



Forensic Linguistics on Gender-Based Abuse and Harassment in Instagram Comments on Public Figures

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-05-02 Revised: 2026-05-28 Accepted: 2026-06-30 Keywords: <i>forensic linguistics;</i> <i>gender-based harassment;</i> <i>Instagram comments; transitivity;</i> <i>verbal abuse</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.11817 Corresponding Author: Febri Pratomo Ramadhan Wijaya febriprw@gmail.com Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia	<i>This study examines gender-based abuse and harassment directed at public figures in Instagram comment sections from a forensic linguistic perspective. Social media has expanded opportunities for direct public interaction, but it has also enabled verbal violence, hate speech, defamatory expressions, and gendered attacks to circulate rapidly. The study aims to identify the linguistic forms, meanings, and structural patterns of abusive comments and to explain their potential relevance to the analysis of language-related offences. A descriptive qualitative design was employed using Instagram comments and supporting online media reports as data sources. The comments were analyzed through Hallidayan transitivity, with attention to process types, participants, attributes, and circumstances. The findings show that abusive comments are predominantly constructed through attributive and identifying relational processes that assign degrading labels to an explicit or implied target. Recurring patterns include dehumanization through animal comparisons, body-shaming, sexualized and moral attacks, and insults based on gender identity or sexual orientation. Ellipsis of the copular process, accumulation of vulgar labels, capitalization, repeated letters, and exclamation marks intensify the aggression. Mental, verbal, and material processes also appear, particularly in expressions of anger, mockery, intimidation, and threat. These findings demonstrate that online abusive language is not linguistically neutral; rather, its grammatical organization constructs unequal power relations and normalizes verbal violence. Transitivity analysis therefore offers a systematic basis for documenting how insulting meanings are encoded and for supporting context-sensitive forensic interpretation.</i>

1. Introduction

The development of information and communication technology has changed the way humans interact, especially through social media. One example of the most popular platform today is Instagram, which is used not only as a place to share photos or videos, but also as a forum for public communication between users and public figures or public figures. However, behind the ease of interaction there is also the phenomenon of swearing, insulting, and harassment of public figures.

Even in recent years, many language crimes or language crimes have spread among the public through social media. For example, cases of defamation, hate speech, and hoax cases are also rampant on social media. The freedom of social media also makes every group, both women and men, able to comment or convey anything that is in their minds to their social media. Without control over social media, social media users can freely comment and write statuses on other people's posts and their own posts. This phenomenon is even more complex when abusive swear comments contain elements of gender-based harassment, especially to female or male figures. This form of harassment can be seen not only from the offensive word choice, but also from the way language users structure their sentences. In this context, language is not neutral. It forms and reflects the power relationship between the perpetrator of the speech and the target who is the victim.

This phenomenon of negative comments is not only a matter of ethics, but can also be a legal issue. Speech that is demeaning, threatening, or harassing can be categorized as a criminal offense based on the Electronic Information and Transaction Law (ITE Law). Therefore, it is important to analyze these utterances scientifically so that their structure and meaning can be understood, and used as valid linguistic evidence.

It is in this context that forensic linguistics comes into existence as a scientific approach that combines linguistic analysis and legal application. In this case, forensic linguistics plays a role in uncovering the hidden meanings, structures of the language, and characteristics of the language used in the legal context. The study of forensic linguistics itself allows researchers to evaluate comments that contain swear words in depth. not only see his words on the surface, but also understand how language is used to demean, intimidate, or harass someone.

Hatred itself includes any form of expression that is considered offensive to religion, race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status and physical capacity (Walker, 1994). In addition, hate speech also refers to a person who behaves disrespectfully due to several factors, namely (1) always driven by emotions in his speech, (2) always wanting to corner his speech partner in every speech, (3) always prejudiced against his speech partner and (4) always protecting his opinion (Pranowo, 2009). According to Andersson and Hirsch (in Rosidin, 2010: 26), there are three conditions for a word or phrase to be classified as a swear word, namely (1) it refers to a taboo or stigma (a sign of social unacceptance) in a cultural environment, (2) it cannot be interpreted literally, and (3) it can be used to embody strong emotions and attitudes. So, swear is an expression that uses rude, dirty, obscene, disrespectful, and vile words that are used to offend other people's self-esteem and hurt someone's heart.

