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Investigating the Genuineness of Suicide Notes in Social Media

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Abstract:
This study aims to find linguistic evidence that is able to act as legal evidence in determining the genuineness of a suicide note. The data sources were written and digital suicide notes from Indonesia. The data were collected from social media through documentation. The data collected were graphology and lingual units that indicate the linguistic features of a genuine suicide note. The units were seen from their structure, meaning, and context to determine the motivation. The data were analyzed through referential identity, orthography identity, and distributional methods from descriptive-qualitative and descriptive-quantitative approaches based on linguistic theories. The theories applied were intertextuality, meaning, linguistic features of suicide notes, the context of the situation, and generative transformation. The findings show that written and digital suicide notes, as well as posts on the victim’s social media, provide evidence that the note is genuine and written by the victim. The evidences are recursive graphology, interrelated propositions, and linguistic features of a genuine suicide note. The motivations for suicide are derived from the victim’s self-blaming, his acknowledgment of his inability to help himself from financial and mental issues, and a constant feeling of being a disappointment to people who had supported him.

Keywords: forensic linguistics, genuineness, Indonesia, suicide notes

1. INTRODUCTION
Indonesia’s suicide cases were recorded at 971 cases in the period January to October 2023 (Muhamad, 2023). This figure shows an increase from 2021 and 2022. The Indonesian National Police recorded 613 cases in 2021 and 826 cases in the following year (Yusuf, 2023). In previous years, it was also known that suicide cases in Indonesia increased in 2020 to 3.4% per 100,000 population from 2.4% in 2019 based on World Bank data (Mahila, 2022). These figures demonstrate that suicides in Indonesia are becoming more frequent from year to year.

There have been cases of suicide in Indonesia such as the case of Novia Widyasari in December 2021 (Kurniawan, 2021), the case of @valeriblue_ in April 2022 (Sekar, 2022), and...
the case of the boss of the Tambora expedition company in May 2023 (Nita, 2023). Among these cases, some left evidence that can be investigated in the form of suicide notes. Suicide notes are written messages made by the suicide. They can be handwritten or typed. Suicide notes are important and useful for the police to investigate and prove the truth of the case.

The rise of social media has influenced access to suicide messages. Some of the suicide victims have actively used social media before. This can be seen from their posts. The victims wrote down their thoughts and emotions which can provide information about the reasons for suicide. In addition to revealing the reasons for suicide, the messages found can be a tool for investigating the case. These messages are called suicide notes. The question that should be answered through these suicide notes is whether they are genuinely written by the suicide victim or they were written by someone else.

In relation to social media, one of the suicides mentioned above left a publicly accessible suicide note on his personal Instagram account page, @valeriblue_. The note was uploaded on Google Drive with the link included in the account's bio. This suicide note is interesting to study because it is written longer than the usual suicide note found on a piece of paper. The suicide note from @valeriblue_ was written in three Indonesian and English documents, totaling more than 25 pages. The number of pages indicates a long writing. Based on a claim from Olsson (2008, p. 149), genuine suicide notes are usually short, about less than 300 words. Olsson (2008) also states several other features of a suicide note. However, it cannot be directly categorized that suicide notes that do not conform to previous expert claims are not genuine.

Information in suicide notes that can help the police is not only known through the content or meaning of the sentences, but also through the writing style of the text and the special linguistic features of suicide notes. Identification of these elements is important to support legal facts. By looking at the writing style, linguistic features, and meaning of the suicide notes, the identification can be taken into consideration for the police and/or the court to decide the truth of the suicide case.

Suicide note identification is one of the studies of forensic linguistics (Olsson, 2008, p. 128). Forensic linguistics is a field of science that specifically examines the relationship between language and the law and its cases. This is in accordance with Olsson's statement (2008, p. 1) which states that the object of study of forensic linguistics is text that is implicated in legal and criminal contexts. Olsson (2008, p. 128) states that in forensic linguistics, the term investigative linguistics aims to assist the authorities through text analysis. Pastika (2018b, p. 123) supported this definition by stating that forensic linguistics is a science that makes language components (lexical, grammatical, meaning, and sound) to aid the justice enforcement process.

