Characteristics of Comments in Social Media

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Abstract*

Negative and sarcastic sentiments dominate online discourse. It reflects the dynamic nature of digital communication and its socio-linguistic implications. This study investigates the prevalence and types of comments with focusing on explicit negative opinions and sarcastic and explicit opinions. Those emerge as the most frequent forms in sentiment discourse. Drawing upon insights from sentiment analysis frameworks by Liu (2015) and Ponzi *et al.* (2017), this research categorized user comments and analyzed their frequencies and implications within the context of social media interactions. The research employs qualitative analysis to classify and interpret comments. It also combines theoretical insights with real user-generated content. Comments were grouped into categories, including fact-implied opinions, explicit negative opinions, sarcastic opinions, and implicit opinions. It reveals significant trends in the expression of dissatisfaction and humor-laden critiques online. The findings suggest that digital platforms serve as spaces for users to openly voice grievances. It is often through direct negativity or sarcasm. In particular, sarcasm functions as a creative linguistic tool for indirect critique and identity construction. While it also reflects broader societal concerns such as socioeconomic inequality. These trends highlight the polarized and emotionally charged nature of online discourse, where negativity is amplified through rapid interactions and shared cultural references. Implications of this study underline the importance of nuanced sentiment analysis models that account for the complexities of tone, sarcasm, and indirect communication. Additionally, fostering constructive digital environments requires strategies to mitigate negativity. While it is promoting balanced engagement and contributing to a deeper understanding of evolving digital communication practices and societal dynamics.

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of social media in recent years has significantly transformed human communication. It is also influencing societal norms and behaviors in digital interactions. Unlike traditional face-to-face communication, social media enables seamless exchanges across distances and time, fostering dynamic, and two-way communication among users. This digital platform offers unprecedented convenience and effectiveness. At the same, it is encouraging active user participation in online forums and discussions. The dynamic role of social media has redefined internet users from passive recipients to active contributors. Individuals engage in real-

time discussions, sharing opinions on events, topics, and news. However, this shift presents challenges, particularly concerning adherence to values, norms, and ethics, which remain fundamental in virtual and real-world interactions.

Despite the advantages of social media, the interactive nature of these platforms often gives rise to inappropriate or hostile discourse. The interactive also overshadows its potential for constructive dialogue. The prevalence of harmful comments, such as those rooted in political or commercial biases, highlights the deterioration of ethical communication norms in online spaces. For example, while constructive feedback exists, many comments reflect frustration or fear-mongering. There is perpetuating divisiveness rather than fostering understanding. This research is motivated by the need to investigate the linguistic features and underlying sentiment in social media discourse. While it is focusing specifically on netizen comments on *Facebook* related to government policies during the Covid-19 pandemic. By analyzing these comments, the study seeks to unveil patterns of sentiment and their implications for digital communication ethics and contributing to broader discussions on online discourse and its societal impact.

The study of language use on social media highlights the dynamic evolution of communication practices and linguistic creativity among users. Research by Atmawati (2016) reveals that social media platforms like *Facebook* provide a unique space for linguistic innovation and at the same time encompassing diverse language variations. These include the use of informal language styles, abbreviations. It includes the incorporation of multiple linguistic elements from regional and foreign languages. Such diversity reflects the influence of social, educational, and cultural backgrounds on digital communication. This linguistic creativity serves specific purposes, such as self-expression, humor, and strengthening social bonds. It is facilitated by the unrestricted and global nature of social media communication. In another perspective, the emergence of *alay* language is a linguistic phenomenon prevalent among Indonesian youth on *Facebook* (Hendrawan & Riang Hati Waruwu, 2021). The study categorizes *alay* expressions into abbreviations, phonetic spelling variations, and unconventional capitalizations. All features exemplify the informal and playful nature of digital interactions. While these creative forms serve as tools for identity and group belonging, they often disrupt the semantic clarity of messages. It is then lead to miscommunication and potential exclusion of non-familiar audiences. This phenomenon underscores the tension between linguistic innovation and the need for standardization to maintain effective communication on public platforms.