We often find swear expressions in the Instagram comment column of public figures, this has become a habit because someone is free to comment without any complaints from the victim against the perpetrator who comments about swear on social media accounts, and in the end it becomes an activity that is considered normal when netizens make negative comments on public figures in their Instagram columns. Swearing and swearing containing harassment contained on Instagram can become a criminal case if a public figure reports swearing and harassment in their comment column to the police. This phenomenon

is the main attraction for conducting forensic linguistic research which will later use a forensic linguistic approach with transitivity to analyze it. Based on the regulation of the National Police Chief No: SE/6/X/2015 concerning hate speech, what is called hate speech is any act that is considered insulting, defamatory, blasphemy, unpleasant acts, provoking, inciting, or spreading false news. which is used to scold and harass a public figure through comments on their posts.

Through this study, the author seeks to explore the forms of swearing and harassment in Instagram comments, especially on public figure accounts. The focus will be on how the speech is formed transitively. Through transitivity analysis, this study not only identifies swear words and swear words in the form of harassment, but also dismantles how language is used as a tool to normalize verbal violence against certain groups, especially women. This approach is in line with the goal of forensic linguistics, which is to uncover hidden meanings in speech that have the potential to violate the law and be socially harmful, as well as how such analysis can contribute to the understanding of forensic linguistics.

Research on swear words has been conducted by several researchers previously, namely (Arikah & Enih, 2022); (Putri et al., 2024); (Dewi & Rai, 2020) in the study describes swear words using a sociolinguistic approach, the study only describes the use of swear words without any discussion of articles that can ensnare netizens and also only describes the types of swear that are often used by netizens

In other studies that discuss cursing, namely (Nur & Junaini, 2022); (Aryani et al., 2023); which discusses swear words using a pragmatic approach, in the study only describes swearing based on immodesty but there is no explanation that the article can ensnare netizens who throw the word swear

Other studies that discuss Cursing are (Melda, 2018); (Nurjanah et al., 2024); (Goesda & Nirmawan, 2024); (Inderasari et al., 2019) the study uses a semantic approach in describing the research. The study focused on swear language and sarcasm but did not relate to the crime of language that could be violated in the netizen's comments

In another study that discussed hate speech using a pragmatic approach with forensic analysis conducted by (Permatasari & Subyantoro, 2020); (Claudia & Bagus, 2021); (F Ramadan, 2021); (Maulana & Mulyadi, 2021); (Suryani et al, 2021); (Duncan, 2023); (Kusno et al, 2022); (Sanubarianto & Winci, 2022); (Hestiyana, 2017); (Nuraini et al, 2022); (Batubara et al, 2023); (Gunawan, 2022) from the results of the analysis, comments were found in the form of hate speech that was provocative, speech in the form of insults, expressive in the form of disappointment, and hate speech in the form of blasphemy.

Based on the background and gaps obtained, this study will examine and describe the form and meaning of swearing and harassment contained on Instagram of public figures on Instagram. The researcher wants to reveal the transitivity structure of swearing and harassment contained in the Instagram comment column of a public figure, looking for differences in the pattern of swear words based on the gender of the commenter on the Instagram of the public figure, forensic linguistic analysis can be used to identify swearing that has the potential to violate the law.

In analyzing this research, the author uses the theory of Forensic Linguistics. Forensic Linguistics is a combination of forensic and linguistic science. Forensic science aims to find the cause or root cause of an event. In addition, forensic science refers to issues of law enforcement and justice, while linguistics is a language science that studies the ins and outs of linguistic aspects scientifically. Forensic Linguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies and analyzes language data for judicial purposes. The things analyzed include all elements of language, supporting elements of the meaning of language symptoms (paralinguistics) and the context of language events as key elements (Aziz, 2024).

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2. Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. The source of this research comes from comments on public figures' social media account posts on Instagram. This research aims to describe to find the cause of causation or the root cause of the occurrence of an event. In addition, forensic science refers to issues of law enforcement and justice, while linguistics is a language science that studies the ins and outs of linguistic aspects scientifically. The data analysis in this study uses an orthographic matching technique with the determining tool of the writing recorder.

