cases of defamation go unnoticed, especially in social interactions and digital communication. Expressions that are considered normal by one party can be accepted as insults by another party, especially if spoken in an inappropriate context. On social media, the use of provocative or ambiguous language is also often a source of conflict, causing someone's reputation to be damaged in public without a clear basis. This situation shows the need for a scientific approach to objectively assess whether a case can be categorized as defamation[9]-[11].

In Indonesia, defamation has been regulated in law, both through the Criminal Code (KUHP) and the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE). However, the implementation of this law often encounters obstacles, one of which is due to a lack of understanding of the language used in certain contexts. Forensic linguistic analysis can contribute to bridging the gap between understanding language and the law, so that defamation cases can be handled more fairly[12],[13]. Therefore, research on forensic linguistic analysis in defamation cases in everyday life is very relevant to be conducted. This research not only provides insight into how language is used in a legal context, but also helps raise public awareness of the importance of ethical and responsible communication. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions, especially in the legal and social contexts in the current digital era[14]-[16].

Based on previous research that has been conducted, there is a gap analysis in this study[17]. Reviewed from the focus and subject of the study. This study focuses on defamation in everyday life using a forensic linguistic approach. This study explores linguistic aspects such as word choice, sentence structure, and pragmatic context to determine whether a statement is defamation . This study aims to provide practical and theoretical contributions to understanding the use of language in legal and social contexts in Indonesia[18],[19]. The scope of this study includes direct interaction in everyday life and digital media in general. In contrast, previous studies have a more specific focus, namely examining language crimes on social media, especially Facebook, in certain jurisdictions in Manokwari . This study analyzes language facts that contain elements of insults, defamation, and hate speech. With the aim of providing a specific analysis of cases that occur on social media, this study also aims to support legal regulations and improve the ethics of using social media. This study bases its analysis on primary data in the form of language facts from social media and official documents such as Investigation Reports (BAP) and short messages [11]-[21].

In terms of research subjects, this study involves victims, perpetrators of defamation, and legal or linguistic experts, with a broader scope of direct interactions and legal documents such as police reports and court decisions. Meanwhile, previous studies focused on defamation cases that occurred through the social media platform Facebook, with a focus on social media users in the Manokwari area and analysis of official documents and electronic communications. It can be concluded that these two studies complement each other with different focuses and approaches. This study provides a broader picture of the phenomenon of defamation, while previous studies provide in-depth and specific analysis of the social media context in certain areas. Potential for further development can be done by integrating the methods and approaches of these two studies to produce a more holistic understanding of defamation cases in various contexts and regions [22]-[24].

Based on the gap analysis above, this study offers a novelty that lies in the expansion of the scope of the defamation context analyzed by forensic linguistics, both in direct interactions and in digital media in general. Unlike previous studies that focused more on the analysis of language crimes on certain social media such as Facebook, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of defamation in various forms of communication. This study has a novelty in a holistic approach that integrates linguistic analysis of word choice, sentence structure, and pragmatic context in various situations of daily life, including verbal communication in direct interactions as well as written communication on digital platforms such as social media, electronic messages, and online discussion forums[25],[26]. The use of more diverse primary data is another unique feature, involving in-depth interviews with victims, perpetrators, and legal and linguistic experts, combined with analysis of legal documents such as police reports, court decisions, and digital evidence. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the motives, impacts, and dynamics of language in defamation cases. In addition, this study emphasizes the importance of cross-disciplinary understanding by connecting forensic linguistic theory and its implications in law and communication ethics. Thus, this study not only provides theoretical contributions in the realm of linguistics and law, but also offers practical solutions to address defamation cases through ethical communication education, digital media regulation, and increasing public awareness. With a broader scope and integrative methods, this study is expected to be able to complement and expand the findings of previous studies, as well as become an important reference for researchers, legal practitioners, and policy makers in facing communication challenges in the digital era[27]-[29].

This research makes an important contribution to the development of linguistics, especially in the branch of forensic linguistics, by expanding the application of language analysis into various contexts of everyday life. With a holistic approach, this research not only produces theoretical findings that can enrich the understanding of the relationship between language and law, but also provides practical guidance in handling defamation cases [30], [31]. Other implications are increasing public awareness of the importance of ethical communication, especially in the digital era, as well as encouraging the formation of more effective regulations to minimize the misuse of language in various media. This research can also be a reference for legal institutions, academics, and policy makers in developing evidence-based policies to address linguistic issues that impact legal and social aspects[32]-[34].