Based on the phenomenon described above, this study aims to find language evidence that can become legal evidence from suicide notes found on social media in order to determine the genuineness and motivation of suicide cases. Research on suicide notes from the perspective of forensic linguistics has not been widely conducted in Indonesia. Suicide notes written by Indonesians and in the Indonesian language have also not been widely researched. This is evidenced by previous studies (Fata et al., 2021; Maharani et al., 2022; Malini & Tan, 2016; Masood, 2021; Mejías-Martín et al., 2023) that addressed English suicide notes. Therefore, the current research is expected to be able to contribute to the horizon of forensic linguistics from the findings of Indonesian suicide notes. Furthermore, the fundamental difference between the
past studies and the current research is one of the problem formulations that the current research answers, namely the identification of the genuineness of suicide notes. Therefore, the theory used to analyze the data is also different. This research is expected to be useful as knowledge material for the community and academics to construct forensic linguistic analyses of suicide texts. Furthermore, this study can become a reference for authorities, such as the police, to look at cases from a linguistic perspective that can provide additional information about suicide cases.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Forensic Linguistics

When linguistics interacts with law in which language becomes a sample of evidence for a crime, forensic linguistics becomes an interdisciplinary study between linguistics and law (Mahsun, 2018, p. 24). The term forensic comes from the Greek word forensics, which means forum. Forensic linguistics is the scientific study of language to solve forensic problems, such as finding scientific answers to law enforcement evidence (Mahsun, 2018, p. 25). Coulthard et al. (2017, p. 14) state that forensic linguistics is a branch of linguistics that is concerned with professional and institutional interactions in a legal context. Pastika (2018a, p. 123) says that forensic linguistics is a science that uses language tools (lexical, grammatical, meaning, and sound of language) to assist the process of upholding justice.

2.2 Suicide Note

Suicide is the activity of a person who, with intention and purpose, takes his or her own life (Reber & Reber, 2010, p. 948). Kral (2019, p. 20) says suicide is a purposeful act of self-destruction defined as a complex misery experienced by a person who feels profoundly in need of something and who recognizes that suicide is the best way to solve that problem. Reber & Reber’s (2010) and Kral’s (2019) definitions are supported by the results of a survey conducted by Leo et al. (2021, p. 8). According to Leo et al. (2021, p. 8), suicide is an act resulting in death that is initiated and carried out by a person until the end of the act, with knowledge of a potentially fatal outcome, may involve a risk of death, or may not involve an explicit intention to die.

Suicide notes are documents that are said to be a window into the people who are gone (Synnott et al., 2017). These records serve to provide an understanding of the psychological processes of those who commit suicide (Leenaars, 1996). Shapero (2011, p. 26) states that suicide notes are all text genres, such as diaries, letters, lists, and greeting cards that contain suicidal intentions. Prokofyeva (2013, p. 20) defines a suicide note as a note written by a person who is suicidal or who has suicidal intentions.

2.3 Genuineness of Suicide Note

Tatsuki (2006) states that genuineness is synonymous with authenticity and credibility. Genuineness or authenticity texts are those that are designed for real-life communication (Esfandiari & Gawhary, 2019). Olsson (2012, p. 105) states that genuine suicide notes are the notes written by the suicide victim under a case of suicide. Therefore, the definition of genuineness of a suicide note is the quality of the suicide note which states the truth of the suicide case as an authentic proof of a suicide case and is written by the suicide victim.
2.4 Motivation of Suicide

Motivation is an impulse within an individual that moves a person to carry out activities (Djamarah, 2008, p. 148). Sardiman (2011, p. 74) explains motivation as something complex that will cause changes in human energy to do something. Uno (2012, p. 15) defines motivation as an internal force that encourages someone to do something to achieve a goal. In this concept, the meaning of motivation is associated with the act of suicide.

Suicide motivation is the causal factor that drives a person to commit suicide. Durkheim (1897, p. 151) explained that suicidal motivation is the reason a person commits suicide. This reason becomes an individual's weak point, which becomes the easiest place for external factors to encourage someone to destroy themselves.

2.5 Prior Studies

Suicide notes receive great attention from linguistic researchers around the world. Hein et al. (2023) did their study about suicide notes in Uruguay. Kanyama (2022) did a study of notes in Northern Namibia. Rayon (2022) in Philippine, Masood (2021) in Pakistan, and Grundlingh (2020) in South Africa are other examples of suicide notes studies that prove forensic linguistic studies on suicide notes are popular. These studies shed light on understanding suicide notes from their linguistic characteristics in determining genuineness. Furthermore, these studies also provide practical information about the reasons behind suicide in each country to develop awareness and action to mitigate it.

In Indonesia, Pericha (2022) conducted research on Indonesian suicide notes in online news media. Her study focused on analyzing the meaning and message of the notes. The result of her study showed that Indonesian suicide notes consist of lingual units about pain, fear, disappointment, desires of the victim, love and gratitude expressions, and victim’s identity. Saputro (2023) did his study to identify the general discourse patterns of Indonesian suicide notes. His study revealed that Indonesian suicide notes begin with addressing receivers of the notes, apology and love expressions, and regrets, and end with a signature. Although their and current studies have similar objectives, the current study highlights genuineness analysis that has never been conducted by previous studies. The genuineness analysis in the current study involves genuine authorship and genuine quality of suicide notes. The current study also provides practical value by determining issues that led to the victim's suicide. Therefore, the current study contributes to novel information and findings in the scope of Indonesian suicide notes.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research applied a theoretical approach from the perspective of forensic linguistics by integrating Plett's theory of intertextuality (1991), Leech's theory of meaning (1981), and Olsson's (2008; 2012; 2014) theory of linguistic features of suicide notes, Halliday & Hasan (1985) theory of context situation, and Chomsky's theory of generative transformation (1965). The theory of intertextuality was used to look at the consistency of writing in the suicide note and other writings on the victim's social media to determine the veracity of the text. The theory of linguistic features of suicide notes was used to determine the veracity of the text. The theory of meaning was used to interpret the messages written in the sentences in the text to determine the motivation for suicide. Context of situation theory was applied to reconstruct events that
could be the motivation for suicide. Generative transformation theory was used to look at the surface structure and deep structure which supported the analysis of meaning.

