

Insults on Donald Trump's Twitter: A Study of Pragmatics

Evert Haryanto Hilman

Postgraduate Program in Linguistics, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia

Dadang Suganda

Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia

Nani Damayanti

Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia

Abstract—As one of the most used social media platforms, twitter has become a powerful tool for a number of purposes, including personal and business promotions as well as social communication. As for the political celebrities, it is considered to be the fastest way to communicate with their fans, friends or even their haters. Donald Trump is the former of 45th President of the United States and also a frequent user of twitter who often posts controversial or false statements. On July 16, 2019, the House of Representatives voted to censure him for “racist comments”. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the utterances of insults on Donald Trump's Twitter account using descriptive qualitative research method, before and after Trump became the president of the United States and will look at the utterances, forms and references. The insult utterances of Trump's illocutionary speech acts that were found and then to be classified into (1) abusive swearing, (2) swearing, (3) obscenity, focusing on Searle's five classification of speech acts which consist of (1) representatives, (2) directives, (3) commissives, (4) expressives, and (5) declarations.

Index Terms—insults, Donald Trump, twitter, three classifications, speech acts

I. INTRODUCTION

Obscenity is very powerful and has a negative effect on conversation in formal situations and behaves differently than other types of language. Moreover, it is coded differently in the brain, learned differently, then articulated differently, and changed differently over time. As a result, poor language has the unique potential to reveal facts about our language and ourselves that we never imagined (Hamuddin et al., 2022). Furthermore, learning profanity teaches us where language finds its power to shape thoughts and shape the world, how our brains learn language, and how language should develop (Bergen, 2016, pp.1-2).

Many American politicians use profanity or swear words, but not many do so like the 45th President of the United States, Donald Trump. Like previous presidents, they commonly use swear words at their personal advisers and not be covered in the media, but no one uses them as dramatically and as frequently as Trump at many public events. In addition many American politicians have used curse words, but none have used curse words dramatically and repeatedly at public events and few have done so like Donald Trump, as it is well known that past presidents used language disrespectful in private conversations with their advisers or unattended moments recorded on tape, (<http://time.com/4978212/donald-trump-cursing-swear-words/#>).

Vice President Joe Biden called the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare (Health Insurance Reform) “This is a big fucking deal.” heard through the microphone, while George W. Bush, the 43rd President of the United States, called a journalist a “major-league asshole” that was also caught on the microphone. Vice President Dick Cheney once told a Democratic senator “go fuck yourself” as did presidents Richard Nixon (37th) and Lyndon Johnson (36th) who were notoriously rude when talking to their advisers. Lyndon Johnson once said, during a dialogue with his cabinet members, using swear words. “I do know the difference between chicken shit and chicken salad.”

John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States, has also used swear words, for example, when news broke that the Air Force had spent US\$5,000 to equip a delivery room for Jackie Kennedy. “This is obviously a fuck-up,” he grumbled to a general over the phone. In the eyes of Harry S. Truman, the 33rd President of the United States, General Douglas MacArthur was a “dumb son of a bitch,” and Nixon was “a shifty-eyed goddamned liar.”

However, these are events that do not occur in public, while Donald Trump often uses swear words in public, especially in a series of campaigns in his speeches using words, such as “damn” and “hell” and even “shit” and “pussy.” In a famous speech in Las Vegas in 2011, he mentioned the word “fuck” repeatedly, such as “Listen you motherfuckers, we're going to tax you 25 percent!” aimed at China (<http://time.com/4978212/donald-trump-cursing-swear-words/>).

The preceding statement demonstrates the necessity to analyze insult utterances further using a speech act theory stating that language always arises in the form of particular speech acts or behavior, based on real-life experience. As a

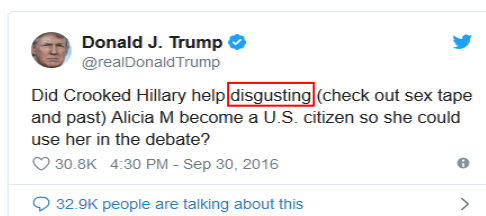
result, every study of language structure must begin with an examination of speech acts.

Speech acts are psychologically based individual signs whose continuation is governed by the speaker's language ability in coping with specific situations (Recanati, 2004, p. 179; Weda et al., 2021). It is more important to see the meaning or meaning of the actions in the speech in speech acts. In different settings, the phrase "The automobile broke down!" might signify different things. It's possible that the speaker is just expressing the present state of the vehicle, requesting that someone else repair or push it, or even making a complaint (Jaszczolt & Jaszczolt, 2005; Andini, 2021, p. 875). Since humans will frequently be faced with the need to comprehend and use numerous types of speech acts, each of which can be achieved through diverse means, sociolinguistic skills, including a comprehension of speech acts, are vital in communication (Rahman et al., 2019).

