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Beyond Netizen: Understanding Communication Norms in Islamic Perspective

Riza Adrian Soedardi

Universitas Gadjah Mada

Abstract

Instagram is one of the popular social media among Indonesia because it provides facilities for communicating and expressing the users. Yet, the popularity of Instagram emerges problems such as cyberbullying and harassment. Therefore, this study attempts to examine communication norms among netizen in their comments on Instagram based on the Islamic perspective. The method used in this research is communication approach and linguistic perspective to elaborate the social media phenomena and to examine the language used on the comments. This result shows that communication schema on Instagram represents users so that Muslim in Indonesia should keep away from cyberbullying and harassment in social media, especially on Instagram.

Abstrak

Instagram menjadi salah satu media sosial yang populer di kalangan masyarakat Indonesia karena memberikan fasilitas untuk berkomunikasi dan berekspresi. Namun, kepopuleran Instagram juga memunculkan masalah baru seperti *bullying* dan penginaan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami norma komunikasi di antara netizen dalam berkomunikasi di Instagram berdasar pada perspektif Islam. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini merujuk pada pendekatan komunikasi media dan linguistik untuk melihat fenomena social media dan penggunaan bahasa dalam berkomentar di media sosial. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pola komunikasi di Instagram menerminkan masyarakatnya sehingga seorang muslim harus bisa menjaga diri dari komunikasi yang menyakiti orang lain di dalam media sosial khususnya Instagram.

Keywords: Instagram; social media; communication norms

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Introduction

Industrial revolution leads society to advanced technology and communication. One of advanced technology on communication is social media, which consists of Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, etc. Those social media provide users to communicate easily among users around the world, even it also uses for expressing users' life. For instances, Instagram is one of social media product that provides users to share photos and videos. Twitter as a social media application, gives users to share ideas in texts, and it is sometimes used by politicians or influencers to drive public opinion in their *tweets*. And, YouTube is used by users for video sharing even it replaces television recently.

Nowadays, those are popular among global citizenship because all of them can be accessed globally by people. Users can reach any accounts and channels around the world unlimited, so it has replaced much conventional communication such as letter, Short Message Service (SMS), or Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS). This occurrence happens in any country as well as it is popular in Indonesia. Ministry of Communication and Informatics of Indonesia released internet user in Indonesia around 63 million population (Kemenkominfo, 2013) and around 95% of the internet user population were active in social media. Hootsuite (We are social) as global internet research institution reported that internet user in Indonesia has reached rapidly around 150 million users or 56% of the total population and it is also for social media users numerously (Anonymous, 2019a; Datareportal.com, 2019; Pertiwi, 2019).

The data shows that internet user in Indonesia is more than half of the country's population and it also reports that the users are actively using social media. In other words, the internet and social media are being apart of Indonesian's life. Internet users in Indonesia have been active for 8 hours and 36 minutes per day, and an average of using social media of Indonesian users is for 3 hours and 26 minutes a day (Anonymous, 2019b). It makes sense if the internet and social media replace television or radio.

By those reasons, I propose to take a research about happened communication in social media because many communication problems emerge in social media such as cyberbullying or a hoax. The implication of communication problems on social media indicates that users are not to have media literacy. Hereby, the research framework in this article is only focusing on communication norms to avoid cyberbullying on social media. Yet, social media is to have diversity so it is only in Instagram for the limitation. Instagram is one of the social media popular among global citizenship, and Indonesia ranks 3rd out of 10 most Instagram users in the world (Anonymous, 2018).

Table 1. Most Instagram Users

Countries	Users
United State of America	110
Brazil	57
Indonesia	53
India	52
Turkey	33
Russia	29
Iran	24
Japan	22
England	21
Mexico	20

The popularity of Instagram influences many things to users, especially for Indonesian. I observed communication phenomena on Instagram comments and found out many verbal cases of abuse in any comments. Therefore, this article would examine communication phenomena in Instagram among Indonesian users. So far, research about Instagram itself has been already taken by many scholars among the world. Yet, Instagram study tends to find out user motivation using Instagram (Lee & Lee, 2015; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016), to elaborate narcissism and subjectivity (Ho, Lee, Lee, Rang, & Sung, 2016; Wales, 2016), and to look for the trend in social media (Park, Ciampaglia, & Ferrara, 2016). However, Instagram comments among Indonesian users have been not researched yet by any scholar.