A human instrument was used in this study. Sugiyono (2019, p. 31) explains that in qualitative research, the research instrument is the researcher himself. This is also supported by Hardani et al. (2020, p. 116) who state that the status of the researcher as an instrument in qualitative research is an acceptable condition. In this study, the researcher played an important role in formulating problems, determining data sources, and collecting and analyzing data. The credibility and validity of the researcher as a qualitative research instrument are shown through analysis in this study to demonstrate an understanding of theories and insights in forensic linguistics studies.

Data collection was conducted using documentation and a note-taking technique. Sugiyono (2019) states that the documentation method is used when the data source ranges from texts, books, reports, and other documents. The data collected were lingual units that showed the consistency of writing and linguistic features of suicide notes as evidence of truth. The lingual units were also examined for structure, meaning, and context to determine the motivation for the suicide. Data analysis was conducted using referential identity, orthographical identity, and distributional methods with descriptive-qualitative and descriptive-quantitative approaches based on the linguistic theories mentioned above. The data analysis was presented with informal method.

The data source for this research was suicide notes from the @valeriblue_ account on Instagram found on the Google Drive with the link as follows https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1TSGc7EYt7GqsFbwYvxvE5soJ9PbJNC05. The original link on the Instagram account is no longer accessible as Google declared it lost. However, these suicide note documents went viral on X (previously Twitter) and have been duplicated to a new Google Drive link, which is the link above. The suicide notes are divided into three documents entitled Prologue - read first, The ACT 1, and The ACT 2. The English documents, namely Prologue - Read First and The ACT I, which were duplicated, have been given Indonesian translations by the duplicator so that they can be understood by the general public on the social media platform. There were also handwritten notes found at the scene of the crime.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data collected, it is found that written and digital suicide notes have correlation to each other. There are several repetitions occur in terms of graphological, grammatical, and lexical expressions. These repetitions can denote that the suicide notes were written by one person genuinely. Concerning the linguistic features of a genuine suicide note, most of the features from Olsson (2008; 2012; 2014) are found.

The note is read as follows.

Kalau kalian nemu ini
Sebelum tgl 4, Tenang aja..
Bakal ada penjelasannya habis itu
Bakal banyak yang tau
Aku sudah ada rencana
Don't cut my nails and hair
Be careful when bathing me, I just painted my hair.
I'm afraid of staining white clothes.
Don't take off my arm and leg bracelets.
All my stuff is okay to sell.

All knives in boarding house
Are blunt!

The content above is related to the digital suicide notes found on Google Drive. Based on the message above, a commissive illocutionary force is found that contains a commitment to future action in the sentence ‘There will be an explanation after that, many will know, I already have a plan’. This sentence shows that the author of the message will reveal the explanation behind the suicide. The perlocution of the commissive illocutionary act was proven successful by the digital suicide note found in the link. In The ACT 1 document, a sentence is written as follows ‘if you read this, that means I'm long gone by now. I succeeded with the killing. Yeah, I'm no longer in this world right now’. This can already serve as language evidence that the written and digital notes found indeed come from the same person, the suicide victim. The features showing genuineness and motivation in both suicide notes are presented below.

4.1. Linguistic Features Showing Genuineness

The features showing genuineness are divided into three, namely graphological feature, grammatical feature, and lexical feature. The graphological feature shows the recursive patterns of handwriting and the physical appearance of the typing. The grammatical feature shows the repetition of affixation. The lexical feature shows the language style of the suicide notes.

4.1.1 Graphological Feature

Based on the analysis of intertextuality in terms of writing, it can be seen that the consistency shows that the suicide note was made by the victim. The writing found at the crime scene has
repetition in terms of graphology. In addition, in the digital note, which was uploaded on the link, a recursive condition of typing appearance was found.