The urgency of this research lies in the increasing cases of defamation, both in direct interactions and on digital platforms, which often cause social conflict, personal losses, and even complex legal problems. In the digital era, technological developments have facilitated the dissemination of information, but have also increased the risk of language abuse that can defame individuals or groups. The gap in adequate regulations and the lack of public understanding of the legal implications of language use require research that can bridge the gap between linguistic theory and legal practice. This research is relevant because it provides a cross-disciplinary approach that can help resolve legal and social issues objectively and comprehensively[35]-[37].

The purpose of this study is to integrate forensic linguistic analysis of word choice, sentence structure, and pragmatic context in various everyday life situations, both in direct and digital communication. This study also aims to explore the motives, impacts, and dynamics of language used in defamation cases through in-depth interviews with victims, perpetrators, and legal and linguistic experts, supported by legal document analysis. In addition, this study seeks to connect forensic linguistic theory with communication law and ethics to create a relevant cross-disciplinary understanding in resolving defamation cases[38],[39]. With the results of this study, it is hoped that practical guidance can be provided for the community, law enforcers, and policy makers in handling and preventing defamation cases, especially through ethical communication education and digital media regulation. Furthermore, this study aims to provide theoretical and practical contributions to strengthen legal regulations related to language use, while increasing public awareness of the importance of responsible communication [40]-[42].

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach allows researchers to explore and understand the meaning, intent, and implications of the language used in defamation cases. The data will be analyzed in depth to identify linguistic characteristics relevant to the legal context[43]-[45].

The research will be conducted on defamation cases that occur in everyday life, in direct interaction. The subjects of the research include victims and perpetrators of defamation cases, legal experts or lawyers who have handled similar cases, and finally documents that are evidence in legal cases related to defamation[46],[47].

The sources and techniques of data collection in this study are primary data and secondary data. Primary data is in the form of in-depth interviews with victims, perpetrators, and linguistic and legal experts. Then observations of direct interactions or relevant direct communication. Meanwhile, secondary data is in the form of legal documents such as court decisions, police reports, and related laws[48]-[50]. There are three data collection techniques used, namely, semi-structured interviews to explore the subject's perspective on the use of language in defamation cases. Furthermore, documentation is by collecting evidence or official documents related to the case. And the last one collects data using observation techniques, namely by analyzing communication patterns that occur directly.

The data analysis technique in this study involves several stages. Data reduction is done by sorting data that is relevant to the focus of the study, such as text, expressions, or phrases that are the core of the defamation problem. Furthermore, data categorization is done by grouping data based on linguistic aspects, such as word choice, sentence structure, pragmatic context, and language tone. Then data interpretation is done by referring to forensic and legal linguistic theories and explaining how these language elements can be considered as a form of defamation. Finally, data validation is done by using data triangulation through comparisons between interview results, documents, and observations to ensure the validity of the findings.

The instrument in this study used a semi-structured interview guide, then used a recording device to document interviews and other evidence, and used field notes to record direct observations.

Table 1. Semi-structured interview instrument

No	Aspects Asked	Interview Questions	Purpose of Questions
1.	Case Background	Can you explain the events that occurred to constitute defamation?	Understand the general context and chronology of the case.
2.	Media or Means of Communication	Can you explain the events that occurred to constitute defamation?	Determining the communication channels used in defamation cases.

3.	Language Content Used	What are some words, phrases, or statements that you think are detrimental to your reputation?	Identifying the linguistic elements that are at the heart of the problem.
4.	Interpretation and Impact	How do you interpret the statement? What impact did the statement have on you, both personally and professionally, after it was released?	Understand the victim's perception of the meaning of the statement that is considered defamatory. Explore the psychological, social, and economic impacts of the statement.
5	Context and Intent of Communication	Do you know what the speaker meant when he made that statement?	Assess the pragmatic context and intentions of the actor.
6	Reaction to Statement	What steps did you take after learning about this statement?	Identifying the victim's initial response to the case.
7	Perpetrator Perception	In your opinion, did the perpetrator realize the impact of his statement?	Understanding the victim's view of the perpetrator's awareness of the impact of his actions.
8	Legal Views and Evidence	Have you gathered evidence that shows that the statement is detrimental to you? Have you involved authorities such as lawyers or police to handle this case?	Ensure there is supporting evidence for further analysis. Know the legal actions that have been taken by the victim.
9	Hope for Completion	What do you expect from the resolution of this case, both legally and socially?	Identifying victim expectations regarding case resolution.
10	Opinions on Communication Ethics	In your opinion, how should one maintain ethics in communicating, especially on social media?	Exploring victims' views on the importance of responsible and ethical communication.

