



## Forensic Stylistic Analysis of the Suicide Note by an Elementary School Teacher's Family in Malang

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### ABSTRACT

This research delves into the realm of forensic stylistic analysis by examining a poignant suicide note penned by a family of elementary school teachers in Malang. Through a meticulous exploration of the emotional intricacies and linguistic characteristics of the note, the study seeks to unravel the underlying motives and sentiments of the authors. Employing techniques such as semantic and sentiment analysis, the research aims to uncover the deeper meanings and emotional nuances embedded within the message. The study sheds light on the enduring presence of love and familial bonds even amidst challenging circumstances, showcasing expressions of care and emotional connections within the notes. The findings underscore the importance of recognizing signs of emotional distress and providing appropriate support for individuals in need. This research contributes to a better understanding of suicide notes within the realm of forensic stylistics and emphasizes the significance of empathy and intervention in times of emotional crisis.

**Keyword:** Emotional Connections, Forensic Stylistic, Linguistic Characteristics, Sentiments, Suicide Note

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mendalami ranah analisis gaya bahasa forensik dengan meneliti sebuah catatan bunuh diri yang ditulis oleh sebuah keluarga guru sekolah dasar di Malang. Melalui eksplorasi yang cermat terhadap seluk-beluk emosional dan karakteristik linguistik dari catatan tersebut, penelitian ini berusaha mengungkap motif dan sentimen yang mendasari penulisnya. Dengan menggunakan teknik-teknik seperti analisis semantik dan sentimen, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap makna yang lebih dalam dan nuansa emosional yang tertanam di dalam pesan tersebut. Penelitian ini menyoroti keberadaan cinta dan ikatan kekeluargaan yang abadi bahkan di tengah-tengah situasi yang menantang, menampilkan ekspresi kepedulian dan hubungan emosional di dalam catatan tersebut. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya mengenali tanda-tanda tekanan emosional dan memberikan dukungan yang tepat bagi individu yang membutuhkan. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih baik mengenai catatan bunuh diri dalam bidang gaya bahasa forensik dan menekankan pentingnya empati dan intervensi pada saat krisis emosional.

**Kata Kunci:** Hubungan Emosional, Gaya Bahasa Forensik, Karakteristik Linguistik, Sentimen, Catatan Bunuh Diri



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## 1. Introduction

In the words of Verdonk (2002), stylistics is the study of style, which is defined as the analysis of unique linguistic expression and the presentation of its significance and intent. A subfield of applied linguistics called stylistics studies text style; a text can be literary or not. The translation and investigation of several written or spoken languages in a court setting is the focus of forensic stylistics. This method is used to comprehend

literary styles where language is prioritized above all else. Language is significant due to the form linguistic structures, which are made up of many levels, patterns, and structures. These are important components of how the material functioning. The study of style and how it might change depending on circumstances is referred to as forensic stylistics. It makes it feasible for people to comprehend texts linguistically in an effort to develop norms appropriate for expressing the particular choices that individuals make.

Stylistic analysis of the suicide note displayed a consistent writing style throughout. The author used a mix of compound and complex sentences, with a varied sentence structure that added depth and complexity to their message. The note also contained minimal grammatical errors, suggesting that the author was literate and had a good command of written language.

As forensic linguistics is a rapidly expanding and fascinating area of linguistic study, studies of legal papers reveal that linguists are very knowledgeable in this sector and that many of them study them. In 1968, linguistics professor Jan Svartvik used the phrase "forensic linguistics" to describe his examination of Timothy John Evans's claims. The application of linguistic knowledge to a particular social environment, particularly the legal forum (from whence the name forensics is from), is what Olsson (2012) defines as "forensic linguistics." Furthermore, forensic linguistics is a branch of corpus linguistics that applies linguistic data, analytical methods, and linguistic expertise to legal, criminal justice, trial, and other related problems.

As forensic linguistics is a rapidly expanding and fascinating area of linguistic study, linguists are drawn to it. Studies of legal papers reveal that linguists are very knowledgeable in this sector and that many of them study them. In 1968, linguistics professor Jan Svartvik used the phrase "forensic linguistics" to describe his examination of Timothy John Evans's claims. The application of linguistic knowledge to a particular social environment, particularly the legal forum (from whence the name forensics is from), is what Olsson (2004) defines as "forensic linguistics." According to Gregory (2018), a suicide note is a message written by someone when they decide to end their life, to share their feelings with others, to express their pain, or to suffer responsibility to a specific person. People who are suicidal often write long notes with more information about their feelings because they won't be able to talk about it later. Suicidal thoughts or suicidal ideation happen to people with psychological problems or people who have absolutely no problems after being depressed. So, suicidal thoughts are posts written and posted by someone on social media platforms, like Twitter, Reddit, or any other platform, after being stressed to seek help or tell others about their pain, etc. Therefore, these platforms are considered windows to see the true emotions of the participants or read their last words. Barak & Miron (2005) confirm that suicidal people can be effectively researched through their online posts. Therefore, suicide letters or messages with suicidal thoughts help people understand the real feelings of others from their writing style.