It can be seen that there is a repetition in the graphology of several letters that can be evidence that the note was indeed written by the suicide victim. The letters are J, K, P, and T. Below is a table of the findings of the recurrence of the letters above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Recursive Graphological Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>J</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Jangan" /> <img src="image2" alt="Jangan" /> <img src="image3" alt="Jual" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>K</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Kebon" /> <img src="image5" alt="Kebon" /> <img src="image6" alt="Kecu" /> <img src="image7" alt="KOS" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>P</td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Piso" /> <img src="image9" alt="Poto" /> <img src="image10" alt="Tunpel" /> <img src="image11" alt="Pos" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>T</td>
<td><img src="image12" alt="Takutnya" /> <img src="image13" alt="Tening" /> <img src="image14" alt="Tunpel" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The repetition found of J, K, P, and T letters in handwriting can provide additional information to determine whether a note or signature can be proven to be written by the original author. This statement is based on the principle that no two authors have the same combination of handwriting characters (Harrison et al., 2009). If the handwriting characters on the same suicide note are found to be different from each other, it can be suspected that the note was written by someone else to cover up the actual incident. Therefore, recursive handwriting characters can help investigate the veracity of suicide notes.

Table 1 shows how the handwriting characters of some letters are found to be recurrent. In the letter J as the onset of a word, it can be seen that the letter J is written in the capital by drawing an upward sloping line from left to right and then pulled down, forming a sharp angle, the line is drawn to the right, and it appears that the pen is lifted up so that there is a slight upward line pull. This handwriting character is found in all the Js that are the onset of a word. However, there is one letter J that does not have the same pattern due to a broken line, which is the word Jir!, it can be seen that the line-drawing pattern is similar to the upward slash when starting to write the letter J and the upward pull when ending the letter.

The letter K is written with the same character whether it is capitalised or not. It starts with a downward vertical line, then a sloping line to the upper right then retraces the sloping line and
then draws a horizontal line to the right, and ends with a slight upward pull. This K-writing character is found in all existing Ks, therefore, it proves that this note was written by one person.

The letter P does have a variety of writing characters, but there are some special characters that are recursively found. Firstly, the curved line at the top often crosses the vertical line as a buffer. Secondly, the resulting curve is slanted to the upper right. No signs of falsification of the writing characters were found as all the lines forming the letter P appear natural.

The letter T on the suicide note has a repetitive writing character for capital letters. The letter T is written by drawing an upward-sloping horizontal line from left to right, then in the middle of the vertical line, a horizontal line is drawn from top to bottom, and then ends with a slight lift of the pen that creates a pull to the right. Although there are T letters that become onsets that are not capitalized, all T letters that are capitalized have similar writing characters.

Based on the graphological repetition as described above, there is linguistic evidence to support that the suicide note was written by the same person. To further prove whether the person is a suicide victim, the message in the writing needs to be connected to the digital suicide note found in the link. The repetition of spelling in the digital note was also identified to strengthen the language evidence.

![Recursive Lowercase Spelling in Digital Suicide Note ACT 1 Document](image)

Figure 1: Recursive Lowercase Spelling in Digital Suicide Note ACT 1 Document

Figure 1 is a screenshot of the digital suicide note typed by the victim. It is taken from a document named ACT 1 from the Google Drive link. This document tells the victim’s life journey. It involves the beginning of his life issues that led him to commit suicide. This document is written in English.

![Recursive Lowercase Spelling in Digital Suicide Note ACT 2 Document](image)

Figure 2: Recursive Lowercase Spelling in Digital Suicide Note ACT 2 Document

Figure 2 is a screenshot of the digital suicide note typed by the victim in a document called ACT 2. This document is filled with messages, gratitude expressions, and apologies towards the victim’s family, friends, and relatives. This document is written in Indonesian.

In digital suicide notes, as shown above, the most noticeable pattern is not starting a sentence with a capital letter. This pattern was found in both the English suicide notes in The ACT 1 document and the Indonesian notes in The ACT 2 document. Figure 1 and 2 are excerpted from the English and Indonesian suicide notes. It can be seen that each new sentence does not
Investigating Genuineness of Suicide Notes

start with a capital letter in the first word. However, capital letters are still found in words that refer to names of people, names of places, names of institutions, and abbreviations. Therefore, there is a special feature related to the writing of this suicide note that is unique and only owned by the author of the suicide note.

Another recurring linguistic element is the abbreviated auxiliary verb in English. This is found in both positive and negative sentences. The words included are as follows.

Table 2: Recursive Shortened Auxiliary Verb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Lingual Units Found</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I’m</td>
<td>I am</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>‘d ’</td>
<td>I had or I would</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>(word) 's</td>
<td>(word) is</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>(word) 'll</td>
<td>(word) will</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>(kata) 're</td>
<td>(word) have</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>doesn’t</td>
<td>does not</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>don’t</td>
<td>do not</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>didn’t</td>
<td>did not</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>hadn’t</td>
<td>had not</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>wouldn’t</td>
<td>would not</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>couldn’t</td>
<td>could not</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>wasn’t</td>
<td>was not</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>weren’t</td>
<td>were not</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>can’t</td>
<td>can not</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that auxiliary verbs in English are abbreviated, as are their negative form. The appearance of these abbreviations on varied verbs shows the consistent features of the writers. Based on the various recursive patterns shown above, linguistic evidences are gathered to justify the genuineness of the suicide note studied in this research.