The procedure in this study begins with the preparation stage by determining the research location and subjects to be interviewed and preparing research instruments such as interview guidelines and recording devices. Then carry out the data collection stage by conducting interviews, observations, and collecting relevant documents and documenting the results of data collection systematically. Furthermore, carry out the data analysis stage by analyzing the data that has been collected using reduction, categorization, and interpretation techniques.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

This study produced several important findings based on data obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The following are the findings categorized according to the focus of the study.

3.1.1. Characteristics of language in defamation

Defamation cases often involve words or phrases that have negative connotations, are derogatory, insulting, or create negative stereotypes about a particular party. These words are usually used intentionally to attack a person's integrity or reputation, either personally or professionally. Examples of words that often appear in defamation cases include terms such as "liar," "thief," and "immoral." These word choices not only reflect the perpetrator's intention to defame the victim but also show the courage to spread accusations without clear basis. Furthermore, the use of emotionally charged words like these often worsens the psychological and social impacts on the victim, especially when spread in public spaces or digital media with a wide audience reach.

The sentence structure used in defamation is usually declarative, where the perpetrator makes a claim without any concrete evidence. For example, a sentence like "He must have done that because it has been proven before" creates a negative perception of the victim by utilizing assumptions and speculations. Sentences like this are often deliberately constructed to convince the audience that the accusation is true, even without verifiable evidence. This declarative structure also functions as a tool for manipulating public opinion, where the perpetrator tries to direct the narrative to the detriment of the victim. In linguistic analysis, this can be identified as an attempt to use language as a weapon to build a negative image that is difficult for the victim to fight.

In many cases, defamation depends not only on the words or sentence structure used, but also on the pragmatic context surrounding it. Statements that are considered defamatory often occur in situations where the perpetrator has a specific goal, such as influencing public opinion, reducing the credibility of the victim, or gaining a certain benefit. In the context of social media, for example, perpetrators often use these platforms to spread

information that defames the victim to a wider audience. Social media provides the speed and reach that allows negative messages to spread massively, creating a significant impact on the victim's reputation.

Word choice, sentence structure, and pragmatic context in defamation cases interact to create a detrimental effect on the victim. Offensive word choice can be reinforced by a convincing declarative sentence structure, while pragmatic context provides a framework that allows the accusation to be considered credible by the audience. These three elements, if used effectively by the perpetrator, can cause deep harm to the victim, both psychologically, socially, and professionally. The results of this analysis indicate the need for stricter legal regulations to handle defamation cases, especially on social media. In addition, education about the importance of communication ethics needs to be improved to prevent similar cases from occurring in the future. A better understanding of how language elements are used in defamation can help law enforcement officers, the public, and policy makers to formulate more effective preventive and solution-oriented measures.

Interviews with several victims of defamation revealed that psychological impacts were one of the most felt aspects. One victim interviewed said, "I feel like I have lost my confidence to appear in public because of the false accusations. It feels like everyone is looking at me negatively." This statement reflects how defamation cases can affect the victim's mental health. In addition, an interview with a legal expert showed that many perpetrators take advantage of the lack of legal literacy in society to spread baseless accusations. According to the expert, "Many people do not know that they can actually report these defamation cases to the legal system, especially if they are done through social media." The interview also included the views of a social media practitioner who stated that platform algorithms often amplify the spread of negative content. This practitioner explained, "Content containing accusations or negative news tends to get higher interactions, so it appears more often on the timelines of many users. This exacerbates the impact of defamation." This interview emphasized the importance of a multidisciplinary approach in handling defamation cases. A combination of legal approaches, public education, and more responsible social media platform policies are needed to protect victims from further impacts.

3.1.2. Perception and impact on victims

Most victims interpret defamatory statements as a direct attack on their personal and professional integrity. These statements are often seen as not only attacking the individual's character, but also destroying the reputation that has been built with great difficulty in personal, social, and professional life. Victims feel that these actions are often done intentionally and have certain motives, such as damaging their reputation in the eyes of the community or gaining certain benefits by the perpetrator. In some cases, victims feel powerless to fight the accusations, especially if the statements have been widely circulated through social media or other public forums, where responses or clarifications from the victim are difficult to reach the same audience.