3. Result and Discussion

The results of the analysis of the transitivity of swearing and harassment contained in the comment column of public figures on Instagram social media. The results of the analysis in question are the results of the findings of the transitivity structure in the curse carried out by perpetrators who come from the male and female genders

Forms of Mental Process Curses

Table 1 Forms of Swearing in the Mental Process of Male Gender Perpetrators

Gender	Transitivitas	Forms of swear	KHUP			
			Law ITE27 & 28A defamation	ITE Law 28 (fake news/hate speech)	Article 310 of the Criminal Code: Attacking the honor of a person	Article 315 of the Criminal Code (intentional minor insult)
Male	Mental processes (3)	Referential Insults (3)	3			
		Referential Profession				
		Body Referential				
		References to curses				
		Animal References				
		Harassment				

In table 1 above, it is found that curses are used to the mental process thrown by the male gender in the Instagram comment column. In the table, 3 data were found on the referential mental process of humiliation.

Date: 1

@Fredythp "Will you see your face in the mirror!!"

(Until you see your face again in Surabaya, your face is gone!!)

a)

Stuttgart (until)	Squirrel (View)	Sludge (your face)	Again (again)	At the Time of Snooze (in Surabaya)
Conjunction	mental processes	Phenomenon	Circumstan Manners	Circumstance of location

b)

Squirt (finished)	Sludge	Cok
Attribute	<i>Carrier</i>	Vocal

b) Clause: "A Lot of Rain"

Squirt	(is Ø)	Sludge Cok
<i>Evaluative</i> Attribute	The relational process Attribute if (implicit),	<i>Carrier</i> Vocal (affirmation of aggressiveness)

The first sentence of the sentence reads, "*Your Excellency's Letter to the Editor of the Gazette!!*" uploaded by @Fredythp account can be analyzed through the Functional Systemic Linguistics (LSF) approach with an emphasis on Halliday's transitivity. This speech consists of two clauses that build the meaning of insult and verbal aggressiveness, each representing the speaker's perception experience and the giving of a negative attribute to the target speech. The first clause, "*until you see your raimu again nang Suroboyo*", is realized through a perceptual mental process, in which the speaker acts as a *Senser* who experiences perceptual activity in the form of seeing (looking) at the Phenomenon, namely *raimu* ('your face').

Participants who are subject to this perception are not explicitly mentioned, but can be reconstructed as a second party, namely the target of speech. The use of the phenomenon in the form of a face indicates that the target of the attack is personally directed, given that the face in a social context serves as a symbol of individual identity, honor, and self-esteem. The element of *maneh* ('again') functions as a Circumstance of Time, indicating the frequency or repetition of events, while the phrase *nang Suroboyo* ('in Surabaya') is a Circumstance of Location that clarifies the situational context, while strengthening the confrontational nuances built by the speaker.

The second clause, "*entek raimu cok*", is analyzed as a relational process of the Attribute if, although it literally appears to be an idiomatic expression. In this clause, *raimu* acts as a *Carrier*, while *entek* ('exhausted') functions as an *Attribute* attached to the *Carrier*. This relationship is implicit, reconstructed through an implied link, so that the meaning of the clause can be understood as "(your face) is exhausted". Semantically, the use of Attribute *does* not only express physical conditions, but also contains negative evaluations that are degrading and attack the target's personal identity. The word *cok* functions as a vocative, which in the East Javanese dialect is usually used as a swear word or emotional

affirmation. This vocative presence reinforces the intensity of the insult, confirming the expression of anger, hatred, and the intention to demean the victim.

From a forensic linguistic perspective, the speech can be categorized as a form of verbal insult that contains implicit threats. The use of negative expressions directed at the physical identity of the victim (*raimu*) and combined with offensive vocatives (*cok*) emphasized the intensity of the speaker's aggressiveness. The potential violation of the law is related to the provisions in Article 27A of Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning the ITE Law, which prohibits insults and/or threats through electronic systems. In addition, this expression can also be studied through Article 433 of the Criminal Code, which regulates insulting the honor of individuals. Thus, although the criminal element must be legally proven, from a linguistic point of view, this speech clearly shows the intention of the speaker to attack the dignity, reputation, and identity of the victim in the digital public space, thus having a detrimental social and psychological impact.

