

The Way of LAPOR! Site's Users Communicate Complaints in 2015: The Study of Systemic Functional Linguistics

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Abstract: This study examines the use of language in the genre of the complaints in public messages on the *LAPOR!* site in 2015. The main objectives of this study are to explore the generic structure and the linguistics features used in the complaint messages using SFL approach, and to describe the achievement of social function of the complaints messages that can be indicated from the generic structure and the linguistics features used by the *LAPOR!* site's users. This research used descriptive qualitative method because it aims to illustrate the use of language with the natural data without any manipulation of the researcher. The data in this study were 40 complaining messages that were given to the responsible authorities to make solutions. Therefore, the complaining messages on this website were categorized as direct complaints. The results of this study indicated that a complaint genre in *LAPOR!* site had 9 stages and had several lexicogrammatical features. Focusing on the achievement of social function, the entire of complaint messages can be understood as complaint activity, as reflected in its responses. The social function of complaint genre can be achieved because the complaint messages were supported by the effective generic structure and relevant linguistics features.

1 INTRODUCTION

The social problems that arise in society are an example of dynamic social life. The dynamics require people to be more sensitive to their social environment. Efforts that can be made by the community to show their concern for the environment are by contributing ideas to solve the problems occurred. Therefore, Indonesian government facilitates the citizens to convey their social problems to the institutions through *LAPOR!* site, which can be accessed through www.lapor.go.id homepage.

In the linguistics term, the communicative function is used to convey the problem is called a direct complaint. Generally, communicative function of complaints is to express a subjective view based on observations and feelings of complainants on their dissatisfaction of the factual object (Edwards, 2005: 6). Based on its nature, complaints can be divided into two categories. Those are indirect complaint that aimed for expressing dissatisfaction; and direct complaint (instrumental complaint) that aimed to construct changes or to change

circumstances (Daskal & Kampf, 2015:1228). Based on its form, complaints can be expressed orally and written form. In this case, a complaint message on *LAPOR!* site is a written complaint form.

Direct complaints are more beneficial compare to indirect complaints. This benefit i.e. improvement response from the receiving party. In the direct complaints the possibility of getting improvement response tends to be higher because the problem is conveyed to the party who has the authority to provide the solution, whereas on indirect complaint the problem is submitted to the party who has no authority to provide solution. Therefore, the direct complaint expression is more sensitive because there is level of power difference between complainant and the receiving party. Such sensitivity can be a product of language used is influenced by cultural context. The influence of culture can be reflected through the existence of communication patterns formed by customs in society (Yates and Orlikowski in Cornut, Giroux, & Langley, 2012:22).

The pattern of communication can be formed by the convention in the community of the same cultural background (Widdowson, 2011:28).

Therefore, people tend to use these patterns to increase the level of comprehension (Eggins, 2004:57). In language realm, this communication pattern is called genre. In line with SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics) genre concept which states that genre is a social activity because it involves speakers and speech partners, and has a social function manifested through patterned stages (Martin & Rose in Wigglesworth & McKeever, 2010:115). In this regard, the SFL sees genre as a cultural context that influences the text in several ways, including social functions or communicative functions, stages to achieve the purpose of communication, and the selection of linguistics units used (Gerot & Wignell, 1995:17, Bache, 2010:2563). In addition, genre also refers to text type that exist in the community (Joyce & Feez in Emilia & Christie, 2013:1).

Study of the genre has been widely conducted in both oral and written genres. Research that explores verbal genres such as on telephone conversations between customer service representatives and customers in telecommunication companies in China (Xu, Wang, Forey, & Li, 2010), and the pre-school age conversation genre (Hoyte, Torr, & Degotardi, 2013). Some research on writing genre i.e. the relational genres in readers letters rubric at *www.kompas* (Muniroh, 2011), report genre of scientific work sessions (Maingueneau, 2002), genre on message complaints from students addressed to the dean (Al-Momani, 2014), genre of wedding invitation letter in Iran (Sharif & Yarmohammadi, 2013), genre of editorial letter in the electronic newspaper *The Washington Times* (Ansary & Babaii, 2005), genre of news text on the *Mobi News* website (Erjavec & Kovacic, 2009) and genre of conversations on Facebook. In addition, there are also studies that explore the commercial genre on trade letters (Yunxia, 2000), and genre in business letters (Nguyen & Miller, 2012).