Defamation has profound psychological impacts on victims. They report experiencing significant emotional distress, including stress, anxiety, and depression. Victims often feel isolated and lose their self-confidence due to the social stigma created by the allegations. In some cases, the trauma experienced by victims can affect their ability to function normally in their daily lives. Victims also tend to experience sleep disturbances, fear of interacting with others, and persistent worry about the long-term impact on their reputation. Socially, victims often face a decrease in trust from coworkers, friends, and even family. Widespread allegations can create an emotional distance between victims and their social circle, where they feel isolated or looked down upon. Victims involved in the workplace often face indirect discrimination, such as being passed over for important projects, losing support from colleagues, or even being fired indirectly due to a lack of trust from management. The economic impact of defamation is also significant. Some victims report losing employment opportunities because the allegations tarnish their professional image. In a competitive workplace, reputation is a valuable asset, and negative allegations can damage their chances of advancing or maintaining a position they have already achieved. In extreme cases, victims face real financial losses, such as the loss of clients, projects, or income generated from their work. Interviews with several victims of defamation revealed that the psychological impact is one of the most felt aspects. One victim interviewed said, "I feel like I lost my confidence to go out in public because of the false accusations. It feels like everyone is looking at me negatively." This statement reflects how defamation cases can affect a victim's mental health. Another victim explained the social impact she experienced, "I feel shunned by my friends and colleagues. Even my family started to question the accusations, even though I know I'm innocent." This shows that the social stigma caused by defamation can damage a victim's interpersonal relationships. A psychology expert interviewed added that the impact of defamation on victims often requires professional intervention. "Victims who experience severe trauma need counseling or therapy to overcome the emotional effects and rebuild their self-confidence," she said. This interview emphasizes the importance of a multidisciplinary approach in dealing with defamation cases. A combination of legal approaches, public education, and more responsible social media platform policies are needed to protect victims from further impacts.

The combination of psychological, social, and economic impacts creates a domino effect that worsens the situation of victims. They not only face challenges in restoring their reputations, but also struggle to regain emotional and financial stability. This study demonstrates the importance of a multidisciplinary approach in dealing with defamation cases, including providing psychological support, legal counseling, and comprehensive

social recovery. By understanding the perceptions and impacts on victims in depth, this study provides a strong basis for developing effective preventive and intervention strategies in dealing with similar cases in the future.

3.1.3. Victim's response to the case

As an initial response to a defamation case, most victims try to resolve the issue directly by clarifying it with the perpetrator or related parties. This step is taken in the hope of avoiding a bigger conflict and resolving the issue peacefully. Clarification is usually in the form of verbal or written communication, where the victim tries to explain the facts of the case or asks the perpetrator to retract the statement that is considered defamatory. In some cases, victims also use the same media as the perpetrator, such as social media platforms, to convey clarification publicly to defend themselves. However, the effectiveness of this step is highly dependent on the response of the perpetrator and the support of the audience involved.

Interviews with several victims showed that clarification was often the first step they chose because it was considered faster and less expensive. One victim said, "I hope the perpetrators can understand their mistakes and withdraw the accusations without having to involve a third party." However, several victims reported that this step was not always successful, especially if the perpetrators were unwilling to cooperate or had already spread the information to the public. When clarification efforts were unsuccessful or did not receive an adequate response, victims tended to involve legal authorities to resolve the issue through the courts. This step includes collecting relevant evidence, such as screenshots from social media, recordings of conversations, or documents that support claims of defamation. Victims usually report these cases to the authorities, such as the police or lawyers, to obtain legal protection and justice. In some cases, victims also filed civil or criminal lawsuits against the perpetrators to obtain compensation for the losses they experienced, both financial and non-financial.

An interview with a lawyer specializing in defamation cases revealed that the legal process often takes a long time and requires patience from the victim. "Many victims initially do not understand how complex the legal process is, especially in collecting valid evidence," said the lawyer. Several victims also highlighted the importance of obtaining competent legal support to face the challenges during this process. In addition to using legal channels, victims often implement mitigation strategies to minimize the impact of defamation. One common strategy is to rebuild reputation through positive activities, such as increasing community involvement, spreading correct information, or getting support from trusted parties, such as colleagues, friends, or family. In some cases, victims also use the services of PR (Public Relations) consultants to manage their public image and respond strategically to accusations.