In order to support the linguistic investigation, intertextual findings on the victim’s character of writing should be stressed. In Figure 3, it is found that the repetition of linguistic elements in Table 2 also occurs in the suicide victims’ social media. Figure 3 has shown that the auxiliary verbs in his posts are shortened, such as ‘don’t’ for ‘do not’, ‘haven’t’ for ‘have not’, ‘it’s’ for ‘it is’, ‘I’m’ for ‘I am’, and ‘you’ve’ for ‘you have’. The similarity between the language evidence in the suicide note and the victim's social media status supports that the victim wrote the note;
thus, the notes were genuinely written by the victim and the messages in the notes were genuinely produced by the victim.

4.1.2 Grammatical Feature

Another recurring linguistic element in terms of grammatical feature is the prefix *Ng-* as an active verb marker. There are many verbs to which the *Ng-* prefix is attached in Indonesian suicide notes. The *Ng-* prefix has allomorphs *N-* , *Nge-* , and *Ny-. Here are several examples in the suicide notes that contain the *Ng-* prefix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Word Formation</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Excerpt from</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ngelunasin</td>
<td>Nge + lunas + -in</td>
<td>tapi pas masuk kulia mereka yang mendaatangin surat kemampuan pembayaran, jadi mereka secara hukum berkewajiban ngelunasin itu.</td>
<td>To pay off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ngambil</td>
<td>Ng + ambil</td>
<td>coba kemarenya aku ga eleom, pasti pas audit aku ngambil roger, enak aja ga ada saingan pas itu, ehehe.</td>
<td>To take something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ngisi</td>
<td>Ng + isi</td>
<td>Kevin, makasi dah ngisi masa SMP ku dengan kecanggihan internet</td>
<td>To fill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ngebukt, ngerasa</td>
<td>Nge + buat, Nge + rasa</td>
<td>terima kasih sudah ngebuktiku ngerasa rasanya keluarga, walopun yang dimainin disfungsional.</td>
<td>To make, to feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ninggal</td>
<td>N + tinggal</td>
<td>aku punya banyak salah ke kalian, bahkan sampai aku pergi pun, aku masih ninggal masalah dan banyak perasaan ga enak.</td>
<td>To leave something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Nyusul</td>
<td>Ny + susul</td>
<td>aku khawatir ada yang nyusul, eh malah aku yang nyusul.</td>
<td>To follow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The prefix *Ng-* is used in Indonesian suicide notes as an informal affix. This is due to the content of the Indonesian suicide note, which is to recount the memories and thank the victim’s friends and family; thus, the prefix *Ng-* is used to comply with the positive politeness principle as it emphasizes the friendship relationship. There are 91 active verbs with the n-prefix found.

Furthermore, the casual ambience found in the suicide notes is also supported by informal spelling of the lexicons, such as the word *kemarin* which is spelt *kemaren* as shown in Table 3 data number 2. The weakening of the vowel from [i] to [e] in the last syllable in Indonesian usually signifies the transition from formal to informal style, for example the word *air* which turns into *aer* in humorous rhymes on Indonesian comedy shows.

4.1.3 Lexical Feature

The lexical features of the suicide victim found are recursive specific expression and language style in composing the suicide notes. The recursive expression found is the consistent writing of the expression *ehehe*. In Indonesian, this particular expression is also found in different typing, such as *hehe* or *hehehe*. This expression is emotive because it is used to express emotions. The
meaning of the expression can denote a response towards sufficiently funny joke, a realization of guilty feeling in an apology, a sense of being shy, and an attraction towards an object or individual. However, in the suicide notes found, the victim has his particular typing, which is ehehe. 57 ehehe expressions were found in Indonesian suicide note in ACT 2 document.

The consistency and repetition of ehehe expressions coloured yellow in suicide notes can be supporting evidence to investigate the truth that the note writer is the suicide victim. In order to further prove that the person who wrote the note is the suicide victim, it can also be confirmed by looking at the writing of the status on social media. Below is a screenshot from the Twitter account of the suicide victim who has the character of writing an ehehe expression.

![Figure 4: Recursive ehehe Expression as Stylistic Feature of Suicide Victim](image)

The linguistic evidence, namely the repetition of ehehe expressions in the suicide note, is confirmed by looking at the social media status writing in Figure 5. As the posts in Figure 5 contain ehehe expressions, it can be concluded that the suicide notes were genuinely written by the victim.