Instagram comments as understanding communication norms indicate to be a novelty of this study. By the research design on the Instagram comment, this study would examine communication norms among Indonesian using Instagram as their social media. I propose to use communication study approaches and linguistic perspective to look for communication norms behind the users of Instagram. The implication of those cases, I would like to ask a certain problem for understanding social media representative in the user's mind and secondly, this study would elaborate on communication problems on Instagram comments.

To examine this study, I propose to employ qualitative approach to elaborate the data with systematic review. This method investigates the data to understanding communication norm on social media. Language used in social media comments represents the users behavior on digital communication would be examined with linguistics approach and communication studies. By the design, this study would understand netizen in communication norms on social media especially in Instagram.

Instagram and Users Phenomena in Indonesia

Advanced technology provides Instagram as one of the social media that the most demanding among Indonesian. Instagram itself was established in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. For three months, Instagram had 1 million active users and it became the first worldwide installment next year (Instazood.com, 2018). Afterward, it becomes greater as social media platform because of the popularity, social media users replace old social media to Instagram. Even, Instagram also influences users' culture on social media and it is similar to Al-Kandari, Hunaiyyan, and Al-Hajri (2016), researched about Kuwait user's behavior on Instagram, explained that Instagram has greatly affected the attitudes and behaviors of its people.

According to Sherman, Green, Hernandez, and Dapretto (2017) mobile social media like Instagram effects youths' neural and behavioral responses to photographs. In particular, it can influence one another to positive or negative behaviors. Like those reasons, many celebrities created Instagram account to deliver their activities to engage with their fans. It can be a positive way because it is effective to raise their popularity with keep-in-touch to fans through Instagram. There are 5 most popular Instagram accounts in Indonesia, which are Ayu Ting Ting, Raffi Ahmad, and Nagita Slavina, Prilly Latuconsina, Laudya Chintya Bella, Syahrini.

Table 2. The Most Popular Public Figure Instagram Accounts

Accounts	Status	Followers
Ayu Ting Ting	Singer/Actrees	25,300,000
Raffi & Nagita	Actor & Actress	23,700,000
Prilly Latuconsina	Actrees	22,300,000
Laudya Chintya Bella	Actress	22,200,000
Syahrini	Singer	22,000,000

Instagram's effect is not happening only among public figure but also among politician in Indonesia. There some actively Instagram accounts of a politician, which 5 most politician accounts are Joko Widodo, Ridwan Kamil, Prabowo Subianto, Mahfud MD, and Sandiaga Uno.

Table 3. The Most Popular Politician Instagram Accounts

Accounts	Status	Followers
Jokowi	President of Indonesia/President Candidate of Indonesia 2019-2024	11,900,000
Ridwan Kamil	Governor of West Java	7,600,000
Prabowo Subianto	Head of Gerindra Party/President Candidate of Indonesia 2019-2024	3,200,000
Mahfud MD	Former Head of Supreme Court	2,200,000
Sandiaga Uno	Former Vice Governor of Jakarta/Vice Presiden Candidat of Indonesia 2019-2024	1,900,000

Either public figures of politician utilize Instagram to deliver their activities for engaging followers. It can be positive and negative perspective among audiences, they sometimes made a controversial issue on their account and it is considered as negative effect as if they posted motivation on their account would be reacted as a positivity thing. Although, the bad and good posts depend on audiences acceptance. For instance, Ridwan Kamil often posts their activity as a governor sometimes it has two acceptance, one side regards as transparency, another side consider as building the political image.