According to Zierhofer (2002, p. 1359), speech act is a key term in pragmatics, which can be broadly defined as the use of language in context while takes into account the verbal and nonverbal contributions of the speaker and receiver to the process of negotiating meaning. Furthermore, pragmatic theory should actually provide a clear view of the cognitive mechanisms at play when an utterance is interpreted as a particular type of speech act, and of the linguistic and extralinguistic factors that determine such interpretation (Rahman & Weda, 2018, p. 150). However, most cognitively oriented pragmatic models leave little room for the way speech is given illocutionary power (Wilson & Sperber, 2002; Levinson, 2000; Carston, 2008).

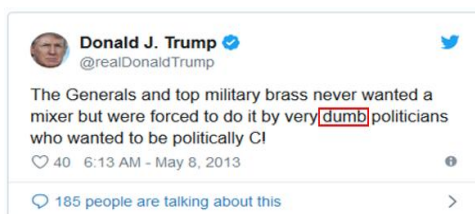
Searle (1999, p. 151) claims the five Classification of Speech Acts which consist of (1) Representatives, (2) Directives, (3) Commissives, (4) Expressives, and (5) Declarations. Representative: the goal is to connect the speaker to something that is happening. For example, this class will contain most of Austin's exposition and many of its decisions (suggest, hypothesize, insist, swear, assert emphatically). Posterior directive: these illocutionary points consist in the fact that they are the speaker's attempt to get the listener to do something. This class contains some Austin behaviors and many Austin exercises. Examples: Commands, Commands, Requests, Invitations, Permissions, Suggestions. Next, commissive: the goal is to get the speaker to commit to some future action. The class contains the commission of Austin except the will, the intention, and the support. Expressive: The illocutionary point of this class is to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about the state specified in the propositional content. Example: thank you, congratulations, sorry, condolences, regret, welcome. Statement: It is the defining characteristic of this class that the successful performance of each of its members results in a correspondence between propositional content and reality. Examples: resign, dismiss, excommunicate, baptize, appoint, and declare war.

This study is looking at how social practices/habits underpin insults on Donald Trump's Twitter account, both before and after Trump became president of the United States (US), and what types of Trump illocutionary speech acts from all texts used and explain the meanings and messages contained in Trump's utterances. The following are extracts from Trump's divisive remarks, made on his personal Twitter account, which frequently employ insult words directed at the opposite sex, like in the following example:



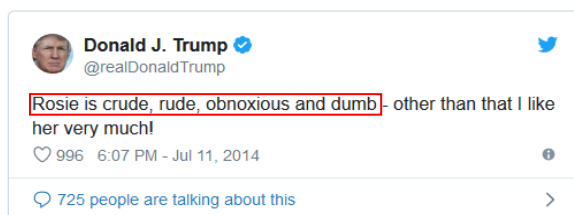
With his 'disgusting' remarks to former beauty queen Alicia Machado, and also accusing her of possessing 'sex tapes of her past' after the first presidential debates in 2016, there is clearly an element of swearing included in Trump's Twitter account classified as obscenity with the goal of attacking his political opponent, Hilary Clinton. Trump's treatment of Machado in public at the time drew a lot of attention since his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton, regularly brought up Machado's name during presidential debates.

Another example of Trump's remark in his Twitter account pertaining to the classification of abusive swearing with mental retardation, in which he expresses his opposition to the unification of male and female soldiers in combat units:



Interior Secretary (Leon) Panetta's announcement in January 2013 allowing women to join the fighting force enraged Trump and his close advisers, not because generals and other officers want unification of male and female soldiers, but because of political coercion from dumb (brainless) politicians.

Trump has mocked O'Donnell over the years, but he has frequently repeated his swear words in interviews and on his personal Twitter account, as in the example below, where Trump cornered O'Donnell with expletives such as rude, brash, obnoxious, and stupid.



The study shows that Trump intentionally utilizes swear words for strategic goals in order to bolster his image as a truth seeker while avoiding being politically incorrect. Observing the events stated above, the writer attempts to uncover the truth and investigate the utterances centered on Trump's speech acts, which include abusive swearing on Donald Trump's Twitter account.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

The researchers divided this research objective into two: 1) the researcher show how the social practices/habits underpin insults on Donald Trump's Twitter account, both before and after Trump became president of the United States (US), and 2) the researcher reveal what types of Trump illocutionary speech acts from all texts used and explain the meanings and messages contained in Trump's utterances.