Based on literature observations, studies that examine relational genres in the form of writing have not been found, especially studies that examine the structure of the direct complaint genre. In addition, there are limited researches that examine the pattern of socio-political communication between the society and government in the context of Indonesian culture by using Systemic Functional Linguistics approach. Therefore, this study aims to examine the written relational genre in the form of direct complaints in Indonesian culture context by using the SFL approach.

2 METHODS

This study is a qualitative research that aims to describe the use of language to convey communicative functions in the form of direct complaints. In this context, complaints are classified as social activities. In addition, qualitative research occupied to describe and analyze things in the form of phenomena, events, attitudes, perceptions, and social activities (Sukmadinata, 2012:60; Koentjaraningrat, 1977). Therefore, the use of qualitative research methods by means of descriptive approach is considered appropriate as an approach to examine the phenomenon of the use of language that occurs naturally (Denzin & Lincoln in Malik & Hamied, 2016:172; Mariam in Creswell, 1994:57).

The data analyzed is natural, because it is intended to express the actual communicative function. The nature of the complaint message can be an advantageous aspect because the genre study is prioritizing data actuality (Bhatia, Biber, Conrad in Cornut, Giroux, & Langley, 2012:26).

Based on the writer consideration, the complaint messages sampling in this study were taken by using purposive sampling technique, (Maxwell in Alwasilah, 2009:147). The complaint messages that were sampled in this study are 40 complaints containing content in the form of complaints and aspirations, as mostly those content generally appears on the complaint message at *LAPOR!* site.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Generic Structures of Complaints Genre at *LAPOR!* Site in 2015

Based on the analysis result, there are 9 stages to make direct complaint genre at *LAPOR!* site. Those nine stages have their own functions. In addition, when it viewed from the occurrence frequency, the stages can be divided into 2 types i.e. the stage that always appears (obligatory) and the stage that can appear (optional). In addition, the total occurrence frequency of all stages in 40 direct complaints is 246. In Table 1., there is an explanation consisting of the stages that appear on the direct complaint at *LAPOR!* site and occurrence frequency, function of each stage, and type of stage.

Based on the information in Table 1., the stage that has a dominant appearance percentage is the obligatory stage. The stage consists of the Complaint Address stage and the Request stage. These two

stages become the dominating stage and the obligatory stage that triggered by direct complaint at the *LAPOR!* site intended to get improvement efforts from complaint recipient. Therefore, the complaint recipient needs to be explicitly clear in order to get the right solution.

The result of the analysis shows that there are 27 variations of generic structure complaint pattern at *LAPOR!* site. A number of such variations may arise due to the optional stage. The appearance of variations in generic structures is in line with the opinion of Eggins (2004:65) "... the inclusion of optional elements and more extended variations of the genre". While the generic structure potential (GSP) pattern used to describe the usual series of stages used in expressing the direct complaint genre at *LAPOR!* site as follows:

Complaint Address ^ (*Complaint Opening*) ^ *
 (*Orientation Issues*) ^ * <*Request*> ^ *
 <(*Trigger Evidence*)> ^ * <(*Complaint*)> ^ *
 (*Lecture*) ^ (*Complainant Address*) ^ *
 <(*Thanking Expression*) >

3.2 Linguistics Features of Complaints Genre at *LAPOR!* Site in 2015

A complaint message is a product of language used activity to achieve certain communicative purposes. In realizing the communicative purpose, language users create conventions that related to linguistics features used. Table 1 contains the description of

linguistics features contained in complaints genre at *LAPOR!* site.