A PR consultant interviewed stated, "Victims need to build a strong narrative to balance public opinion. This involves a proactive approach in disseminating facts that support them." This strategy is considered important to restore public trust, especially in the digital era where information spreads quickly. Although various steps have been taken by victims, there are a number of obstacles that are often faced. Some victims are reluctant to take legal action because of the high cost, long time, or complexity of legal procedures. In addition, there are also victims who experience intimidation or threats from the perpetrator, so they are afraid to continue the case to the legal route. Fear of social stigma or negative views from the community is also a factor that hinders victims from responding optimally to cases.

To improve the effectiveness of victims' responses to defamation cases, a more systematic and planned approach is needed. Victims are advised to immediately collect relevant evidence from the beginning of the case and seek help from professionals, such as lawyers or PR consultants, to design an appropriate strategy. Emotional and psychological support from family or friends is also very important to help victims cope with the stress resulting from this case. In addition, public education about legal rights related to defamation needs to be improved to provide victims with the courage and knowledge to respond to this case effectively. By understanding the various responses of victims to defamation cases, this study provides deeper insights into the efforts made by victims, the challenges they face, and the steps that can be taken to support victims more holistically.

3.1.4. Hope for resolution of the case

Most victims hope that the case can be resolved through a public apology from the perpetrator. This apology is seen as an important step to restore the victim's tarnished name. For many victims, an apology is not only about acknowledging the perpetrator's mistake, but also as a form of moral responsibility that shows the perpetrator's seriousness in repairing damaged social relationships. A public apology, whether through social media, direct meetings, or other public communication channels, is also expected to reach the same audience as the place where the defamation occurred. In this way, the victim's previously damaged image and reputation can be restored in the eyes of the public. In addition to an apology, some victims want a resolution through legal channels that provide a deterrent effect on the perpetrator. This hope arises especially in cases where the perpetrator is considered to have acted intentionally and repeatedly to defame, or when the impact on the victim is very significant, whether emotionally, socially, or financially. The legal process is expected to not only provide justice for the victim, but also create a clear precedent that similar actions will face serious consequences in the future. Thus, legal action not only functions as a form of protection for the victim, but also as a preventive measure to prevent other perpetrators from doing the same thing.

Victims also hope to receive social support from their community or environment after the case is resolved. This hope arises because the impact of defamation often affects not only an individual's reputation in the public space but also their interpersonal relationships. Support from family, friends, colleagues, and the community is expected to help victims restore their self-confidence and rebuild relationships that may have been disrupted by the case. In the long term, victims hope for reforms in communication ethics and regulations, especially in the digital era. They want stricter measures to regulate the use of language on social media and other public platforms. Education about ethical communication is also considered important to increase public awareness of the negative impacts of defamation. With clearer rules and adequate education, it is hoped that the risk of defamation can be minimized in the future.

Some victims also expressed their hope to resolve their cases through a mediation process involving a neutral party, such as a professional mediator or a related legal institution. Mediation is considered a quicker and less burdensome alternative to formal court proceedings. In mediation, victims and perpetrators can have a dialogue to reach an agreement, such as an apology, compensation, or an agreement not to repeat the same action. Victims hope for psychological support as part of resolving their cases, especially for those who have experienced severe emotional impacts. Counseling or therapy can help victims overcome the trauma, stress, and anxiety that arises from defamation. This is important to ensure that victims not only receive legal justice but are also able to continue their lives in a better mental condition. Interview results support this finding. One victim stated, "A public apology is what I hope for, because it can restore my damaged reputation." Another victim said, "The legal process that I am taking is the last resort after all peaceful efforts have failed. I want to make sure the perpetrator understands the impact of his actions." A respondent who had undergone mediation shared, "Mediation helped me and the perpetrator reach an agreement without having to go through a long and expensive trial. I felt more relieved after the process."

In terms of social support, one victim stated, "I am very grateful to my family and friends who continue to support me. Without them, I might not have been able to cope with this pressure." Regarding regulatory reform, an interviewee said, "Education about the use of social media is very important. Many people do not realize that their words can have legal consequences." The interviewees demonstrated the importance of various resolution steps, from apologies, mediation, to social support and regulatory reform, to provide a more holistic solution for victims of defamation.

