

# Analyzing the Text of the Regulation on Quarantine During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Forensic Linguistic Study

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the text of the regulations on quarantine during pandemic COVID-19. Since Indonesia reported its first case of COVID-19 in the capital, Jakarta, in early March 2020, the pandemic has impacted all sectors of lives. With the fast spread of the COVID-19, the government mandates all sectors to take the necessary actions to prevent the spread. The enactment of Law Number 6 of 2018 concerning Health Quarantine then published which is then followed by various regional regulations both at the provincial and municipal levels. Descriptive qualitative method applied in this research. The data are the Regulation Number 67 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Health Protocols in the Context of Prevention and Breaking the Chain of Spread of COVID-19 in the City of Surabaya followed by a Circular Letter Mayor of Surabaya Number 443 of 2021 concerning the Enforcement of Restrictions on Emergency Community Activities for COVID-19 in the City of Surabaya. The study found out that there was inconsistency between one article and another which tend to contradict and create ambiguity. This ambiguity leads to misunderstandings and allows violations of the rules.*

## KEYWORDS

COVID-19; regulations; forensic linguistics

## INTRODUCTION

In the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic, the issue of quarantine becomes the global wave all over the world. This is not only related to the containment of the COVID-19 rate, but also the issue of quarantine which is closely related to the national security in a broader sense. Quarantine is no longer a national issue of a country but has become an international issue that has grown so complex and sensitive. Indonesia, which has a large population, is automatically vulnerable to the spread of this virus. According to WHO Indonesia's case numbers were recorded to be the highest overall toll in Southeast Asia. The massive increase in movement of people has caused the spread of COVID-19 to become more widespread and increasingly difficult to control. Therefore, regulation and implementation of the quarantine law need to be implemented to protect the country as well as the surrounding countries.

The regulations and enactments related to COVID-19 are significant as a form of state responsibility in providing protection to the community. As the spread of this virus is vastly transmitted, the implementation of quarantine law must be performed in every area in Indonesia. The stipulation of this quarantine law is an effort to prevent the entry and spread of viruses and diseases from within and outside the country or vice versa, either by land, sea, or air. Various precautions also need to be taken such as social distancing, keeping a healthy lifestyle, and restriction of mobility between regions (Caselli, et.al. 2020; Asongu et al. 2020; Djalante et al., 2020a; Moloney. 2020). The quarantine regulations are based on the Law of

the Republic of Indonesia Number 6 of 2018, which was later revealed in the Decree of the Minister of Health Number 15 of 2021, which was then narrowed down to Governor Regulation 188 of 2021.

The quarantine regulations are conducted based on the situation of the region. There are special provisions relating to each of the quarantinable that categorized into 4 levels. The determination of level 1,2,3, or 4 refers to the number of confirmed cases of the corona virus in that region. Level 1 is considered safer than the rest, while level 4 is regarded the most dangerous compared to level 1,2, or 3. Those levelling is based on the Instruction of the Minister of Home Affairs Number 26 of 2021 and known as PPKM Level 1,2,3,and 4. The City of Surabaya belongs to PPKM level 4 and conducted several quarantine regulations. The regulations are based on East Java Governor Regulation 188 of 2021 which was then narrowed down to Surabaya Mayor Regulation Number 67 of 2020 which is accompanied by the Circular of the Mayor of Surabaya Number 443 of 2021 that regulates the implementation of quarantine and PPKM in the Surabaya city area. This study will analyze the texts with a forensic linguistics approach.

Forensic linguistics is a part of the applied science of linguistics which involves the relationship between language and law. This means that language can be used as an investigative tool to help solve legal language problems. Ahmed (2021: 42) states that forensic linguistics is mainly used to analyze language in relation to crime and judicial procedures. In this regard, the COVID-19 quarantine regulations on forensic linguistics are mainly used to examine linguistic evidence for law enforcement purposes and analysis of legal issues. Thus, the main focus of the analysis that will be carried out is to dissect legal texts that are expected to cause multiple interpretations and debates in society. (Ollson, 2016) says that forensic linguistics applies linguistic theories in a linguistic event involved in a legal process, both in the form of legal products, interactions in judicial processes, and in interactions between individuals. From this reference, the analysis of quarantine regulations can be categorized into the discussion of forms of legal products.

