



## When Indonesia Comedians Talked about Omnibus Law: Pragmatically Comprehension

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### Abstract

This research aims to understand the message and the way of comedians in delivering their messages toward omnibus law in Indonesia. How the comedians build their power through language to confirm their position. Pragmatics analysis was a main tool in analyzing the language used by comedians. This research observes two videos of different comedians commenting the law through social media. Both videos examine the truth of comedians' voice on Omnibus law. The comedians absolutely have their special characteristic in reflecting their ideology towards the regulation. Their position reflected from the speech that supporting the demonstrators against omnibus law validation. The result shows that both comedians used some features such as irony, metaphors, and satires in criticizing the government. Plethora signs are given by them in comparing the power and effectiveness of previous and current government in coping country's problems. Moreover, there are several pragmatics cues used to inform people about their position in facing the government's policy.

**Keywords:** Omnibus law, comedians, pragmatics, irony, metaphors, and satires

### Introduction

Indonesia, October 6, 2020 was a great incident in the republic country. There was a protest throughout the country regarding omnibus law validation by Indonesian Senate (DPR). The validation emerged many mistrustful assumptions due to erroneous condition and a hurry decision (Wijaya, 2020). Many protest against the validation of omnibus law provoked a controversial issue. On the peak of it, the demonstration was conducted during Covid-19 pandemic that became a dangerous activity in the current time. Speak up our mind, is the main objective of the demonstration.

Many activists elaborate their thought in the demonstration. Most of them are labor and university students. As a result, the demonstrator commanded the others who did not attend the demonstration to participate. They spam in social media comments, asking and begging for support. One of them was a demand of speech to the prominent actors, politicians, and even comedians. There were many comedians reacted regarding this request. Two of them were Bintang Emon and Abdur, they are stand-up comedians, which are popular throughout the world in recent days. Stand-up comedians are considered smart, influential, and effective to initiate a movement. Further, because they are influential people, their opinion is

considered as important. They are good public speakers with good sense of humor. They deliver jokes and message in the same time.

Hence, as a part of citizens in a democracy country, comedians have rights to speak up their opinion towards any trending issues, such as political, religious, social issues. Further, comedians can deliver their thought smoothly within their jokes. However, in further comprehension, those jokes can be interpreted as a message. Since all pragmatists agreed about the intended meaning of utterances, comedian's utterances can be a valuable matter to discuss. Some people probably confused why these comedians talk about certain aspects, which are not in their specific competence. However, less known by most people those comedians are intelligent people who can deliver critics within jokes, well known as satire.

Moreover, some comedians are bachelor of education, law, social science, etc., which enables them to critically, reacts towards certain issues. Yet, what can we catch literally and pragmatically relatively depends on different comprehension and interpretation. Therefore, this study examined the hidden meaning of those comedians' speech. Further, it explored how they mention the utterances that place themselves point of view.

Research regarding comedians seems to be lack of concern. Yet, there are some scholars, who identified comedians and their language as an object of analysis. As humor can be a tool to entertain, deliver message, provoking and stimulate action, comedy activity is significant in human life. It is a multi-functional tool in daily communication. Nasihah (2019) explored the function of comedy as a tool to spread an Islamic Dakwah. Taha (2020) postulated that humor or comedy could be analyzed interdisciplinary with other disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, literature, and linguistics. Thus, it is crucial to concern comedy in depth to interpret the intended meaning of comedian's utterances, the researcher examined it using pragmatics theory. It enabled the proper interpretation based on the context of language. Further, pragmatics also revealed the hidden meaning, which is not easily understood by people in common. Since pragmatics is a study about meaning involving Language and context, it is important to draw an interpretation with context of situation to obtain better comprehension.