III. METHOD

A qualitative descriptive research method that stresses the quality of the entity under study was used to assess the swear words in Donald Trump's Twitter account. There are two types of qualitative research: descriptive and analytical. Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 15) describe that qualitative research emphasizes the social construction aspect of reality. The process of qualitative research focuses on revealing the social meaning of a phenomenon built by the research subject. Furthermore, Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p. 74) explain that there are five characteristics of qualitative research methods, that are, (1) qualitative research has a natural setting as the direct data source, and the researcher is the key instrument; and (2) qualitative research is descriptive research. The data collected are more words or pictures than numbers; (3) qualitative research pays more attention to the process than the product. This is due to the way researchers collect and interpret data, settings or relationships between the parts being studied will be much clearer if observed in the process; (4) qualitative research tries to analyze the data inductively: the researchers do not look for data to prove hypotheses that have been prepared before starting the research, but to develop abstractions; and (5) qualitative research focuses on meaning, not just visible behavior. Furthermore, in line with Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Moleong (2000, p. 3) argues that qualitative research can be defined as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people who can be observed. Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1992, p. 15) argue that one of the things contained in qualitative research is data that appears in the form of words and not a series of numbers. Furthermore, Corbin and Strauss (2004, p. 4) emphasize that qualitative research methods are types of research whose findings are not obtained through statistical procedures or other forms of calculation.

In this study, data was collected using the observational method or document studies obtained from the internet. In addition, Mahsun (2005, p. 90) discussed the observational technique because the data is gathered through witnessing how people use language. The term "observing" refers not just to the use of language audibly, but also to the use of language in writing. According to Sudaryanto (2015, p. 203), the observing or observational technique is named after Facts are carried out in the form of observation, namely by observing, namely the use of language.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data were compiled from a tally of Trump's verbal attacks on Twitter from the start of his campaign in 2015 through 2021. The results of the poll revealed the most common order of harsh language used by Trump during those years. The most commonly used swear words on Trump's Twitter are eighteen insult words out of over 3044 top selected insults. The following table shows the classifications of Searl's five speech acts and swearing words along with their examples and the intended target in these insults:

TABLE 1
SEARLE'S FIVE CLASSIFICATIONS AND CLASSIFICATION OF INSULTS

Classification:		Representatives	
Illocutionary Act:		represent the situation. For example: claim, hypothesize, describe, state, insist, suggest, assert, or swear that something happened.	
Insult word:		disgusting (80)	
No.	Example of Utterances	Classification	Target
1.	"Rosie O'Donnell is disgusting . I mean inside and out. Look at her, she's a farmer..."	Obscenity	RD
2.	They are disgusting Fake News!	Abusive swearing	ABC
3.	They are utterly corrupt and disgusting . No wonder the media, according to polls, are record low & untrusted. #MAGA	Abusive swearing	M
4.	@PhilipRucker (Mr. Off the Record) and @AshleyRParker of the Washington Post, two vicious and jovial reporters, shouldn't even be allowed into the White House because their reporting is DISGUSTING and untrue. Also add LOTS of federal judge appointments this summer!	Abusive swearing	WP
Insult word:		weak (240)	
No.	Example of Utterances	Classification	Target
1.	"She called me snake oil salesman and, you know, coming from Rosie, that's pretty understated, because when you look at her and see the spirit, the spirit is weak ."	Obscenity	RD
2.	Biden is weak on socialism and will betray Columbia. I stand with you!	Abusive swearing	JB
3.	Did you see where Joe Biden — as Weak , Tired, and sleepy as he is, ...	Swearing	JB
4.	RT @LindseyGrahamSC: The Obama years: ➡ Very weak foreign policy (ISIS, Iran nuclear deal). ➡ Slow growth, weak economy. ➡ A...	Swearing	BO
Insult:		ass (66)	
No.	Example of Utterances	Classification	Target
1.	Mitt Romney never knew how to win. He is a pompous " ass " who has been fighting me from the beginning, ...	Abusive swearing	MR
2.	"@traappgawddd: @realDonaldTrump kick Obamas ass and run for president already."	Abusive swearing	BO
3.	"@cav1301: @realDonaldTrump Kenya Moore is an ass !! Hope she is fired FIRST!!!"	Obscenity	KM
Insult word:		loser (158)	
No.	Example of Utterances	Classification	Target
1.	"Cher is somewhat of a loser . She's lonely. She's unhappy. She's very miserable."	Obscenity	CS (Cherilyn Sarkisian)
2.	How the failed presidential candidate (1% and fell!) @CoryBooker dared to make false accusations and claims about me while speaking to Judge Barrett. Illegally, he didn't even live in Newark when he was mayor. Guy is a complete loser ! I want better health care for much less money, always.....	Abusive swearing	CB
3.	Cryin Chuck Schumer, compared to what other senators have brought to their states, very little has been brought to N.Y.A. Totally redundant losers , the only thing he gave them was SEL. He didn't even call me to stop him. No wonder Cuomo and most others couldn't stand it. COA!	Abusive swearing	CS
4.	George Conway, often referred to as Mr. Kellyanne Conway by those who knew him, was VERY jealous of his wife's success and angry that with her help I had not gotten the job he so badly wanted. I barely know him, but look, what a loser and what a great husband!	Abusive swearing	GC
Classification:		Directives	
Illocutionary Act:		For getting the addressee to do something For example: ordering, commanding, daring, defying, challenging	
Insult word:		dumb (142)	
No.	Example of Utterances	Classification	Target
1.	The United States spends a lot of money at airports to screen people arriving from West Africa, with uncertain results. STOP THE STEALING, BOOLISH B'S!	Abusive swearing	BO
2.	NO MERCY TO TERRORISTS you dumb bastards!	Abusive swearing	T