Meanwhile, established engagement of public figures has a purpose to create audience attitudes. According to Jargalsaikhan and Korotina (2016) explained that the Instagram account of public figures drives consumers' purchasing decision. It is caused by the high influence of the public figure, the more endorsements come to them. It means that the popularity of public figure accounts tends to optimize for advertising to drive audience decision to purchase the products.

In the other hand, the audience's acceptance of Instagram messages, derived from their idols either public figure or politician, emerge received problems throughout the language used. Hereby, the differentiation of the audience's acceptance of Instagram would be elaborated in the discussion of this study. I assure that the differentiation of the audience's acceptance leads communication norms on Instagram comments. So, we would discuss understanding communication norms on Instagram comments below to depict the reality of Instagram users in Indonesia.

Understanding Communication Norms Among Netizen: Case Study of Instagram Users in Indonesia

Instagram is well-known as the most occurred harassment or bullying in social media. Kompas.com (2017) reported that commonly social media used for bullying and harassment is Instagram. The report claimed that more than 10.000 youths 12 to 20 years old received cyber-bullying on Instagram. Receiving bullying reports, Instagram suddenly prevented

bullying and harassment on apps by installing a tool for privacy and safety center (Instagram, 2019).

Intensity using Instagram as social media communication leads society communicates to each other on the apps. Communication schema in Instagram itself drives users to leave the comment as a response to uploaded photo or video of the followed users. Most netizen, the term of networking society, put the comment easily such a daily communication. Although, it is totally different from daily communication because it is like understanding verbal language or written language.

It would be make-sense if there some bullying or harassment on social media because people write for communicating and sometimes they do not pay attention to the meaning of produced texts. Instagram phenomenon emerges a very high percentage of negativity and demonstrates cyberbullying that contains certain linguistics categories such as sexuality, death, appearance, and religion (Hosseinmardi et al., 2015). In order to provide communication norms among netizen in Instagram, this article would show collected data of Instagram comments derive from the public figure or politician in Indonesia to elaborate on the communication norms.



Figure 1. Ayu Ting Ting Instagram Account.

Figure 1 shows that cyberbullying comes to Ayu Ting Ting account from @shantikfebri @kiranaamega @mr.mxyzyptik @afnidraa and @_ryzbamz. They blamed Ayu for her mistake spelling ASEAN GAMES it supposed to be ASIAN GAMES. Shantikfebri's language usage is improper by using *makan tai kucing* 'eating cat's shit', Kiranaamega commented pragmatically in *sekolahnya dimana si* 'where was her school', and others blamed her for the misspelling.



Figure 2. Ridwan Kamil Instagram Account

Figure 2 is Ridwan Kamil's Instagram account taken from the @mak_nyinyiir account. He is Indonesia politician officiated as governor of West Java. On the photo shows followers of Ridwan Kamil's Instagram having a misunderstanding of the posted photo. He wrote caption *iya de, tenang dengan saya mah gratis* 'take it, easy son, with me is free'. The problem emerged because the son's caption *Foto Sama Ridwan Kamil Aja Gratis, Masa Sama Bowo Bayar 80k* 'take a photo with Ridwan Kamil is free, meanwhile, photo with Bowo should pay 80 thousand'. The followers of Ridwan Kamil interpreted Bowo referred to Prabowo Subianto instead of Bowo Alphenlible. They claimed that Ridwan Kamil insulted Prabowo Subianto as the presidential candidate of Indonesia.

Most of Indonesian easily judge the following account if they find out a different perspective of their own. Both figure 1 and 2 show us that netizen often judge before corresponding the truth behind the posted videos or photos. They tend to blame, judge, and discriminate anyone who they have followed in social media. This phenomenon is not representing local culture in that way. Accordingly, this article agrees with Ziman (1984) that claimed communication refers to a fundamental social institution. Meanwhile, Wierzbicka (1992) stated that language produced represents to the speaker itself. It means that the netizen phenomenon on Instagram representing the social environment in Indonesia.