Relational Process Curse Table

Table 2 Curses with Relational Attribute Process in Male Gender Actors

Gen der	Transitiv itas	Curse Forms	CRIMINAL Code			
			Law ITE27 & 28A defamati on	ITE Law 28 (fake news/hate speech)	Article 310 of the Criminal Code: Attacking the honor of a person	Article 315 of the Criminal Code (intentio nal minor insult)
Mal e	Relation al Attribute Process if (74)	Referential Insults (60)	20		20	20
		Referential Profession				
		Body Referential (3)	1		1	1
		References to curses				
		Animal References (8)	5		1	2
		Harassment (3)	1		1	1

Dates 2

@agung.Setiawan "HOMO JANCOK"

Homo	Squirt
Carrier	Attributive relational processes

The phrase "HOMO JANCOK", which was found in social media comments. The sentence contains swear words that use abusive language, with the aim of demeaning the individual mentioned in the sentence. This analysis uses the framework of linguistic theory to explore the relationships between sentence elements, as well as to understand the linguistic processes that make up the curse.

The word "Homo" in this sentence serves as *a carrier* or Attribute carrier. Linguistically, *a carrier* is an element that has or houses the Attribute assigned to it. In this context, "Homo" refers to an individual who is insulted by using stereotypes that lead to a

particular sexual orientation. The use of this word has a derogatory connotation, where the subject mentioned is considered to have negative traits based on a specific social category or identity. The word "Homo" not only serves as a marker of identity, but also becomes the focal point of the insult in the sentence. As *a Carrier*, Homo is an element that carries or houses negative Attributes that will be pinned to it.

The word "Sex" in this clause serves as an Attribute given to *the Carrier* (Homo). In this analysis, the word "Jancok" plays a role in the relational process of the Attribute, which describes the relationship between *the Carrier* and the Attribute attached to it. This Attribute if relational process is a type of relational process that states that an entity (in this case, "Homo") is assigned or associated with a particular Attribute (i.e. Sex). Jancok itself is a very rude and vulgar term, which gives a very degrading value to the object being mentioned, in this case the individual called Homo. Within the framework of transitivity theory, Jancok serves to emphasize the insults directed at Homo, by using words that are not only demeaning but also contain connotations of verbal violence.

Overall, the word "Homo" as *a Carrier* receives a very derogatory Attribute in the form of the word "Fuck". This structure describes how language can be used to convey a structured message of contempt, in the way that *the carrier* is identified with a negative attribute. The use of "Jancok" in this case shows the existence of a hierarchical relationship in the sentence that shows dominance or verbal power over the individual being mentioned. It reflects how language can be a means to vent verbal violence, both in social contexts and in online interactions.

The potential violation of the law is related to the provisions in Article 27A of Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning the ITE Law, which prohibits insults and/or threats through electronic systems. In addition, this expression can also be studied through Article 433 of the Criminal Code, which regulates insulting the honor of individuals. Thus, although the criminal element must be legally proven, from a linguistic point of view, this speech clearly shows the intention of the speaker to attack the dignity, reputation, and identity of the victim in the digital public space, thus having a detrimental social and psychological impact.

Dates 3

@yohaaa.ec "Fat as a Bird"

<i>(implied: you)</i>	Fat (fat)	Poultry Squirrels
<i>Carrier</i>	PRA -Attribute	Circumstance Manner Comparison

The utterance of "Lemu kyok poultry" based on the perspective of Functional Systemic Linguistics (LSF) is realized through the relational process of Attribute, which is the process that constructs the relationship between the participant and a certain Attribute attached to it (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In that clause, the participant who is the object of speech is not explicitly stated, but can be contextually reconstructed as a second-person pronoun, *i.e. you*, so that it functions as *a Carrier*. The lexicon of fat ('fat') acts as an *attribute* attached to *the Carrier*. The use of the lexicon does not simply describe physical conditions neutrally, but represents an evaluative assessment that has a negative value on the body of the target speech.