The two articles reviewed emphasize the linguistic creativity and stylistic diversity in social media. It especially focusing on informal expressions, slang, and rhetorical devices such as irony and sarcasm. They highlight how these linguistic elements are used for self-expression, humor, and identity construction in social media discourse. However, these studies primarily explore the general stylistic features and functional roles of language on platforms like *Instagram* and *Facebook* without delving deeply into the sentiment and polarity classification of specific comment types. In contrast, this article centers on analyzing the sentiment discourse within netizen comments. It is particularly in discussions about government policies during the Covid-19 pandemic. The gap lies in the limited exploration of the intersection between stylistic creativity (e.g., sarcasm, humor) and explicit sentiment types (e.g., negative opinions) in critical and context-specific discussions. This research aims to bridge that gap by combining sentiment analysis with a focused examination of how linguistic devices shape discourse in these contexts.

This study of *Penggunaan Bahasa di Media Sosial* written by Rini (2018) examines the use of diction and language style on Instagram, emphasizing how users express ideas and emotions creatively through captions. It employs a sociolinguistic approach to analyze the selection of words and the aesthetic choices inherent in Instagram posts. The study identifies two main components: connotative and denotative diction. It also describes personification and

metaphor as the dominant stylistic features. By focusing on inspirational accounts, such as those featuring motivational quotes, the study showcases how language in digital spaces bridges personal expression and public interaction. This research underscores the role of linguistic choices in fostering engagement and creating meaning on social media platforms. It also highlights the need for careful language selection to enhance clarity and emotional resonance in digital communication. While Annesia (2018) in the article entitled *Gaya Bahasa dan Fungsi Bahasa Caption Instagram* explores the stylistic elements and functional roles of captions on gossip Instagram accounts. It also reveals how informal and adaptive language reflects users' perspectives and fosters social interaction. It categorizes language styles into rhetorical devices like irony, sarcasm, and rhetorical questions. Meanwhile, the language functions cover representational, heuristic, and instrumental roles. The study utilizes descriptive analysis to illustrate the relationship between stylistic choices and their communicative functions. It also demonstrates how captions influence public perception and engagement in digital contexts. By examining popular accounts, the study contributes to understanding how language style serves as both a tool for persuasion and a medium for identity expression in online communities. Investigation of the social communication patterns of millennials within the framework of Industry 4.0 and focusing on how technology shapes language use and interaction become the points of article entitled *Komunikasi Sosial Generasi Milenial di Era Industri 4.0* written by Nurdin and Labib (2021). It reveals that millennials blend face-to-face communication with digital interactions, adopting adaptive language styles enriched with emojis and other digital symbols. These practices reflect a shift in social norms, where honesty and openness drive the construction of individual and collective identities. The research also highlights the dual reliance on online and offline communication, showcasing how technology facilitates social bonding while potentially diminishing interpersonal skills. This study enriches the discourse on digital communication by illustrating the balance between traditional and technological modes of interaction.

2. Research Methods

This study derives its data from netizen comments on Facebook, particularly those in comment section addressing government policies on the COVID-19 pandemic. The data is limited to written textual comments and excludes other forms of communication such as videos, emojis, and memes. To ensure focus and relevance, only comments associated with a specific news item regarding government COVID-19 policies are analyzed. The inclusion of comments does not consider their length, emphasizing content quality, and thematic relevance. Data collection utilizes the *simak* method, which involves meticulous observation of textual content. Techniques include careful reading and documentation of relevant comments, followed by the categorization of these comments based on their linguistic variety and characteristics. A systematic process of data tabulation ensures clarity and organization, paving the way for precise classification according to identified linguistic patterns and features. The analysis is conducted using qualitative methods to describe the selected data comprehensively. This involves identifying types and characteristics of netizen comments and categorizing them into specific types based on their thematic and stylistic features. Descriptive explanations accompany each category, offering insights into the linguistic trends and communication dynamics evident in the comments.