3.3 The Communicative Function Comprehension of Complaints Genre at *LAPOR!* Site in 2015

Based on the analysis of communicative function comprehension, all observed complaints can be understood, although those are expressed in several generic structures variations. That comprehension is caused by the complaints expressed supported by *Potential Generic Structure* (GSP). There are two aspects that used as a standard to analyze the social function comprehension of the complaints genre at *LAPOR!* site. The standards are response from the institution and *LAPOR!* site users; and the complaint message status. The results of the analysis show that the social function of the complaint message has been achieved. In other words, the complaint activity has been understood as a complaint, not as another activity. The achievement of this social function is indicated by the response to the 40 complaints messages, either responses from related institutions or from other *LAPOR!* site users. In *LAPOR!* site there are features that serve to categorize the complaint on the basis of whether the complaints are followed-up or not by the institutions as the recipient of the complaint. If the status changed it may indicate that the complaint is comprehended by the recipient.

Table 1: The Structure of Complaint Genre at *LAPOR!* Site in 2015.

Stages	Stage Type	Functions	Linguistics Features	f	%
Complaint Address (CA)	Obligatory Stage	to identify complaint recipient	lexical marker 'Yth'	40	16.3
Complaint Opening (CO)	Optional Stage	to express greeting	greetings (<i>assalamualaikum</i>), family vocative (<i>bapak</i> and <i>pak</i>),	2	0.8
Orientation Issues (OI)	Optional Stage	to present information about the background of the complained issue in terms of conditions, time, location, and issue-related actors	circumstance of location, circumstance of manner, and circumstance of matter; first person pronoun (<i>syaya</i>); verb of verbal process and mental process	26	10.6
Request (R)	Obligatory Stage	to request a response either in action or information from the recipient	Imperative Mood (<i>mohon, kiranya, tolong, sebaiknya, semestinya, seharusnya, harap, segera, dilarang and tidak boleh</i>); passive-form verbs (<i>di-kan, and ter-</i>); verbs of material process and mental process.	70	28.4
Trigger Evidence (IE)	Optional Stage	to present the complainant's testimony, provide supporting evidence, and/or to describe the situation	causal conjunction (<i>karena, sebab, akibat, and jadi</i>); result relations conjunction (<i>sehingga</i>); lexical marker of past tense (<i>sudah</i>); the affix of passive form (<i>di-kan, and ter-</i>); forms verbs of existential process (<i>terdapat and ada</i>)	23	9.3
Complaint (C)	Optional Stage	to disclose a negative evaluation of the sender of the message to the issue and to describe an unfavourable condition	contrasting conjunctions (<i>namun, tapi, and tetapi</i>); intensity marker in the form of an adverb that expresses the quality or degree (<i>sangat, sekali, and paling</i>); lexical markers of past tense (<i>sudah, telah, masih, mendapat, and terlaksana</i>); a negative marker to denote a denial (<i>belum, tidak, and kurang</i>); verbs of material process.	22	8.9
Lecture (L)	Optional Stage	to describe what is believed to be a truth based on the complainants' point of view	conjunction terms (<i>apabila, jika, kalau, and bila</i>); conjunction results (<i>maka and sehingga</i>); declarative Mood.	5	2
Thanking Expression (TE)	Optional Stage	to express gratitude	thanking expression (<i>terima kasih, nuhun, and matur nuwun</i>).	57	23.1
Complainant Address (CA)	Optional Stage	to explain the identity of complainants	noun phrase that shows name and geographical name	1	0.4
Total				246	100

4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above research findings it can be drawn four further points. First, the use of linguistics features and stages variations in the text of complaint at *LAPOR!* site indicate that the text of the complaint is a genre formed by a dynamic society. This dynamics is caused by the variation of Indonesian society in terms of ethnicity, mother tongue, territory, and social status. Second, the results of this study seem to confirm the basic concepts in genre theory embedded by SFL theory. In SFL there are two claims: each genre has a different generic structure, and each stage has its own linguistics features because it represents a different purpose (Eggins, 2004: 66). In Indonesian cultural context, there is no study that specifically discusses the form of language used to declare a direct complaint, then the results of this study are expected to contribute the documentation of language used that expressed direct complaint. Third, the results of this study are expected to be a reference for research that examines the genre, especially for research that examines similar genres embodied in different forms and media. Fourth, the results of this study are expected to provide an overview to the society, language teachers, and learners of the Indonesian language on the use of language for the purpose of complaints.

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