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. Forensic Linguistic Analysis

Defamation is a form of legal violation that involves the use of language to harm someone's reputation. In this context, linguistic analysis can be a very important tool in determining whether a statement meets the criteria for defamation. Linguistic elements such as word choice, sentence structure, and pragmatic context play a key role in this assessment. Here is an in-depth discussion of these elements.

Word choice is the first element that is often considered in a defamation analysis. Words that are derogatory, insulting, or explicitly negative about someone can easily give rise to the perception of defamation. For example, terms such as "cheater," "immoral," or "corruptor" carry strong connotations and can damage the reputation of the individual who is the subject of the statement. In forensic linguistic analysis, word choice is analyzed not only in terms of denotative meaning, but also connotative meaning. Denotative meaning refers to the literal meaning of the word, while connotative meaning includes the emotional and social associations attached to the word. For example, the use of the term "stupid" may have a stronger effect than "unintelligent" because of its more negative connotation. In addition, the intention of the use of the words is an important aspect in legal analysis. Are the words used intentionally to degrade or are they simply part of an opinion protected by freedom of expression? Linguistic analysis can help distinguish between the two by examining the pattern of language use and the context in which they are delivered.

Sentence structure also contributes to how a statement is perceived by the audience. Declarative sentences, for example, often have a stronger impact than interrogative or imperative sentences because they give the impression of being a statement of fact. For example, the Declarative "He is a fraud" and the Interrogative "Is he a fraud?". In the first sentence, the statement states a fact that could be considered defamatory if it is not supported by strong evidence. In the second sentence, the statement is more exploratory and may not have the same legal impact.

Pragmatic context refers to the communication conditions in which the statement is made. Some relevant factors include. The perpetrator's intention, was the statement made with the intention of damaging the victim's reputation? In many cases, the perpetrator's intention is the primary factor considered by the court. The Delivery Situation, the place and time of delivery also affect the interpretation of a statement. For example, statements made in a public space, such as social media, have a greater impact than private conversations because of the wider audience reach. The relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, this relationship can affect how a statement is interpreted. Statements that come from individuals who have authority or professional relationships with the victim tend to have a greater impact on the victim's reputation. Audience reaction, the response from the

audience is also an important indicator in assessing the impact of the statement. If the audience perceives the statement as fact and not opinion, then it is more likely that the statement is considered detrimental to the victim.

Relevance of forensic linguistic analysis, forensic linguistic analysis provides a systematic framework for evaluating the elements of language involved in defamation cases. By utilizing this method, linguists can provide. Empirical evidence, analysis of linguistic data to support or refute defamation claims. Contextual language, explanation of how language is understood in a particular situation. Evaluation of intent and impact, in-depth analysis of how word choice and context of delivery affect audience interpretation.

It can be concluded that linguistic elements such as word choice, sentence structure, and pragmatic context play a significant role in determining whether a statement can be considered defamatory. Forensic linguistic analysis provides a useful tool to evaluate such statements objectively, helping the courts to make fair decisions based on the available evidence. With the increasing use of social media as a communication platform, the importance of linguistic analysis in the legal context is increasing to protect individual rights while preserving freedom of expression.

3.2.2. Victim's Perspective

Victims' understanding of defamation shows how personal perceptions influence the social and emotional impacts caused. Victims often experience psychological distress due to the loss of reputation, public trust, and respect in their social environment. In addition, victims can feel isolated due to the stigma caused by defamation.

Social impact, defamation can result in loss of social support for victims. They may be shunned by the community or have difficulty maintaining interpersonal relationships. In the digital age, these effects are exacerbated because the digital footprint of detrimental statements is difficult to completely erase. Emotional impact, from a psychological perspective, victims often experience shame, low self-esteem, to anxiety disorders or depression. These emotional reactions can affect the productivity, mental health, and overall quality of life of victims. The importance of psychological support, in addition to resolving the case legally, it is important to provide psychological support to victims. Counseling or therapy services can help victims overcome the emotional impact of defamation and restore their self-confidence. This recovery program can also include efforts to rehabilitate the victim's reputation through clarification campaigns or strengthening a positive image.

The relevance of forensic linguistic analysis, forensic linguistic analysis provides a systematic framework for evaluating the language elements involved in defamation cases. By utilizing this method, linguists can provide such as, empirical evidence. Analysis of linguistic data to support or refute defamation claims, then contextual language provides an explanation of how language is understood in certain situations. Then in the evaluation of intent and impact, providing an in-depth analysis of how word choice and context of delivery affect audience interpretation.