The language style in the handwritten and digital suicide notes denotes a specific manner that belongs to the victim only. First is the reference to literary works. The repetition of linguistic elements is also found in the mention of titles or characters of famous literary works, such as novels and films, in this suicide note. This is unique evidence and can support that the suicide note was written by the same person. Based on the narrative in the suicide note, it is known that the author is someone who loves literature and plays in drama. The author was also an English
Literature student. This condition may be the ultimate reason references to literary works were used in the notes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Literary Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Reynolds Pamphlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Jack Frost from Guardian of the Galaxy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Supernova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Riddler from Batman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of the literary references found represent the author. An example is the Reynolds Pamphlet, which is an essay by Alexander Hamilton that was written in 1797. Reynolds Pamphlet aims to refute speculations aimed at Hamilton, but it is also used to expose other things that are scandalous. In this suicide note, Reynolds Pamphlet is used as a reference to the suicide note writer's life story. This is indicated by the sentence “nope, i'm not gonna sugarcoat my story. i'm thinking of it as my way to 'Reynolds pamphlet' myself” in ACT 1 document. Therefore, it is recognised that the suicide may have been suspected of committing suicide for one particular reason, but this was not the case. This reason for suicide is explicitly expressed and will be explained in the suicide motivation section.

Second language style used is a nonchalant style in Indonesian language. The messages in figure 1 on how the victim asked his hair not to be washed and commented the knives in boarding house show that the victim did not feel burdened with his suicide issues. This style is also exhibited in ACT 2 document in which the victim playfully wrote messages to his friends. Although the style may not sufficiently stress the mood of suicide, such style is called sad clown paradox in psychology. Sad clown paradox is a psychological condition of an individual who produce humors and make people laugh is actually the one who has or is prone to mental health problems (Smith, 2023). Therefore, the nonchalant style found in the notes is to disguise the personal feelings of the victim. This is supported by the sentence in ACT 1 document that stated ‘I never want to let people know how I felt because I don’t want them to feel pity for me and feel like I'm helpless’.

The language evidence that supports that the suicide victim is the author of the suicide notes can also be seen in the identity of the suicide victim, which is also found on his social media. An example is the identity of the suicide victim as part of the Daur Lingkar community. On the suicide note, it was found that the victim sent a message and gratitude expression to Daur Lingkar members. The message is as follows.

周五 anak-anak Daur Lingkar. makasih dah jadi wadah berlatih menggunakan distraksi untuk bertahan hidup. maaf ak sayang sama kalian & ingin menyebarkan kata 'dibenci' namun tidak pernah dipergunakan dengan baik. aku mau makasih dulu buat Aric & Asto yang dah mau ngebuat

Figure 6: The Victim’s Identity on Suicide Note

Looking at an excerpt in Figure 6, the victim was part of Daur Lingkar because they had trained together and had the right to enter the basecamp or beskem as written in Figure 6. Basecamp means a place for a group to carry out activities. Therefore, the victim is indeed part of Daur Lingkar.
The identity of the victim is also found in the victim's social media status shown in Figure 7. The Twitter post in Figure 7 shows that the suicide victim asked for support from his followers by liking and watching the short film video shared by Daur Lingkar. The use of kami as the first plural pronoun in Indonesian indicates that the victim was part of Daur Lingkar.

There are many identities and things related to the suicide victim contained in the suicide note that are also reflected in his social media status. The similarities between the suicide note and the suicide's social media indicate that the suicide note was written by the suicide. According to the findings shown above, the linguistic evidences prove that the suicide notes were genuine.

4.2. Motivation of Suicide Note

Once it was established that the author of the suicide note was the victim, the motivation for the suicide was analyzed. The victim openly wrote that the reason for his suicide was his behavior and personality, which he was not proud of. He felt that he had a mental illness, was unable to have enough money for treatment, and troubled others by always running away. The analysis of suicide motivation is divided into three sub-parts according to the field of the matter. Analyzing suicide motivation is essential in forensic linguistics as it contributes to the linguistic investigation of a case.

4.2.1 Personal Issue

The personal issue in this analysis is related to the feelings of the victim concerning himself. This issue grows from a course of events experienced by the victim. Below is a screenshot of the suicide note from ACT 1 document that tells the victim’s background of the personal issue.