Islamic Perspective Against Communication Norms in Instagram

Occurrence problem among netizen in communication norms basically refers to a fundamental social institution or group (David, 1998; Hogg & Reid, 2006). In order to understand the meaning of social institution, this article would involve an Islamic perspective for communication norms. Indonesia is well-known as the Muslim majority around the world, it would be make-sense as if we indicate that religion is part of a fundamental social institution. Also, Indonesia has Pancasila as the national principle, and the first principle refers to *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* 'believe in the one and only God' although there are many religions in Indonesia.

As a Muslim majority, this study would look for an Islamic perspective to understand communication norms. There some hadiths teach adherents to speak polite and proper to others, for instances below.

مَنْ يَضْمَنُ لِي مَا بَيْنَ لِحْيَيْهِ وَمَا بَيْنَ رِجْلَيْهِ أَضْمَنْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةَ

“Whoever can guarantee me (to guard) something that is between two of his beards and two legs, I give him a guarantee of entering heaven” *Al-Bukhari No.6474*

The hadith cited from Bukhari teaches us to watch the language used in communication. The meaning of between two of his beards refers to mouth. And, the meaning of two legs refers to sexuality bodies of human because human desires often come from sexuality desires.

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيصْمُتْ

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him say good or let him be silent” *Al-Bukhari No.6018, Muslim No.47*

In this hadith, Bukhari and Muslim narrated Islamic teaching for watching the language used. They explained in the hadith to remind Muslim keeps silence as if they hurt others by the language used in communication.

الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ

“A Muslim is someone whose other Muslims have survived his verbal and handicaps” *Muslim No.64*

Muslim also narrated Islamic teaching to watch their language chosen for communication. Muslim society must pay attention to the language chosen because it is a crucial aspect for communicating with each other, and the language chosen can become a weapon for hurting people unconsciously.

إِنَّ رَجُلًا سَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَيُّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ خَيْرٌ قَالَ مَنْ سَلِمَ
الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ

“There was a man who asked the Prophet Sallallahu ‘Alayhi Wa Sallam, ‘ Who are the best Muslims? ’He replied, ‘ Someone who other Muslims survived from his verbal and handicaps” *Muslim No.65*

This hadiths narrated by Muslim explains other Muslim to choose a proper language for communication. Muhammad prophet has been taught to Muslim society for surviving from the verbal and handicap. It means that surviving represents to avoid hurting each other.

The hadiths above teach adherents to take care of their mouths and hands to avoid them from sins. Islam has already warned the adherents to keep silent rather than speak improper or impolite. In the industrial revolution, communication is not about verbal but also written because advanced technology provides social media to replace communication effectively. It means that Instagram comment replaces verbal communication among users. In other word, users should have pay attention to keep the utterances as if they follow Islamic teachings.

Islam perspective considers communication is not only verbal but also written, so it refers to understanding communication norm is important from netizen, especially Muslim majority in Indonesia. To keep safe from the sins, Muslim should produce language properly and politely to communicate with each other, either real or digital. In particular, media literacy is important to be understood by a netizen to avoid cyberbullying towards others.

Conclusion

Instagram is a product of advanced technology and information in the industrial revolution that provides communication around the world. The occurrence problems in Instagram among netizen are about communication norms. The most misunderstanding about using social media Instagram is about cyberbullying between following and followers. Putting comments on the following account sometimes do not use polite and proper language and tend to be harassment or bullying.

This study concludes that netizen, especially Muslim suppose to be used language used properly. It means they should be *tabayun* or thinking before posting because the language used in comment sometimes hurts people unconsciously. Meanwhile, Islam teaches adherents to keep mouth not to hurt anyone, as if you cannot do it is better for silence. It proves in many hadiths that already told adherents to be quiet rather than speak improper or impolite.

As the explanation above, language usage on comments represents a social institution or environment so that Muslim suppose to be wise using their languages for commenting

on Instagram or any social media. As if Muslim cannot keep away from cyberbullying or harassment on Instagram or any social media, it provides that they do not understand Islamic perspective about keeping mouth and hand away from hurting someone.

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