The phrase kyok poultry ('like a bird') serves as a circumstance manner: comparison that clarifies the form of comparison to the Attribute that has been given. Through this metaphorical comparison, the speaker equates the physical condition of the victim with an animal, namely a poultry, thus strengthening the pejorative effect in speech. In linguistic

practice, the use of animal references is often a linguistic strategy to demean or discredit a person for constructing humans through animal imagery attached to negative connotations.

From a forensic linguistic perspective, the speech shows the practice of body shaming constructed through animal referentialism. The speaker not only gave a negative evaluation of the victim's physical condition, but also reinforced the insult by likening the victim to a poultry. This kind of linguistic strategy has the potential to attack the honor and dignity of the individual because the identity of the victim is represented through degrading animal metaphors. Therefore, the saying "Lemu kyok poultry" can be understood as a form of swear that expresses contempt for the physical aspect of a person through the use of animal references that have pejorative meaning.

Based on this analysis, Data 2 represents a clause with the relational process of Attribute, which involves *the Carrier* in the form of an implied participant as the insulted party, *the Attribute* in the form of a *lean* lexicon ('fat'), and *cirmstan* manner: comparison in the form of the phrase *kyok poultry*. The three elements work in an integrated manner in constructing the meaning of humiliation that targets the physical condition of the victim through metaphorical comparisons with animals.

From a legal perspective, if the speech is directed at certain individuals and disseminated through electronic media, this speech has the potential to meet the element of insult as stipulated in Article 27A of Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning the Second Amendment to the ITE Law, as well as Article 433 of Law Number 1 of 2023 concerning the Criminal Code, because it contains expressions that attack the honor or good name of others in the digital public space.

Dates 4

@wyu4_ "It's Too Black, I'm Still White"

It's Still Black and White	Still white	My Dick
Attribute	Relational Process	Carrier

The statement "it's really black, still white my dick" can be analyzed using Halliday's Theory of Transivity as an attribute relational construct that contains body-reference-based insults. The speech is built through the relationship between *the Carrier*, the relational process of the Attribute, and the Attribute which is used to give a negative assessment of the party who is the target of the speech. In the context of social media communication, this kind of structure does not serve to describe physical conditions neutrally, but rather is used as a verbal strategy to demean and mock a person's physical appearance through comparisons to body parts that are considered taboo or vulgar.

The phrase "my dick" serves as a *Carrier* in Halliday's transient structure. A *carrier* is a participant to which a particular attribute is attached in a relational process. The word "dick" is a vulgar term that refers to the male genitalia, while "gw" refers to the speaker. In this speech, the speaker's genitals are used as a comparative reference point to assess the object being attacked. The use of sexual organs as *carriers* suggests that the speaker deliberately uses personal and sensitive body references to reinforce the effects of humiliation. Thus, *Carrier* not only serves as a grammatical element, but also as a source of comparative legitimacy used to demean speech targets.

The phrase "still white" serves as an Attribute if relational process that connects *the Carrier* to the attached Attribute. In Halliday's Theory of Transit, the relational process Attribute if functions to state that an entity has certain qualities. The word "still" indicates a comparative meaning, while "white" contains a lighter color quality meaning. Implicitly, this construction forms the proposition that the color of the speaker's genitals is still lighter

than the color of the object being compared. Thus, this relational process becomes a linguistic means to build comparative relationships that result in negative evaluations of other parties.

The phrase "really black" serves as an attribute that assesses the target speech. In Javanese, the word "ireng" means 'black', while "banget" functions as an intensity booster. Lexically, dark skin tone does not always mean negative. However, in the context of the speech, the "really black" attribute is used as a pejorative label that aims to mock and demean a person's physical appearance. The use of this Attribute shows the practice of colour-based insults, which are insults that use body color characteristics as the basis for negative evaluation. The "really" intensifier further strengthens the degree of humiliation because it confirms that the condition that is assessed is considered very bad or undesirable by the speaker.

Legally, this speech has the potential to violate the ITE Law Article 27 Paragraph (3) because the speech is disseminated through electronic media (Instagram), and can also be categorized as insulting. The important point is that the medium of dissemination is public, so the potential for legal impact is significant.