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they move to a new place to have a new problem to solve, but me, i move to a new place to run away leaving problems unsolved. so i decided to make my last move, so i can stop the problem that is me. i don't want to keep on hurting people. yes i'm hurting people now that i'm doing this to myself, but it will be the last problem i cause. no more people in the future would get bothered by me. this will be the last time. this will be the last of me.
 i will say this, so you can repeat this at the funeral service, he has fallen to the devil's temptation because he was distant from god. yes i'm aware of that. as a matter of fact, i started to get back to god in december, even before opa passed. but just like my relationship with any other person on the higher power upon me, you know, parents, bosses, lecturers, employers, i then made a mistake and i run away from him again. so mind you this, i was nobody's victim. i'm not playing victim here. i do this to myself, and i own it. and i don't do this because i'm a queer person who's got abused and got sick of living. it's not because of my sexuality and my gender identity. of course living as one in the place i'm living in can be easier, but i'll always be proud to be a part of the community, i'm comfy with my identity. what i'm not proud of and comfy with is my behavior and my personality. i do this because i'm a sick person. an hsp who's being trying so hard to avoid feeling feelings and repress the memories he's uncomfortable with so that he loses his memories upon people and the events happening in his life. a dyslexic person who's too fucked up to be able to have the money to have any medical treatment for himself. a mentally ill person who finally gets the taste of his own medicine.
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Figure 8: The Victim's Personal Issue
From Figure 8, it is known that the suicide victim felt that he was the source of the problem. This is evidenced by the sentence ‘I move to a new place to run away leaving problems unsolved, so I decided to make my last move, so I can stop the problem that is me’. The surface structure of this sentence can be confusing to interpret, particularly the ‘I move to a new place to run away leaving problems unsolved’. However, when interpreted in terms of the deep structure and context, the above sentence can be interpreted that ‘every place that I go, every new start that I take, I will always encounter problems, and those problems are always unsolved no matter what, I will not be able to solve any problem because the problem is me, so the solution to the problem is to end my life’.

The meaning of this deep structure is obtained because, in the suicide note, the victim moved to several areas in Java, such as Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, and Serang. In each area, the victim stated himself that he always brought trouble. This is evidenced by the fragment of the note ‘I couldn't remember why, but it was decided for me to live with a distant relative's household, still in Surabaya. It didn't go well though, I committed some trouble’. Every area that the victim travelled to, he always wrote that he committed some trouble. He did not explain what had caused him to do so, but his statement only explained that he had made a mistake.

The personal issue about identifying as a mistake is further evidenced by the suicide victim's statement of ‘I was helpless, but I never seemed to understand how to get help properly. I became a people pleaser because I don't want to keep on disappointing and hurting people who are helping me, yet I keep failing people over and over again’. This shows that the victim in the suicide note blames himself for his inability to make the people around him happy.

4.2.2 Financial Issue

In relation to finances, the victim has many problems. The victim explicitly stated that he had a lot of debt in the statement of ‘He tried to pay off these debts, but to no avail. He even worked 27 days per month.’ He said that he became weaker, more isolated and frustrated every day in ACT 1 document. This proves that the financial problems made it hard for him to continue living. This also relates to the message in Figure 1 that is to suggest people to sell the victim’s belongings. The message has a connection to the message in ACT 2 document in which the victim asked for help to get his debts paid.

4.2.3 Social Issue

The social issue experienced by the victim is related to his relationship with family and friends. The social issue triggered the feeling of self-blaming. The feeling of self-blaming made the victim had mental breakdown and this is shown by several appearances in the suicide note, such as the statement of ‘I caught up with the idea of pleasing my boss who I felt was very generous to let me live in his hostel but had negative feedback from my boss. The way he treated me made me feel like I failed my boss. the pressure got me so depressed that one day I eventually relapsed into a massive mental breakdown and cut my wrist several times’. This statement shows that the victim tried to be nice to his boss, yet he received unfair treatment.

The victim also felt disappointed by his close male friend. The victim announced that he was part of the LGBT community. He came out to his close male friend. They remained friends for a while. However, the girlfriend of his close male friend told lies to the boyfriend about how the victim often visited the male friend’s boarding house and sniffed his underwear. The male friend believed his girlfriend; thus, he decided to cut the friendship with the victim.
The victim also put distance to his other friends because the other friends did not care for him. The victim stated that he had a panic attack around his friends, but they did not really check on him after the incident. This made the victim disappointed.

After all issues have been presented, the Figure 9 below shows the mapping of the motivation for suicide based on the explanation above.

![Figure 9: Mapping of Suicide Motivation of the Victim](image)

5. DISCUSSION

Olsson (2008; 2012; 2014) states that genuine suicide notes have specific linguistic features that distinguish them from fake notes. He calls this insider language (Olsson, 2012, p. 107). In the suicide notes discussed in this study, some features of genuine suicide notes were not found, but this does not mean that the suicide notes discussed are fake. Olsson (2008, p. 149) also mentions that a suicide note should have an unequivocal proposition stating the suicide. In this study, the suicide note discussed begins with a proposition that directly states that he committed suicide. The proposition is ‘hi there, if you read this, that means I'm long gone by now. I succeeded with the killing. Yeah, I'm no longer in this world right now, which means that the suicide has successfully committed suicide’. The proposition is thematic and direct; there is no ambiguity. The proposition is clear to tell the victim died due to suicide. Proposition about suicide is also found in South African notes (Grundlingh, 2020). This feature receives less attention from other prior studies; thus, no analysis is often found about this feature when this feature is exclusive for suicide notes. Compared to other texts, such as farewell text, there is no word the resembles suicide act because proposition about suicide carries commissive power that bounds the person who writes the proposition to fulfill the act. Therefore, if there is no desire to suicide, there will be no proposition about suicide.