The forensic stylistic analysis of the suicide notes of the family of the elementary school teacher in Malang revealed important insights into the author's writing style and language use. By examining the linguistic features of the note, forensic linguists can gain a better understanding of the author's identity and motives, shedding light on the circumstances surrounding their tragic decision to end their life. This article examines a suicide note discovered in the Malang home of an elementary school teacher's family through forensic stylistic analysis. The suicide note was discovered by the authorities after the family of the elementary school teacher reported her missing. The note was found in her bedroom, along with other personal belongings. The note was written on a piece of lined paper with blue ink, and it was addressed to her family members. When the suicide note was first examined, a few language elements were very noticeable. The writing style of the note was conversational, using easy-to-understand language. Personal pronouns like "I" and "my" were used by the author throughout the note, suggesting that it was written in the first person. Additionally, the note included emotions of regret and despair, indicating that the writer was going through a very trying time emotionally. Another notable feature of the suicide note was the use of past tense verbs. The author recounted past events and experiences, indicating a sense of finality and closure in their decision to end their life. Additionally, the note contained references to specific people and places, indicating a personal connection to the author's life.

Forensic linguistic analysis of suicide notes has emerged as a valuable tool for investigating authenticity and understanding the psychological state of individuals who take their own lives. Studies have employed various linguistic approaches, including transitivity analysis (Hayuwardhani, 2020), corpus-based stylistics (Jassim & Jaafar, 2022), and insider/outsider language analysis. Researchers have identified common features in suicide notes, such as informal writing style, low lexical diversity, and frequent use of verbs (Jassim &

Jaafar, 2022). Linguistic analysis can reveal emotional states, motives, and intentions of the authors (Sudjana & Fitri, 2013).

Researchers identified aspects such as emotion, semantics, and structure in Per Ohlin's suicide note. The study concluded that the predominance of negative emotions in the final text shows that Ohlin was always associated with death and chose to end his life through various acts of self-harm. Research conducted by Maulida et al., (2024) examines the linguistic features present in a suicide note written by a student and applies Prokofyeva's theory to the linguistic features of suicide letters. The results showed that all the characteristics were present in the suicide note, but the researchers discovered that different tenses were used in the suicide note. In a different study, Andini et al., (2023) focused on the forensic style of the suicide letters of veterinary students at Airlangga University. The researchers collected data in the form of screenshots of notes from the Internet and used the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) program to analyze the content of the notes. Research results show that the suicide note is real and not forged. Anjum & Anwar (2023) researched a forensic stylistic analysis of legalese in Bank Cortes in Pakistan. The study used corpus linguistics methodology and collected data from the Bank Corte website. The study found the legal language in Pakistan's Corte Bank has different conveniences and inconveniences that cause unbalanced difficult and practical understanding problems. Sitepu et al., (2023) examines the linguistic elements of the suicide note of a schoolgirl called Mahira. The study found that the vocabulary used in the note was not typically spoken by Mahira.

The suicide notes left by the family of the Malang elementary school teacher were subjected to a forensic stylistic analysis, which provided crucial information about the author's language and writing style. Forensic linguists can learn more about the identity and motivations of the note's author by analyzing its language qualities, which can also provide light on the circumstances underlying the author's terrible decision to terminate their life. This article applies forensic stylistic analysis to take a look at a suicide note that had been discovered in the Malang residence of an elementary school teacher. When the elementary school teacher's family reported her missing, the authorities found the suicide note. The note and other personal items were discovered in her bedroom. The note was addressed to her family members and written in blue ink on a sheet of lined paper. A few linguistic components were immediately apparent when the suicide letter was initially analyzed. The note was written in a conversational style with simple words. The author's frequent use of first-person pronouns like "I" and "my" indicates that the note was written by the author. The note also expressed remorse and despair, suggesting that the writer was going through an extremely difficult emotional period. The suicide note's usage of past tense verbs was another noteworthy element. The author's account of earlier occasions and encounters suggested that their choice to terminate their life was one of closure and finality.

This research was conducted to understand the emotional nuances in the message that may affect the writing style. The researchers are using this suicide note as a research topic because they want to examine the linguistic characteristics of an authentic suicide note. This case attracted attention at the time this study was conducted and was widely discussed in Indonesian society.

## **2. Method**

The researchers used a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze a suicide note written in a mirror by a father who had been an elementary school teacher in Malang. It was considered a primary source for understanding the writing style and expression of emotions in suicide motives. Data had been collected through observation of the suicide note, focusing on sentence structure, expression of positive and negative emotions, and semantic relationships within the text. Data analysis centered on sentiment analysis and understanding the nuances of emotions in the messages, with identification of emotional expressions as well as evaluation of semantic significance in the relationships between sentences. The research also investigated the factors that had influenced the writing style of the messages, namely psychological distress.