Second, it has the potential to violate Article 335 paragraph (1) of the Criminal Code which regulates actions that can harm a person's honor or good name. Speech that offends the color of the interlocutor's skin and sexual organs is included in the category of insult as referred to in this article.

Dates 5

@roll.van_ "FEFEK PUAN ROT"

FEFEK POINTS	(Is: implied Ø)	ROTTEN
<i>Carrier</i>	PRA	<i>Attribute</i>

The phrase "ROTTEN EFFECT" can be analyzed using Halliday's Theory of Transitivity as an attribute relational construct that contains explicit sexual insults. In that structure, speech is built through a relationship between *Carrier* and *Attribute* that aims to provide a negative assessment of the target speech. This form of linguistics is not used to convey objective information, but rather as a means of verbal aggression that attacks a person's personal and sexual identity.

The phrase "FEFEK PUAN" serves as a *carrier* in Halliday's Transitivity structure. A *carrier* is a participant to which a particular attribute is attached in a relational process. In this context, the word "fefek" is a vulgar variation of the word "vagina", while "Puan" refers to a specific individual who is the target of speech. The use of female sexual organs as *carriers* suggests that the insult is directed at the target's body identity and sexuality. The choice of vulgar words reinforces the pejorative effect and shows an attempt to dehumanize the individual being attacked. Thus, *Carrier* in this speech is not only a marker of the biological body, but also a representation of the identity of women who are attacked through sexualization.

The element "(is)" functions as an Attribute relational process that is elliptical or implicit. In Halliday's Theory of Transitivity, the relational process functions to connect *the Carrier* with the *Attribute* attached to it. Although the predictive element does not appear explicitly, the equivalence relationship can still be understood directly through the construction of the speech, so that the proposition formed is "FEFEK PUAN is ROTTEN". This ellipsis shows that in the language of social media speech, relational elements are often omitted to produce shorter, harsher, and more immediate expressions. The absence of explicit verbs actually reinforces the aggressive effect because the insults are conveyed dense and without linguistic mitigation.

The word "ROTTEN" serves as an Attribute that gives a negative rating to *the Carrier*. In Transit Theory, an Attribute is an element that attaches certain qualities to the *Carrier*. The word "rotten" has a semantic meaning that relates to something dirty, corrupt, disgusting, or unworthy. When the Attribute is attached to the female sexual organs, the meaning of insult becomes stronger because it contains elements of moral, physical, and sexual degradation at the same time. The attribute not only attacks the biological aspect of the body, but also degrades the honor and dignity of women as social individuals. In the study of linguistic aggression, this form includes *sexualised verbal abuse* because it uses sexual references to insult and discredit the target.

Thus, the expression "FEFEK PUAN BUSUK" shows the pattern of relational transitivity Attribute if which is used as a sexual insult strategy. *Carrier* ("FEFECTURE"), elliptical relational processes ("are"), and Attribute ("ROT") form linguistic constructs that explicitly degrade the target's sexual identity. The use of sexual body parts as individual representations indicates the existence of humiliation metonymy, which is the attack on a person's identity through certain body parts. Based on Halliday's theory of transitivity, this speech shows how language structure is used as a tool of verbal aggression to degrade, humiliate, and objectify women in the digital communication space

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be concluded that swearing and harassment in the Instagram comment column of public figures is dominated by *the Relational Attribute Process*. This process has a central role in building a semantic relationship between *the carrier* (carrier) and *the Attribute* (Attribute) which is used to attach judgments, negative evaluations, and forms of insult to the individual who is the object of speech.

In many cases, *the carrier* appears in an explicit form of a direct reference to the target, but in some data it is also found an implicit form that can be reconstructed through context. The findings of the study also show that the form of swear used by netizens can be classified into several main categories, namely insult referential swearing, animal referential, body referential, and sexual harassment. The four categories show a variety of linguistic strategies in expressing verbal violence in the digital space. Referential insults are the most dominant form, which shows the tendency of netizens to use terms of negative social value in attacking individual identities. Meanwhile, animal referential and body referential are also quite dominant as metaphorical forms used to degrade humans through association with non-human entities.

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