## **Method**

This study was a qualitative study, which explained all the data and examine it using theory that could be driven in sentences and paragraphs. The researcher firstly listening to the videos. There are two videos used in this research. First is the video made by Bintang Emon and the second is the video by Abdur. Both different videos made by those comedians in order to criticize the government's policy about Omnibus Law. The videos contain plethora connotative meaning in exploring the government's policy. Making a transcription text is the next agenda after watching at the videos, then, and then analyze it based on the selected theory and elaborated it using the current context and theory. The pragmatics theory is the fundamental method used in analyzing the data which will cover deeply about language and context, utterances and the maxims in the performances. Finally elaborate it, summarize it in a result, and conclude it in a conclusion.

## **Results**

Through the analysis, there are some insights about the content of the videos categorized by the both comedians' utterances in delivering their means in facing the government's policy about Omnibus Law. Hanson (2015) states that government's policy may cause some arguments from society especially from popular ones. Berger (1995) found forty-five comedy techniques used by comedy writer and comic actors. Moreover, Elwood (2000) also found that American magazines used comedy technique to make advertisement with persuasive objective, such as; Homonyms, Homophones, idioms and quotation, lexical and grammatical jokes, satire, sarcasm, polysemy, idioms' allusion and literalization, irony, etc.

There are 3 kinds of language features were used repeatedly by both comedians; they were Irony, satire and sarcasm. Irony is one of figures of speech that explains the opposite statement of what is desired (Horstmann & Pauwel, 2012). Moreover, satire also criticize people weaknesses by praising too much and expose the opposite expressions. Diehl (2013) examined kinship in satire and how it constructed philosophy even the role of satire in life and philosophy. Irony is one of the components in satire. However, Irony used by both comedians are intended to make someone reflecting and contemplating situation which is not in accordance with the desired goals. For instance, when Abdur and Emon declared that Jokowi's government is good enough in undergoing their governance with giving foolish facts of the governments' fails and worsts. Meanwhile, satire in the data appear in the utterances of the comedians to inform the listener about what "should" or "must" happen in the reality such as when Emon asked the listener "why did the RUU validate at midnight?" whereas the working time is in the morning and afternoon. Sarcasms are used also in the talks by the comedians. The way of Abdur compared between the previous government of SBY and today's government of Jokowi is one of the reflections of smooth sarcasm made by him in criticizing governments' role currently.

## **Discussion**

### ***Messages and ideology***

Chiaro (1992), Okada (2001), and Ermida (2008) postulated that studies in linguistics rarely analyzed comedy. The comedy is deemed unimportant to be studied. However, the impact of comedy in human daily life is inevitable. Some comedies are hidden in utterances, and only those who can perceive the comedy can understand the exact meaning of it. Understanding and analyzing comedy can improve cognitive ability and broaden knowledge to be wise in reacting any humorous or sensitive utterances anywhere. Utterances are speech products from arranged word into sentences and paragraph that contains meaning, message, and value. The utterances meaning are explained in the following explanation:

Since the comedians are Stand-up comedians who deliver their jokes in one-way communication, selfie video is the best example of their joking style as they do in Stand-up comedy.

- a. Bintang Emon

“Just kidding. Indonesia is a “bloody” democracy country. It is our right to speak up and guaranteed. We are under the law and protected by the law. It’s safe. Seriously.”

Bintang Emon said, “bloody democracy country” to explain that in a democracy country, anyone can speak up their thought regarding governmental policies. In the other hand, the expression of “bloody” democracy country can be interpreted as a satire with irony, which is different with the fact and current condition. Moreover, Emon also said that we fully have rights, and we are protected by law, so we must not be afraid to speak up our mind. He also emphasizes with, “It’s safe. Seriously” to highlight that we will be safe. However, it can be understood as the opposite meaning. Safe opposite to dangerous. Emon might be signaling that democracy is no safer in these days. So, be wise to speak up your mind.

“However, what do you want to complain to the government, what is your point? They had worked properly, look, the senate, oh my God, they organized the law efficiently, quickly. Even, the validation was done rapidly. They validated it at midnight when people were sleeping tight. It proved that they had worked hard.”