Classification:		Commissives	
Illocutionary Act:		For getting the speaker (the one performing the speech act) to do something. For example: promising, threatening, intending, vowing to do or to refrain from doing something.	
Insult words:		dishonest (208) dumb (142)	
No.	Example of Utterances	Classification	Target
1.	Monday at 17.00 I will announce THE MOST DISHONEST AND CORRUPTION MEDIA AWARD OF THE YEAR.	Swearing	M
2.	Do you believe that? The Obama administration has agreed to accept illegal immigrants from Australia. Because? I'm going to investigate this stupid case!	Swearing	BO

Classification:		Expressives	
Illocutionary Act:		express the speaker's thoughts about an event that is considered true. Example: greeting, thank you, regret, sympathy, acceptance, apology	
Insult words:		dishonest (208) stupid (192)	
No.	Example of Utterances	Classification	Target
1.	Kudos to @ABC News for suspending Brian Ross for his grossly inaccurate and dishonest reporting on the Russian, Russian, Russian witch hunt. More networks and "newspapers" should do the same with their fake news!	Abusive swearing	ABC
2.	Thank you , the very dishonest Fake News Media is under control!	Swearing	NM
3.	RT @heatherjones333: Congratulations , sleepy Joe! You just won Stupid Person of 2019 Fools Award! □ Joe Biden: 'We Will All Die' If We Don't Stop...	Abusive swearing	JB

Classification:		Declarations	
Illocutionary Act:		create the conditions associated with it. For instance. to bless, to dismiss, to baptize, to offer, to judge, to excommunicate.	
Insult words:		ugly (50) overrated (47) crooked (450)	
No.	Example of Utterances	Classification	Target
1.	"If I was directing 'The View,' I'd fire Rosie O'Donnell. I mean, I'd see her big ugly face, I'd say, 'Rosie, you're fi red.'	Obscenity	RD
2.	The only thing Barack Obama and I could have in common is that we both had the honor of firing Jim Mattis, the world's most overrated general. I asked for his resignation letter and I feel good. His nickname was "Chaos", which I didn't like, and I changed it to "Mad Dog"...	Abusive swearing	JM
3.	The firing of James Comey would be an exciting day for America. He's a Crooked Policeman.....	Abusive swearing	JC

The frequency with which Donald Trump's insults were used in numerous of his Twitter accounts before they were removed by Twitter is seen in Table 2. This highlights Trump's divisiveness, as he is the only president to utilize social media to malign his opponents by primarily using swear words:

TABLE 2
SEARLE'S FREQUENCY OF INSULTS USED BY TRUMP ON HIS TWITTER

No.	Word	Total Occurrences	Examples
1.	Crooked	450	Crooked Hillary Clinton. Shifty is a crooked politician!
2.	Corrupt	363	Joe Biden is a corrupt politician who only betrayed you for 47 years... RT @GreggJarrett: Corrupt Comey conveniently claims he doesn't remember any part of the FBI investigation into Trump-Russia "collusion".
3.	Low	288	Lamestream Media is stuck with him and they are just trying to clean up his act. Notice how all the bad stuff, like his very low IQ, is no longer reported? Joe is definitely a low IQ person! Lamestream Media is stuck with this and they're just trying to clean up their act. Notice how all the bad stuff, like your very low IQ, isn't flagged anymore? Joe is definitely a low IQ person!
4.	Weak	240	Joe Biden is too weak to lead this Country! Crazy "Nancy Pelosi, you are a weak person. You are a bad leader.
5.	Phony	235	How sad that someone who has made so many mistakes, the corrupt Hillary Clinton, can run a false and vicious ad with her phony money! All the phony TV commercials against me were bought and paid for by SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS, bandits who tell their politicians what to do.
6.	dishonest	208	Nancy Pelosi and Adam Schiff were very dishonest . CNN is very dishonest . Today we took the journalists to the border detention center for families and children and they all told us that...
7.	Stupid	192	It is impossible for the FBI not to recommend the criminal prosecution of Hillary Clinton. What did you do wrong? What Bill did was stupid ! I don't know if President Obama didn't stop the Ebola flights from hitting West Africa because he was stubborn, stupid or didn't care!
8.	ridiculous	177	He was a talentless and ridiculous egotistical. "@StreckerJosh: Hillary's love party on CNN was ridiculous . I feel sorry for the other contestants...especially the non-criminals."
9.	Loser	158	Totally stupid @CheriJacobus. Ask my people for work. Rejected him twice and he became hostile. Big loser , zero credibility! Something needs to be done about stupid @KarlRove - he pushed the Republicans down the same path to win. Make no mistake, Karl is a loser .
10.	Dumb	142	Stuart Stevens is a dumb who fails at almost everything he touches. Romney's campaign, his books, etc. Why is @andersoncooper wearing it? 11 So when is something big going to happen to James Comey? Caught cold. He is either very dumb or one of the worst liars in the history of politics.
11.	Pathetic	126	A weak and pathetic Democrat Mayor!!! Juan Williams at @FoxNews is so pathetic .
12.	incompetent	122	(Ted) Wheeler is incompetent . The incompetent Mayor of Washington, D.C.
13.	Poor	108	Crazy "Nancy Pelosi, you are a weak person. You are a poor leader. Spitzer and Weiner lost, cheerful Eric Schneiderman will be next: he will be challenged in PRIMARY. You did a very poor job!
14.	Dummy	83	If dummy Bill Kristol says this is a spoiler for the independent candidacy, goodbye Supreme Court! Isn't it funny that he is now #1 losing money @HuffingtonPost (poll) and by a wide margin? dummy @ariannahuff gives it her all!
15.	Dopey	70	Dopey @BillKristol, who has lost all credibility with so many stupid statements and choices, said last week on @Morning_Joe that Biden was in. @AC360 You have the worst anti-Trump talking head on your show. Dopey writer O'brian knows nothing about me or my fortune. Free!
16.	Moron	37	"@wzpd8z: Mr. Trump, moron Chuck Todd, all kinds of YouTube videos showing Muslims celebrating 9/11. I'll put it in your ad. George Will is a political moron .
17.	Clueless	25	"@vbonina: @ConserveCast @GeorgeWill, why is Fox even talking to Will? He knows clueless and doesn't represent our party." Biden scores and polls fail over his clueless H1N1 swine flu handling
18.	hypocrite	20	Hypocrite! @HillaryClinton says he needs a 'public and private position' in talks with Wall Street banks. JEB is a hypocrite! Using massive private "eminent domain"

V. CONCLUSIONS

Insults reflect a worldwide phenomenon since they are constantly come across in our daily lives, and the value of 'bad language' and 'swear words' changes with time. However, it is difficult to see a clear distinction between the types offered. For example, there is a slight difference between blasphemy and profanity, although there is still some ambiguity. Profanity tends to secularize something sacred and demonstrate ignorance of God or religion, while blasphemy tends to actively attack a religion and tarnish respect for God. The results of this discussion indicate that there are multiple reasons, causes, and roles for swearing in both genders. The following are some of Trump's most essential reasons, motives, and functions as stated on his Twitter indicating his 1) expression in specific situations, such

as fighting and scolding; 2) indication of obscenity that has a negative (in harming others) influence on people; 3) assistance to people in expressing their feelings of impatience, surprise, and grief, that are among psychological reasons for cursing; 4) declaration of himself to alleviate sadness and build an identity using profanity; and 5) conveyance of fury and sadness in a private and interpersonal environment.

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Evert Haryanto Hilman is a teaching staff of English Literature Study Program at Nasional University, Indonesia. He is currently doing a postgraduate program at Padjadjaran University, Indonesia. His research interests are Translation, Linguistics, and Literature.

Dadang Suganda is a Professor of Linguistics Program at Padjadjaran University, Indonesia. His research interests are Linguistics, Pragmatics, Indonesian Language.

Nani Damayanti is a teaching staff of English Literature Study Program at Padjadjaran University, Indonesia. Her research interests are Linguistics, Pragmatics, Indonesian Language.