Research on potential violations of local regulations related to the handling of the COVID-19 outbreak and infectious disease had previously been studied by Arafiq from the University of Mataram. The paper states that lingual forms of speech related to COVID-19 that appear on WhatsApp social media and offline speech in the NTB community have the potential to violate the regional regulations made to deal with COVID-19 at that time and at the same time form counterproductive opinions in the process. This study has the same analysis in the context of the lingual forms that appear in the COVID-19 theme. However, in contrast to previous research, this paper analyzes the language of the text of regional regulations that can lead to multiple interpretations and ultimately lead to potential violations committed by the community in the application of regulations regarding quarantine and restrictions on community activities in the city of Surabaya. In addition, because the main study is only centered on legal documents, namely the Circular Letter of the Mayor of Surabaya Number 443 of 2021, the contradictory speeches and opinions of the public certainly do not enter the realm of discussing legal texts and statutory regulations.

Furthermore, research conducted by I Wayan Pastika (2021) with the title Text of Distrust in COVID-19 in Indonesian: Forensic Linguistic Studies. This study analyzes texts containing messages of public distrust of COVID-19 obtained from news media and social media in cyberspace. These texts contain a lot of information, some are interesting, provocative, and suggestive, but the information is not supported by facts (16.5%). Some languages are normative or flat and a little boring, but some contain information that can be explained because it's factually valid. These texts are read, identified, and classified based on aspects of illocutionary acts and non-verbal behavior of the elites to see the practice of

discourse and social practice in the context of the high and low public trust in COVID-19. This research is in line with the research that the author presents because it carries the same theme. However, in this paper, the study discussed is the text of the regional regulations, especially the city of Surabaya regarding the multiple interpretations in the Circular of the Mayor of Surabaya Number 443 of 2021 which allows for potential violations by the public due to ambiguity and contradictions in the contents of the Surabaya mayor's regulation.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative which focuses on the dimensions of text analysis in forensic linguistics. The diversity of written language is the type of data that is the subject of this research. The data collection method of this research is based on literature study which is used as a method of collecting data about the dimensions of legal text analysis in forensic linguistics. In addition, the data obtained were analyzed using a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is carried out by describing, explaining, and explaining the data.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of the analysis of the text of the Circular of the Mayor of Surabaya No. 443/7787/436.8.4/2021. The implementation of the COVID-19 Emergency Community Activity Restrictions in the City of Surabaya is Lingual Form Ambiguity (Point 2 Point A, Point 7, Point b, Point 2, Point b, Point 2 letter c number 4) and Ambiguity of Meaning seen in (Point 2 letter d , Point 6, Point 7, Point 7 letter d, Point 3 point 1, Point 3 point 2, Point 3 point 3, Point 4, Point 5).

### ***Lingual Form Ambiguity***

In the Circular of the Mayor of Surabaya No. 443/7787/436.8.4/2021 concerning the Imposition of Restrictions on Emergency Community Activities for COVID-19 in the City of Surabaya, it was found that there were linguistic forms of ambiguity (vocabulary, phrases, and sentences) so that readers or the public did not fully understand the meaning of the text, especially Point 2 Point A.

### ***Data 1***

*Point 2 item A states that*

*"The implementation of teaching and learning activities (Schools, Universities, Academies, Places of Education/Training is carried out online).*

The sentence construction in point 2 item a, it is explained that the implementation of teaching and learning activities must be carried out online. This indicates that all teaching and learning activities by both teachers and students are not allowed offline or face-to-face. This manuscript is allegedly causing ambiguous meaning because it has a double meaning. The phrase 'carried out online' is meant by the government to mean working or studying from home (see Point 2 item b), but schools or universities in Surabaya represent it as an activity that is carried out online so they don't have face-to-face meetings in class. However, all teachers and staff are still active in carrying out activities at school. The multiple interpretations that appear on the item of regulation in point 2 point a mentioned above are actually because there is ambiguity also in the next article, namely article 7, point b which states:

**Point 7, item b**

*"...ensure the learning process, work practices and/or other activities continue and the rights of students to obtain education are fulfilled".*

The context of the sentence above, provides a wide enough space for the reader to interpret the meaning of "fulfilment of the rights of students in obtaining education." The context of this sentence allows for violations of online teaching and learning activities in the previous article considering that not all teachers have maximum facilities for online learning activities. Therefore, schools and campuses then facilitate media and internet networks and issue rules for teachers and lecturers to be able to carry out the learning process in the office where they work and not do it at home. Thus, in some educational institutions, the number of incoming teachers can reach up to 75%. This automatically also violates the rules in point 2, item b which states as follows.