3. Results

Liu (2015) categorizes opinions, which form the basis of comments, into four main types: regular, comparative, subjective, and fact-implied opinions. Regular opinions are direct statements expressing sentiment about an entity (e.g., *This product is amazing*). Comparative opinions contrast two or more entities, often using comparative or superlative adjectives (e.g., *This phone is better than the other*). Subjective opinions are rooted in personal judgments, reflecting positive or negative sentiments, while fact-implied opinions involve objective statements suggesting desirability or undesirability without direct sentiment (e.g., *The car broke down after one week*). Moreover, opinions can be explicit (clearly articulated sentiments) or implicit (where opinions are inferred from the context). These distinctions provide a nuanced understanding of how users express their attitudes online. Pozzi, Fersini, and Messina (2017) highlights the complexity of comments in social networks, dividing them into subjective and objective comments. Subjective comments express opinions and sentiments, while objective comments present factual information. The analysis further categorizes sentiments at three levels: message, sentence, and entity/aspect. At the message level, comments convey an overall sentiment (e.g., a product review). Sentence-level analysis focuses on sentiment within individual sentences, while entity/aspect-level comments provide fine-grained evaluations of specific attributes (e.g., *The camera quality is excellent, but the battery life is poor*). Additionally, comments are characterized as explicit or implicit. Explicit comments state sentiments directly, while implicit ones require contextual interpretation (e.g., *I couldn't stop smiling all day* suggests positive sentiment). Social media comments often include mixed sentiments, sarcasm, and informal language, making them unique and challenging for sentiment analysis.

Table 1
Comment Types

No.	Comment	Type of Comment	Explanation
1	*Kan mayoritas orang menengah ke atas di Surabaya itu adalah orang...(isi sendiri)*	Fact-implied opinion	An objective statement that hints at a sentiment but does not explicitly state it.
2	*kasian pribumi menengah ke bawah? Perlu belajar lagi sama yang menengah ke atas biar ga stay low terus*	Subjective and regular opinion	Expresses a judgmental sentiment about different social classes.
3	*ga nyambung mase*	Explicit negative opinion	Clearly conveys dissatisfaction or disagreement with the preceding discussion.
4	*HAHAHAHAHA ABANG*	Implicit and subjective sentiment	Indicates humor or ridicule but lacks context for a clear sentiment classification.
5	*Covid19 juga ngerti mana orang susah....*	Sarcastic and implicit opinion	Uses sarcasm to critique COVID-19's indiscriminate impact.

No.	Comment	Type of Comment	Explanation
6	*Penyakitnya orang kaya Tapi orang miskin yang paling berasa dampaknya*	Subjective and fact-implied opinion	Mixes sentiment with a critique of socioeconomic disparities.
7	*Imun org miskin lebih kuat daripada org kaya, tipes aja minum teh anget sama jahe sembuh, lah org kaya meler dikit minta infus wakakakaka*	Sarcastic and comparative opinion	Contrasts the resilience of different social groups humorously but critically.
8	*2024 bentar lagi bu*	Implicit opinion	Vague sentiment suggesting anticipation or concern about a future event.
9	*cm flu biasa jg dsbut covid dan mereka semua sembuh,. jd gk ngaruh,. cm berita ny jg yg berbahaya*	Explicit negative opinion	Expresses skepticism about the severity of COVID-19.
10	*Karena orang kaya ga pernah kehujanan makanya gampang kena covid, kan covid sejenis ama flu*	Sarcastic and explicit opinion	Sarcasm is used to highlight perceived privilege and vulnerability to COVID-19.

Table 1 presents a categorization of user-generated comments from social media. It is particularly focusing on sentiment types and linguistic expressions. The classification follows the framework of sentiment analysis and pragmatic discourse. It is also identifying key patterns in online communication. The comments in table 1 demonstrate diverse linguistic strategies used to express opinions. It ranges from implicit sentiments to explicit critiques. The first category, **fact-implied opinions**, comprises comments that imply a sentiment without directly stating it. For instance, comment 1 makes an objective statement about social classes, but subtly conveys a perspective on economic disparity. Similarly, **subjective and regular opinions** (comment 2) introduce evaluative language reflecting personal judgment about different social groups. Such expressions align with subjective sentiment analysis. It also indicates that users frame their viewpoints in digital discourse.