Linguistic elements such as word choice, sentence structure, and pragmatic context play a significant role in determining whether a statement can be considered defamatory. From the victim's perspective, the social and emotional impact is no less important in handling these cases. Forensic linguistic analysis provides a useful tool to evaluate such statements objectively, helping the court to make a fair decision based on the available evidence. With the increasing use of social media as a communication platform, the importance of linguistic analysis in the legal context is increasing to protect individual rights while preserving freedom of expression.

3.2.3. Legal Implications

In the legal context, the results of this study emphasize the importance of strong linguistic evidence to support defamation claims. Forensic linguistic analysis provides an objective basis for courts to evaluate cases.

Determining credible evidence, linguistic analysis helps ensure that statements considered to be defamatory are supported by credible language evidence. This includes analyzing word choice, sentence structure, and relevant pragmatic context. Furthermore, separating fact from opinion, courts often face challenges in distinguishing between statements of fact and opinion. Linguistic analysis allows the identification of language patterns that support this classification, so that courts can make fairer decisions. Then using the guideline for digital regulation, with the increasing cases of defamation through social media, this study provides guidance for regulation and legal policy in the digital space. This analysis can be used to develop clearer guidelines regarding the responsibilities of digital platform users in maintaining ethical communication. Then increasing the capacity of legal experts, knowledge of linguistic analysis can be part of the training for judges, lawyers, and other law enforcers to improve their understanding of the relevant language elements in defamation cases. And finally minimizing the abuse of the law, with strong linguistic evidence, the risk of abuse of defamation claims can be minimized. This prevents individuals or groups from using the law to suppress freedom of expression unfairly.

Linguistic elements such as word choice, sentence structure, and pragmatic context play a significant role in determining whether a statement can be considered defamatory. From the victim's perspective, the social and emotional impact is no less important in handling this case. In the legal context, forensic linguistic analysis provides an objective tool to evaluate cases, promote justice, and minimize the potential for abuse of the law. With

the increasing use of social media as a communication platform, the importance of linguistic analysis in the legal context is increasing to protect individual rights while preserving freedom of expression.

3.2.4. Relevance to Communication Ethics

The findings of this study emphasize the important role of communication ethics as a foundation for building harmonious interactions, especially in the highly dynamic digital era. In this context, responsible language use is not only a matter of propriety, but also a strategic tool for preventing social conflict, maintaining harmony between individuals, and creating an atmosphere conducive to productive dialogue.

Language plays a significant role as a medium of communication that conveys ideas, emotions, and values[51]-[53]. When used responsibly, language can avoid misinterpretations that have the potential to trigger conflict. In the digital era, where information spreads so quickly, language responsibility is increasingly important. Wise word choices and polite tones can ease tensions and strengthen social relations. Social media has become the main arena for interaction in the digital era. However, these platforms often facilitate irresponsible communication, such as hate speech, the spread of hoaxes, and defamation. Education about communication ethics on social media needs to be encouraged by integrating values such as, Digital Awareness, users must understand the long-term impact of digital footprints and the legal implications that may arise from violations of communication ethics. Empathy and Tolerance, understanding other people's points of view can reduce the potential for conflict and increase social harmony. Compliance with the Rule of Law, Expressing opinions on social media must always comply with the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE) or related regulations to avoid defamation cases [54],[55]. Failure to comply with communication ethics, especially on social media, can have negative impacts, both individually and collectively. At the individual level, a person's reputation can be tarnished due to irresponsible speech. Meanwhile, collectively, these violations can trigger broader social conflicts, affect the stability of society, and even cause legal problems.

Based on previous research conducted in 2021[17], there are gaps with this research in terms of methods, subjects, and research results. Both studies show different but complementary focuses in understanding language crimes. Previous research is narrower, focusing on analyzing language crimes on social media in a political context, especially the 2020 Makassar Mayoral Election. Using comment data from platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, this research conducted in 2021 identified forms of expressive speech acts such as insults, slander, and curses. Meanwhile, this research has a broader scope, exploring defamation not only in digital media but also in direct communication. In addition to analyzing word choice, sentence structure, and pragmatic context, this study also involves in-depth interviews with victims, perpetrators, and legal experts, and uses legal documents such as police reports as data. With a more multidisciplinary approach, this study provides a more holistic analysis of defamation cases.