**Point 2, item c**

*"The implementation of activities in the non-essential sector is 100% (one hundred percent) work from home (WFH)".*

In point 2 item c it is stated that only essential sectors are allowed to carry out work from office activities with a percentage from 25% to 100% with strict health protocols. Schools and universities are not included in the essential sector so all practical activities must be carried out at home or in other words carried out in a work from home (WFH) manner. Thus, the school's policy to require teachers or lecturers to carry out teaching and learning activities in schools clearly violates the regulations of the articles mentioned above. Furthermore, at point 2 letter c number 4, we can also find statements that seem complete and clear, but on closer inspection the statements have not been made in detail so that they can lead to confusion in interpreting meaning.

Surabaya Mayor Circular No. 443/7787/436.8.4/2021. The Implementation of Restrictions on Emergency Community Activities for COVID-19 in the City of Surabaya.

**Point 2 letter c number 4**

*"Supermarkets, traditional markets, grocery stores and supermarkets that sell daily necessities are limited to operating hours until 20.00 local time with a capacity of 50% (fifty percent) of visitors".*

In the context of the statement above, it is stated that the closing hours or the completion of operations for a number of shops, markets, supermarkets that sell basic needs of the community is until 20.00 local time. This regulation was made with the aim that people reduce mobility at home during night hours and stay at home to avoid the spread of COVID-19. However, the context of this sentence then becomes incomplete considering that traditional markets in Indonesia are used to reopening at 23.00 until the early hours of the morning around 03.00 or before dawn. As a result, many markets close at 20.00 according to the regulations, but return to operational activities a few hours later. This happens because the regulations made do not regulate opening hours and only regulate closing hours which are then used by the community to carry out activities that actually violate COVID-19 prevention regulations.

### **Ambiguity of Meaning**

In the Circular of the Mayor of Surabaya No. 443/7787/436.8.4/2021. The implementation of the COVID-19 Emergency Community Activity Restriction in the City of Surabaya has ambiguity in meaning in point 2 letter d.

#### *Point 2 letter d*

*"The implementation of eating/drinking activities in public places (restaurants, restaurants, cafes, street vendors, hawker stalls) both in separate locations and those located in shopping centers/malls only accepts delivery/take away and does not accept food at restaurants. place (dine-in). A statement stating that which is in a separate location or located in a shopping center/mall."*

The text of point 2 item d above gives rise to a different meaning given that many street stalls do not have their own location and are also not located in shopping centers. These street stalls are usually only in the form of unloading stalls that are placed on bicycles or carried with human bodies so that they can sell anywhere without a "separate place" and "certain location". Therefore, these street vendors can serve buyers and sometimes the food is intended for buyers who want to take the food they bought home, but often buyers eat and drink on location. The place is not defined as what has been mentioned in the above points and also the activity does not cause a crowd (as mentioned in point 4: "Prohibit any form of activity / activity that can cause a crowd").

Thus, it seems necessary to conduct a more in-depth study of the socio-cultural context of the community so that the diction and lexicon used in the regulations for limiting community activities in preventing COVID-19 can run optimally. Then at points 6 and 7 there are also differences in understanding about the context of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). In this case, PPE can mean special clothes worn by health professionals when treating patients or PPE is just an ordinary mask that must be worn by the public during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### *Point 6*

*"...use personal protective equipment (PPE) in the form of masks and if necessary also use a face shield and/or gloves, if you have to leave the house or interact with other people whose health status is unknown" .*

#### *Point 7*

*"...provide special trash bins for single-use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).*

In the context of the sentence above, the definition of PPE as regulated in point 6 is personal protective equipment in the form of masks, while in point 7 the special trash bin provided by the Surabaya City Government is intended for medical personnel who will then be specially processed so as not to spread to the general public. However, the regulation does not clearly explain the PPE in question so that this can also lead to multiple interpretations and different meanings for each person.

#### *Point 7 letter d*

*"...applying coughing and sneezing etiquette by covering the mouth and nose with the upper arm when sneezing."*

Then,

Point 7 item d states "...covering the mouth and nose with the arm...", even though people are already wearing masks. In fact, the act of "covering the mouth and nose with the arm" will be dangerous considering that the outer mask that has been contaminated with the virus should not be touched. The rule in point d seems to apply to people who do not wear masks, but if so, it would be contrary to the provisions of the above regulations.