The **explicit negative opinions** (comments 3 and 9) represent direct expressions of dissatisfaction or disagreement. These comments are characterized by straightforward negation, skepticism, or critique. It reflects the tendency of online interactions to accommodate confrontational discourse. Additionally, **sarcastic and implicit opinions** (comment 5) utilize irony to convey meaning indirectly. The use of sarcasm in social media discourse serves as both a rhetorical strategy and a mechanism for humor. At the same time, it allows users to critique issues without overt aggression. A significant category in table 1 is **sarcastic and explicit opinions** (comment 10), where sarcasm and direct critique intersect. These comments leverage irony and exaggeration to highlight perceived inequalities. In this case, it is particularly in discussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sarcasm, as an integral component of digital discourse,

often functions as a subversive linguistic tool for expressing discontent while engaging audiences.

In general, the comments in table 1 reveal that users navigate sentiment expression through various linguistic devices. The interplay of explicit negativity, implicit critique, and sarcasm illustrates the complex nature of online discourse. Sentiments are not merely conveyed, but strategically framed to enhance engagement and provoke reactions.

Table 2
Comment Types

No.	Comment	Type of Comment	Explanation
11	*Covid19 juga ngerti mana orang susah....*	Sarcastic and implicit opinion	Uses sarcasm to critique COVID-19's indiscriminate impact.
12	*cm flu biasa jg dsbut covid dan mereka semua sembuh,. jd gk ngaruh,. cm berita ny jg yg berbahaya*	Explicit negative opinion	Expresses skepticism about the severity of COVID-19.
13	*Karena orang kaya ga pernah kehujanan makanya gampang kena covid, kan covid sejenis ama flu*	Sarcastic and explicit opinion	Sarcasm is used to highlight perceived privilege and vulnerability to COVID-19.
14	*Fitnah sana fitnah sini, ini bikin perpecahan.....selesaikan ajalaaaah.....g sanggup ya mundur, kok repot....*	Explicit negative opinion	Criticizes social disunity and conveys dissatisfaction about ongoing issues.
15	*ini tumben bener, dl yg jubir korona bilang orang miskin yg nularin penyakitnya ke orang kaya*	Explicit negative opinion	Directly criticizes past statements from public figures, reflecting negative sentiment.
16	*bu .. masa lupa.... "si kaya membantu yang miskin... yang miskin jangan menularkan"* 🤣🤣🤣	Sarcastic and implicit opinion	Uses sarcasm to mock a perceived double standard or tone of previous statements.
17	*Hasil test swab sebelumnya NEGATIF, di cek lagi T3rNy4t4 hasilnya p051t1f c0v1d-19*	Implicit opinion	Implies confusion or dissatisfaction without directly stating a sentiment.
18	*Maklum lah virusnya juga import*	Sarcastic and explicit opinion	Sarcastically critiques the idea of imported issues, linking it to COVID-19.
19	*kelaparan tidak akan menjadi pandemi karena korbannya bukan orang menengah ke atas*	Sarcastic and fact-implied opinion	Sarcastically critiques societal priorities and highlights socioeconomic inequalities.
20	*Krn virusnya dr orang kaya, jd yg nyebar virus ya orang kaya... Kan virusnya dr luar negeri, yg mampu keluar negeri kan orang kaya...*	Sarcastic and explicit opinion	Critiques wealth and privilege sarcastically, linking it to COVID-19 spread.

Table 2 expands on the categorization of social media comments. It also reinforces key trends observed in sentiment discourse. The table presents a selection of comments that reflect explicit negativity, sarcasm, and implicit sentiment. The table also provides further insights into the language that is used in online discussions regarding government policies and societal concerns. A prominent feature in table 2 is the recurrence of **explicit negative opinions** (comments 12, 14, and 15). These comments articulate dissatisfaction directly. It also expresses a critic to government decisions or societal conditions. The prevalence of such expressions underscores the tendency for social media platforms to serve as spaces where grievances and criticisms are voiced without restraint. Explicit negativity, as observed in these examples, contributes to the broader phenomenon of online polarization. The phenomena in which digital discourse is shaped by confrontation and dissent.