Genuine suicide notes tend to be short, less than 300 words (Olsson, 2008, p. 149). This feature is not found in the suicide notes discussed as they are written over 30 pages. Although the suicide note discussed is very long, it is genuine as it has been identified intertextually according to the analysis above. Prior studies analyzed single note; thus, the feature of less than 300 words occurs as a genuine one. However, there are also lengthy suicide notes that cannot be directly concluded as fabricated. Each victim has different personality and writing style; therefore, this feature should not be the main feature to investigate genuineness when the note is a serial one.

Furthermore, Olsson (2008, p. 149) explains that if a proposition is written about the reason for suicide, it should make it clear that suicide is the only action to be taken. In this suicide note, it is not explicitly stated that ending life is the only way, but the statement ‘so I can stop the problem that is me’ is found, which means that the suicide victim considers himself the source of all problems; therefore, suicide is the sole way. The statement has the same point as suicide is the only course of action.

Olsson & Luchjenbroers (2014) explain that original suicide texts contain linguistic expressions that emerge from the heart that views life as a constraint. In the suicide notes discussed, the
expressions do not describe life as a restraint. The victim does not consider his life to be constrained or limited, but he feels like a failure because he is unable to be a person who is able to make those who help him happy when he has the opportunity to do so. His family did not demand him to be something, but he himself stated that he always brought them problems. This self-blaming is also a linguistic feature of suicide notes. Expression of self-blaming is in accordance with the linguistic features of Olsson & Luchjenbroers (2014) who explain that original suicide texts usually have expressions of self-blaming and do not blame others. Kral (2017), from a psychology point of view, states that suicide victims have the perspective of being so flawed and burdensome to others that leads to self-blame. As self-blaming seems to be a psychological part of suicide, studies from Meyer et al. (2017), Lazarides et al. (2019), Grundlingh (2020), Masood (2021), and Kanyama (2023) found similar expressions in their data. Therefore, expression of self-blaming and seeing oneself as a burden is a feature of genuine suicide notes.

Olsson (2012, pp. 110–112) explains that genuine suicide notes contain expressions of love, inability to survive, and apologies. In the suicide note in this study, the expression of love was found because the suicide wrote messages to many people in The ACT 2 document that contained how these people were special to him; an example is the sentence ‘how can I not talk about you? Yes you, one particular person who’s very special to me’, which means a memorable and special person for the victim. Meyer et al. (2017) supported this theory based on their data-driven study. Based on their data, 76% suicide notes contain love expressions. Similar finding also occurred in studies of Foster (2003) and Sanger & Veach (2008). Studies of Indonesian suicide notes also found love expressions (Pericha, 2022; Saputro, 2023). According to these five data-driven studies, it is proven that the expression of love is an integral part of genuine suicide notes.

Expressions of inability to survive were also found that the victim felt helpless because no friends showed empathy to him. Meyer et al., p. (2017, p. 38) also found that suicide notes have sentences that carry the meaning of being tired of life. One of the reasons behind this is loneliness. This is also found in suicide notes in Uruguay (Hein et al., 2023). Therefore, it is exhibited that social issues can lead to suicide, and this situation can be represented in suicide notes.

Many apologies were also found in this study. The word *maaf* has the meaning of ‘sorry’. Based on the data, the victim has stated many apologies. He apologized to his family and friends for his wrongdoings. This finding is also shown in suicide notes in South Africa (Lazarides et al., 2019). Indonesian suicide notes in Pericha (2022) and Saputro (2023) also acknowledge this apology feature.

Based on this finding, the suicide note shows a genuine linguistic feature of a suicide note. According to the above explanation, which proves that the suicide notes in this study contain many language features of original suicide notes, it can be stated that the suicide notes analyzed were originally and truthfully written by the suicide victims.

6. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the written suicide notes at the crime scene, digital notes, and the suicide victim’s social media account showed that the suicide notes found were genuine and made solely by the victim. The written suicide note has the repetition of handwritten characters
without any sign of forgery. The messages on the written and digital notes also have continuity based on the propositions. The genuineness of the suicide note is also supported by the linguistic features of the original suicide note. The linguistic features found were explicit and direct propositions about suicide, propositions about suicide as the only solution of all issues in life, expressions of self-blaming, expressions about love, expressions about the inability to survive, and expressions of apology.

The motivation for the suicide on the suicide note is explicitly written. The reason behind the victim’s suicide act was a feeling of inability to save himself and make others happy; thus, he believed he disappointed people. This motivation was driven by the victim’s childhood in which he felt he was always troublesome towards his family, the absence of empathetic friends, and the lack of money that led to a lot of debt.

7. REFERENCES


Investigating Genuineness of Suicide Notes