The results of previous studies show a focus on language crimes on social media during the pre- and post-Makassar Mayoral Election 2020, by highlighting three forms of expressive illocutionary speech acts: insults, slander, and curses, such as "empty brain," "corruptor candidate," and "stove mouth." This study emphasizes the legal impact of these utterances in a specific political context. In contrast, this study examines defamation more broadly, covering direct and digital communication with an analysis of linguistic elements such as negative word choice, declarative sentence structure, and pragmatic context that strengthens the perpetrator's intention[56]. This study also explores the social, psychological, and economic impacts on victims, such as loss of self-confidence and reputation, through interviews with victims, perpetrators, and legal experts, as well as analysis of legal documents. The gap lies in the scope and depth of the findings, previous studies provide specific analysis on social media in a local context, while this study offers a holistic perspective that covers various life contexts. These two studies can complement each other through the integration of specific findings and in-depth analysis to understand language crimes comprehensively[57]-[59].

This study offers novelty with a broader scope and multidisciplinary approach compared to previous studies that are limited to analyzing language crimes on social media in a political context. This study explores defamation in direct and digital communication in general by analyzing linguistic elements such as word choice, sentence structure, and pragmatic context, and integrating legal perspectives through in-depth interviews with victims, perpetrators, and legal experts. The use of legal documents such as police reports and court decisions provides stronger empirical validation, while the holistic approach allows for exploration of the psychological, social, and economic impacts on victims. This study also introduces an integrative approach to understanding language dynamics, including perpetrators' strategies in constructing negative narratives. In addition to providing theoretical contributions in the field of forensic linguistics, this study offers practical solutions in the form of ethical communication education, digital media regulation, and psychological support for victims, as well as being a reference for evidence-based policies in handling defamation cases more comprehensively.

This study makes an important contribution to the field of forensic linguistics by extending the application of language analysis to various communication contexts, both face-to-face and digital[60],[61]. The results of this study help improve the understanding of language dynamics in defamation cases, including the identification of linguistic elements such as negative word choice, declarative sentence structure, and pragmatic context that

strengthen the perpetrator's intention. In practice, these findings can be used to raise public awareness of the importance of ethical communication in the digital era and provide guidance for law enforcement officers to evaluate defamation cases objectively. In addition, this study supports the development of evidence-based policies, especially in designing stricter regulations on the use of language on social media, while strengthening legal support for victims.

Despite providing extensive insights, this study has several limitations. First, the scope of the research subjects is still limited to cases that can be accessed through interviews and certain legal documents, so there is a possibility that there are similar phenomena that have not been fully revealed. Second, because this study uses a qualitative approach, the generalization of the results to a wider population is limited. Third, the dynamics of culture and social norms that influence the perception of defamation in various regions have not been fully represented in this study. Finally, this study focuses on individual impacts without investigating in depth the systemic or institutional impacts of defamation cases.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that defamation often involves certain linguistic elements that can be forensically analyzed to support the legal process. Digital media is the main means of disseminating these cases, thus requiring better regulation and education. The impact of the cases on victims is multidimensional, covering psychological, social, and economic aspects. By using forensic linguistic analysis, this study provides theoretical and practical contributions in supporting efforts to resolve defamation cases fairly and effectively.

Future research can use quantitative or mixed-method approaches to expand the scope of data, so that the results are more measurable and have a high level of generalization. In addition, cross-cultural comparative studies are very important to be conducted considering the differences in cultural contexts and social norms that influence the perception of defamation, so that it can provide a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon in different regions or countries. Research can also integrate language analysis technologies, such as natural language processing (NLP), to analyze language patterns in defamation on social media more accurately and scalably. Furthermore, it is important to explore the systemic or institutional impacts of defamation, such as its effects on organizations, educational institutions, or specific communities. Research can also contribute to the development of public education programs and the evaluation of the effectiveness of regulations to prevent defamation cases on various communication platforms. Given the significant psychological impact on victims, further research is also needed to explore effective psychosocial intervention approaches to support victim recovery, so that it can provide holistic and broad-impact solutions for society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher would like to express his deepest gratitude to all parties who have provided support and contributions in completing this research. The researcher also expresses his appreciation to the respondents and sources who have been willing to take the time to provide valuable data and information. Hopefully the results of this study can provide real benefits and contributions to the development of science and become a useful reference for further research. The researcher realizes that this research still has limitations, so constructive suggestions and criticisms are highly expected for future improvements.

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