Emon deliberately explained why we must not protest the government regarding the omnibus law validation. He said that the government have worked properly to arrange the law. They signed it quickly in the midnight. Emon’s explanation is a positive message, but it contains negation meaning. There are some rules in determining a law. Further, validating a regulation is not as easy as pie. The government must not validate this law in hurry because they must consider the advantages and disadvantages for Indonesian people. Nevertheless, they prioritized the validation and put aside the people’s interest. The validation happened in midnight is suspicious. There must be something fishy about the midnight validation.

“Although I am not sure why they validate it at midnight. Maybe the agenda has been fixed, they watched Liga Championship after meeting had finished. No one knew.”

Then, Emon put a joke within his speech why the government signed the law at midnight. Emon said that maybe because the government wanted to watch a Liga Championship after meeting. Liga championship is generally displayed at midnight. Yet, he asserted that he was not sure about that. Emon’s uncertainty reflects that there are many probabilities regarding the phenomenon of midnight validation. “No one knows” means that the midnight validation can draw many assumptions without right and clear reasons.

“Moreover, we must appreciate the government because they follow protocol extremely well. For instance, when citizens conducted a demonstration, the government applied “social distancing” towards the citizens. It’s for safety and health. Health, the government washed their hands. Further, for health reason, some of university students (demonstration participants) were locked down (arrested). It proved that our government seriously overcoming Covid-19. Fortunately, I was talking about Bulgarian government.”

In the statement above, Emon asks people to appreciate the government attitude toward Covid-19, where the government obey “social distancing” and washing hands properly. However, Emon gives ironical examples by giving an analogy of Covi-19 protocol and Government, the demonstration event and the protocol. The literal meaning of those protocols and the hidden meaning is in an opposite mode. Emon said, “Social distancing” done by government (senate) was an arrogant attitude of senate. For instance, when government met the demonstrator, they were in distance. It reflected the arrogant senate that keep distance with citizens. Some of university students were locked down means that some of demonstrators were arrested without any reason.

Based on the Emon’s video and statements above, he deployed his message humorously with ironic statements that made the video valuable because it contains message within. Emon said his joke with smile, helpless but satire gesture and face expressions. His smooth sarcasm is sweetly delivered in his joke. Thus, Emon’s technique in his humorous video about omnibus law validation is the mixture between irony, satire and smooth sarcasm that can make people laugh and think twice about what he said.

b. Abdur

“I was brave, because the president was SBY, he was a former military but modest (easy going). But now, people said this (government/president) was modest (easy going) but authoritarian. What can I do? I can die.. shit!”

Abdur referred to someone, who was the opposite of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), (the former Indonesian President). SBY was a former military, yet during his rule, freedom of speech is safe without any danger consequences. The one referred by Abdur, was a warm, modest and calm person (characteristic of Javanese people). Yet, he/she can be a dangerous person because of their authority. It reflected activists’ helpless situation. When the activists speak up their voice, they will be in danger.

“We are such a marching band, we are led by activist and experts, and they lead us by saying, “left, left, right, right.” Some follow with voices, and some follow in silence. Nevertheless, we are in same line. It was good. You are such a shit in the marching line, ruined the line.”

Abdur mentioned the leader of democracy must be an expert activist who purely speak up their mind, without causing any vandalism and violence that astray from the main idea of the struggle. Yet, there were many rioters in demonstration, which caused riot and vandalism. The provocateur and rioter were a disturber. Abdur suggested to follow the expert, don’t cause a riot in demonstration. If someone cause a riot, the rioter is a embarrassment of the action.

“The one we against is smart, smartly provoke (Indonesian idiom: adu domba). So, don’t be a sheep. Some people have to be a tiger, chicken, komodo and Cendrawasih, ketupat, whatever is it. Make them confuse, when they want to provoke sheep fighting (adu domba), the will find no sheep.”

Abdur put a joke within his statement in the quotation above. He made an analogy that the government is smart in provocation. The government can do anything to save their image and ruin the country by provoking. The idioms of provoking in Indonesian language is “*adu domba*” means provoking 2 sheep to fight. So, don’t be easily provoked. You must not be sheep to provoke. Be anything else, be brave to show your opinion and you will not easily to be a sheep. So that the one who wants to provoke, they will difficult to provoke the sheep.