The presence of **sarcastic and implicit opinions** (comments 11 and 16) describes the role of irony in online interactions. Sarcasm in these comments is used to critique inconsistencies in public discourse, particularly in references to socio-political issues. For instance, comment 16 employs a sarcastic tone to challenge prevailing narratives about socioeconomic inequality. It also illustrates the irony that is deployed to question dominant perspectives. Similarly, **sarcastic and explicit opinions** (comments 13 and 18) combine humor with criticism and amplifying sentiment through rhetorical exaggeration. Such comments demonstrate the strategic use of sarcasm in digital communication. In the meantime, humor is not merely an expressive device but also a means of fostering solidarity among like-minded individuals. The implicit opinions (comment 17) reflect a subtler approach to critique which sentiment is suggested rather than overtly expressed.

Table 2 highlights the dominant sentiment patterns in digital discourse. The discussion is particularly in contentious topics. The recurrence of sarcasm and negativity emphasizes the emotional intensity of online debates. It is shedding light on the ways in which language serves as both a vehicle for critique and a tool for engagement.

Table 3
Frequency of Comment Types

Type of Comment	Frequency
Fact-implied opinion	2
Subjective and regular opinion	1
Explicit negative opinion	5
Sarcastic and implicit opinion	4
Sarcastic and explicit opinion	5
Sarcastic and fact-implied opinion	1
Implicit opinion	2

Table 3 presents a quantitative summary of the various sentiment categories identified in the analyzed social media comments. It is the results that are taken from both table in advance. The distribution of comment types provides insights into the prevailing linguistic and affective tendencies in digital discourse. The **explicit negative opinions** and **sarcastic and explicit opinions** emerge as the most frequent categories with five instances each. This trend suggests

that digital communication, particularly in social media discussions, is dominated by direct expressions of dissatisfaction and irony-infused critiques. The predominance of explicit negativity reflects the increasing tendency of online users to engage in confrontational discourse. The discourse happens when social and political grievances are articulated without inhibition. Similarly, the significant presence of sarcasm underscores its role as a preferred rhetorical strategy. It gives an opportunity for allowing users to express discontent in an indirect yet impactful manner.

The **sarcastic and implicit opinions** (four occurrences) further reinforce the role of sarcasm as a linguistic tool in online interactions. Unlike explicit negative opinions, these comments rely on contextual cues and inferred meaning. It adds another layer of complexity to sentiment expression. The **fact-implied opinions** and **implicit opinions** appear with lower frequency (two instances each) which are suggesting indirect sentiments exist. It means that users are more commonly resort to explicit means of communication. The findings presented in table 3 confirm key patterns in digital discourse. The patterns are a tendency toward negative sentiment expression, the strategic use of sarcasm, and the presence of implicit critique. These trends reflect broader socio-linguistic dynamics which digital platforms facilitate not only the open articulation of grievances, but also the performative aspect of language. The performative aspects such as humor and satire become integral to online interactions. Understanding these frequencies helps to contextualize the evolving nature of online sentiment. It also emphasizes the need for nuanced sentiment analysis models that can capture both explicit and implicit forms of expression in digital communication.

4. Discussions

The frequency of explicit negative opinion and sarcastic and explicit opinion has became the most common types of comments. It indicates several key aspects in the context of sentiment discourse and the mode of digital communication. The key aspects are prevalence of negative sentiments in digital discourse, role of sarcasme in digital communication, polarized and emotional nature of online discussions, linguistic creativity and identity construction, and reflection of broader socioeconomic concerns.

Prevalence of negative sentiments in digital discourse covers the high frequency of explicit negative opinions. The prevalence suggests that online platforms often serve as spaces where users openly express dissatisfaction, frustration, or criticism. This might be due to the perceived anonymity and lack of immediate accountability on digital platforms. It can encourage individuals to express their negative sentiments more freely than in face-to-face communication. Role of sarcasm in digital communication provides the significant presence of sarcastic and explicit opinions. The role also highlights the use of sarcasm as a rhetorical strategy in online discourse. Sarcasm allows users to express discontent or critique in an indirect yet impactful way, often combining humor with criticism. This reflects a cultural shift in digital communication, where sarcasm is frequently used to engage audiences or to soften the perceived harshness of a negative statement.