**Point 3 item 1**

*"...the application of discipline and law enforcement on health protocols and restrictions on community activities to break the COVID-19 chain in the Regions".*

Semantically, the phrase "implementation of discipline and law enforcement" is still very ambiguous; what kind of discipline and how to enforce the law, have not been explained in detail so that in its application in society, the disciplinary and law enforcement schemes are various. Pay attention to points 2 and 3 below.

**Point 2 item 2**

*"...increase the participation of all stakeholders in an integrated and effective manner; and..."*

**Point 3 item 3**

*"...improve coordination, harmonization and synchronization of policies between local governments, stakeholders and communities in the regions."*

The phrase "stakeholder" is widely applicable in the regulations issued by the Ministry and the Governor of East Java, while in the SE Mayor of Surabaya it is clearly stated that stakeholders are the ranks of the team who are members of the Surabaya COVID Group. Thus, there is often a debate between the head of the RT or RW and the COVID Cluster in the assignment of community restrictions. The next thing that often arises is the overlap of power between the COVID Cluster Team as stakeholders who have been legalized and administrative officials who in the context of their work can also be referred to as stakeholders.

Another thing that is also being debated so far is the number of restrictions on the number of people in the PPKM scheme in Surabaya. The ministerial regulation states the amount of 50% which is then followed by a Governor and Mayor Regulation. However, then there was the issuance of the SE at the same time which gave leeway up to 75% of the total number of people and even in the latest SE the Mayor only amounted to 25% of the people. The difference in this number at the same time certainly creates a polemic in the community.

**Point 4**

*"... limiting the number of people to a maximum of 50% (fifty percent) and implementing provisions regarding physical distancing;  
limit the number of people to a maximum of 75% (fifty percent) and apply provisions regarding physical distancing;  
limit the number of people to a maximum of 25% (fifty percent) and apply provisions regarding physical distancing".*

Another multi-interpretation that appears in the three regulations is regarding the rules for entering malls or public areas for Surabaya residents.

### *Point 5*

- a. It is mandatory to use the Peduli Lindungi application for screening of all visitors and employees.
- b. Maximum capacity of 50% and only visitors with the green category (already vaccinated twice) in Peduli Lindungi are allowed to enter
- c. Visitors under 12 years old are not allowed

The regulation states that to be able to enter public areas, the public must use *Peduli Lindungi* application in which there is a statement that "has been vaccinated twice." However, when viewed in that context, the most important thing is the evidence of being vaccinated. The people of Surabaya sometimes only bring proof that they have been vaccinated in the form of print-outs that are packaged like ID cards so that many community members enter public areas without the need to upload the evidence into *Peduli Lindungi* application. For visitors at the mall, information that has been vaccinated twice is also no longer needed because the regulations at the mall state that visitors only need to show evidence that they have been vaccinated once. In this case, items a and b mentioned above contradict each other. Related to item c that the age of 12 years is not allowed. In many aspects, this was later relaxed, even when this phenomenon became more widespread, the ministry regulations were finally repealed, as reported by the following media

### *Media News*

“jpn.com, SURABAYA - The Surabaya City Government has finally made concessions for mall visitors. This time, children aged 12 and under are allowed into the shopping center.”

Furthermore, in Article 17 there is a clause:

### *Article 17 point 1*

“...no smoking near street vendors/hawker stalls; and throw garbage in its place and always maintain cleanliness and don't cough, sneeze or throw saliva carelessly...”

The context of the statement in the sentence of Article 17 above is clearly narrow and ambiguous. The use of a semicolon (;) after the place for street vendors/hawker stalls means that the activities of disposing of garbage, smoking, sneezing, coughing, and spitting should not be carried out only within the scope of the place's duration. In fact, the prohibition of activities not to cough, sneeze or throw saliva carelessly actually applies in all public places. Thus, the use of this context in the sentence above suffers from a narrowing of meaning which can then actually lead to violations committed by the community.

## **CONCLUSION**

The conclusion of this study is that there is ambiguity of meaning because the application of linguistic rules is not optimal. The linguistic rules include the rules for the preparation of words, phrases and sentences. This was possible because of the points in the Circular Letter of the Mayor of Surabaya No. 443/7787/436.8.4/2021 which tend to contradict each other. The inconsistency between one article and another makes the reader interpret the contents of the text according to the desired situation and conditions. Inaccuracy in the application of linguistic rules leads to misunderstandings and allows violations of the rules themselves.

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