“Let’s support the people who struggling in the street. Support with prayer and donation (if available). The one who struggle in demonstration and the one who support from afar. We are from a same line, struggle (*Perjuangan*), purely struggle (*perjuangan*), without any symbol of animals. “

Abdur asked people to support the demonstrators by praying for them and giving donation (if possible). He also said that anyone who struggled in the street as in demonstration and the one who support from distance were in unity. They are in one interest, to speak and demand people’s rights and to voice up better change for Indonesia. He referred a name of political party, but he did not mention the name. There is a political party in Indonesia named *Perjuangan* as the title of the party. The party symbolizes themselves with animal symbol. Thus, it was the reason why Abdur referred that *Perjuangan* or Struggle must be done in unity, not based on the particular party and interest.

Based on the Abdur’s video, audiences can think deeply and automatically laugh as well. He delivered the sarcasm expression that was very rude in his speech. Moreover, the safety of referring is his priority in his speech. He enforces the ethic of satirical critics, especially towards government and other sensitive prominent roles. His video seems seriously campaign safe demonstration and contains ridiculous joke about “*adu domba*” which means the fight of sheep, then he adds “*tiger, ketupat*” which sounds ridiculous because they are unrelated to the sheep. However, the joke contains deep message that Indonesian people must not cause any riots and must unite in any situations.

### **Power and Position**

Power exists in human life. Either deliberately or unconsciously, power can be seen through language. As studies by Locher (2004) in Locastro (2012), that power is most likely reflected through language. The way of message delivery also determines power presence. However, power in language must be elaborated with contextualization. Further, power is constable, relational and dynamic. The idea of power behind the language emerges because there are interconnections between language and society. Then, the power reflected society’s ideology.

#### **a. Bintang emon**

Bintang Emon delivered the message within, in ironical narration and put the joke climax at the end. Yet has strong message. Emon emphasize his satire with ironical narration that the government has done their job properly and they obey Covid-19 protocol effectively. Nevertheless, Emon’s statement was the opposite of the truth. Everyone knew that in the pandemic, government should solve the pandemic and find a solution. Yet, the government flurry validated Omnibus Law,

which is suspicious at that time. Emon conveyed his jokes smoothly, with smiling; kidding; so that it would not put him in danger. Based on his speech, Emon satirically jokes about Indonesian government, which put him in position of pro-demonstrators. In the other words, Emon was also a demonstrator.

b. Abdur

Abdur conveyed the message boldly with some swear words. There were strong references without mentioning certain name and institution. The one Abdur referred as the slow (modest) is strong, without mentioning specific name, public will understand. It is the government (probably Indonesian president). He also referred a name of political party, but he did not mention the name. There is a political party in Indonesia named Perjuangan as the title of the party. The party symbolizes themselves with animal symbol. Thus, why Abdur referred that Perjuangan or Struggle must be done in unity, not based on the particular party and individual needs. The jokes is between the speeches. The mixture was perfect. His position was pro-demonstrator and he was contradictory to government. Moreover, he also warned rioters who ruined the demonstration. He also warned the people not to easily provoked during this condition.

### Conclusion

In sum, both comedians said their jokes and messages with satirical sentences and expression effectively to amuse and to warn people about the suspicious validation of omnibus law. Both comedians conveyed a message to people in demonstration to carefully conduct a protest so that there will no other problems follow by using some kinds of language features such as satire, irony, and sarcasm languages. In addition, both comedians explained their position as the pro-demonstrator, and they declared themselves as back-defense who support demonstration from afar through their action and speeches.

Through paying attention to the language phenomenon nowadays, people can utilize language as a tool for changing the situation. Besides, people may have some insights of the language features and functions by considering the intended meaning of the people's utterances in every forms of language used such as speech, conversation or even humor and comedy. In addition stand up comedy can be a great media to be used as a source for analyzing the update development of language features and functions.

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