Polarized and emotional nature of online discussions refer to the dominance of negative and sarcastic opinions. The opinion indicates a tendency toward polarization in digital spaces. Social media and online forums often amplify emotional reactions due to the rapid exchange of opinions and the visibility of other users' sentiments. This dynamic fosters a feedback loop of negativity. It allows users to respond to negative comments with similarly charged reactions. Linguistic creativity and identity construction depend on the use of sarcasm. In particular, it showcases the linguistic creativity of users. Sarcasm can serve as a tool for identity construction.

It is allowing users to align themselves with particular ideologies or social groups through humor and shared cultural references. Reflection of broader socioeconomic concerns many sarcastic and negative comments in the provided examples. It relates to socioeconomic inequalities or perceived injustices. This suggests that online discourse often serves as a medium for voicing grievances about systemic issue whichreflecting broader societal discontent.

These findings underscore the importance of understanding the tone and mode of expression in sentiment discourse. Negative and sarcastic comments are not merely expressions of dissatisfaction, but also serve as markers of social identity, humor, and critique. Effective sentiment analysis models must account for these nuances to accurately interpret user intentions and the broader social dynamics at play. The frequent use of negative and sarcastic tones in online discourse suggests a need for better moderation and community-building strategies to foster more constructive and inclusive digital conversations. Additionally, it highlights the evolving nature of digital language, where indirect and creative expressions like sarcasm play a central role in user interactions.

5. Novelties

The novelty of this research lies in its focused integration of sentiment analysis with a context-specific examination of netizen comments related to government policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. While previous studies have explored linguistic creativity and stylistic features in social media discourse, it has not sufficiently addressed how explicit sentiments, such as negative opinions and sarcasm, interact with broader societal concerns in critical discussions. This study advances the field by combining sentiment classification with an analysis of rhetorical strategies, such as sarcasm and humor, in a context of heightened emotional and social polarization. By emphasizing the nuanced roles of these linguistic devices in expressing discontent and shaping digital discourse, the research provides a deeper understanding of how sentiment and stylistic choices reflect societal grievances and influence communication dynamics in online platforms. This approach offers a novel perspective on the evolving nature of digital communication and its socio-political implications.

6. Conclusion

The dominance of explicit negative opinions and sarcastic and explicit opinions in online discourse reflects key characteristics of sentiment expression and digital communication. These findings highlight the prevalence of negativity and sarcasm as significant features of online interactions. It is driven by the unique dynamics of digital platforms. Firstly, the high frequency of explicit negative opinions suggests that social media and online forums are often used as outlets for dissatisfaction and criticism. The perceived anonymity and lack of direct accountability in digital communication encourage users to express their grievances more freely than they might in face-to-face interactions. This openness amplifies negative sentiments and making them a central feature of online discourse. Secondly, sarcasm emerges as a dominant mode of expression, blending humor with critique. Sarcastic comments often serve dual purposes namely delivering indirect criticism while engaging audiences through linguistic creativity. This reflects a shift in digital culture, where sarcasm has become a socially accepted and popular rhetorical strategy for expressing discontent and constructing identity. Having humor and shared cultural references, users align themselves with particular ideologies or social groups.

Furthermore, the prominence of these comment types reveals the emotional and polarized

nature of online discussions. Social media platforms amplify emotional reactions and it creates a feedback loop of negativity and sarcasm. These sentiments often reflect broader societal concerns, such as socioeconomic inequalities, systemic grievances, and positioning online discourse as a space for voicing public discontent. In the context of sentiment discourse and digital communication, these findings underscore the complexity of analyzing online interactions. Sentiment analysis must account for the nuances of tone, indirectness, and cultural context to accurately interpret user intentions. Additionally, fostering constructive and inclusive digital conversations requires strategies to address negativity and promote balanced engagement. These insights are essential for understanding the evolving nature of digital communication and its societal implications.

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