## **3. Result and Discussion**

The chronology happened on December 12, 2023, a suicide tragedy occurred in Saptorenggo Village, Pakis District, Malang Regency, East Java. The three victims were 44-year-old Wahab (father), 40-year-old Sulikha (mother), and their 12-year-old daughter RY. The chronology of the incident began when Wahab's other daughter, AKE (13 years old), overslept and found her mother and twin sister ARE (initially) lying in the back room. Wahab asked AKE (ARE's twin sister) to ask the neighbors for help. When the neighbors arrived, they found Wahab dying with hand wounds, Sulikha dead with foaming at the mouth, and ARE dead with blue lips. Wahab was rushed to the hospital, but could not be helped. The motive for the suicide was suspected to be due

to economic factors, namely the dominating conventional debt burden. Several residents were questioned by the police regarding Wahab's suicide motive and they admitted that Wahab had asked them for a loan. This led the police to believe that the motive for this suicide was due to economic factors. Before the father left his eldest daughter, he had written a letter containing a message that he wrote on the mirror using a black marker to his daughter to stay alert, obey his elders, and study well. This can be seen in the picture below.

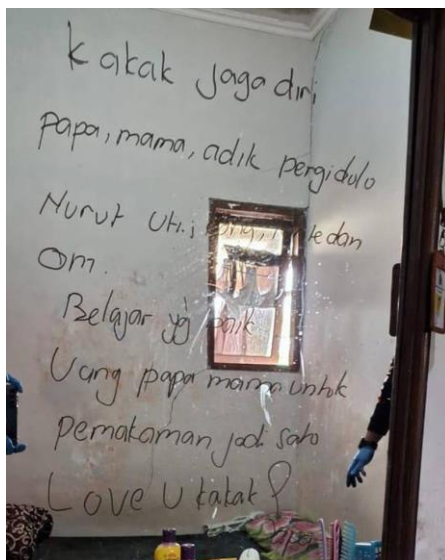


Figure 1. Suicide Note

Table 1. Finding Positive and Negative Emotions

Sentence	Emotion
Kakak jaga diri	Negative emotion
Papa, mama, adik, pergi dulu	Negative emotion
Nurut uti, kong, tante dan om	Positive emotion
Belajar yg baik	Positive emotion
Uang papa mama untuk pemakaman jadi satu	Negative emotion
Love u kakak	Positive emotion

The above table shows that there are three negative emotions and three positive emotions in the suicide note.

### 3.1. Structure of the Suicide Note

This structure illustrates how the message reveals final feelings, urges, and possible difficult decisions before a possible extreme action. This structure consists of:

#### 1. Statement of Farewell and Emotional Grievance

- Papa, mama, adik, pergi dulu: A farewell phrase that reflects a sense of loss and difficult separation from family members.
- Nurut uti, kong, tante dan om: Indicates a sense of hopelessness and a desire to obey everyone who plays an important role in her life.

## 2. Last Words and Positive Messages

- Belajar yang baik: Hinting at a difficult decision the author may be facing, the final message is an encouragement to study well, perhaps as a last-ditch effort to provide positive direction before taking an extreme step.

## 3. Expressions of Love and Care

- Love you kakak: A strong expression of love towards his daughter, despite his difficult situation. This shows that although feelings of hopelessness may be present, love and emotional connection are maintained.

## 4. Inferences Indicating Intent or Doubt

- There is no direct statement of suicidal intent however, the overall context of the message, the emotional overtones, and the emphasis on separation and difficult decisions may provide clues about possible intentions or doubts related to her life.

### 3.2. *Semantic Analysis*

The researchers used semantic analysis to find out the deeper meaning of each sentence in the suicide letter written on a mirror. In this case, the researchers divided it into sentences.

1. The first sentence written by the author in the suicide letter is "Kakak jaga diri". This sentence can be interpreted as a message from the author when he left the person he loved. He hopes that the person he loves (his daughter) can take care of himself after he leaves.
2. After that, the author wrote "Papa, mama, adik, pergi dulu" on his suicide note written on a mirror. This phrase shows a sense of leaving loved ones, which can evoke feelings of guilt or sadness.
3. The speaker is telling their older sibling to obey their grandparents (uti, kong), aunts (tante), and uncles (om).
4. The fourth sentence in the suicide letter written by the father is "Belajar yg baik". The speaker is telling their older sibling to study hard. The directive to "Study well" can be interpreted as a specific wish of the writer.
5. The suicide note in the fifth sentence mentions "Uang papa mama untuk pemakaman jadi satu" implying a message and mandate that might be a burden for the person left behind.
6. The expression "Love u kakak" at the end indicates a sense of affection and love towards the recipient, likely a sibling (kakak). This expression suggests a desire for connection and care. Concerning their elder sibling, the speaker is expressing their affection and worry. They are advising them to prioritize their studies, respect their elders, and take care of themselves. Additionally, the speaker notes that their parents had put money aside for their funeral. This could be the speaker's method of telling their sibling that, even in the absence of their parents, they will be financially supported.

In the text, the agent is the speaker who directs actions such as telling their daughter to take care of herself, obey her parents and elders, and study well. The patients of these actions are the speaker's daughters. The theme raised in the text is the importance of family and respect for elders. Meanwhile, the main thought (rheme)

of the text is the speaker's love and concern for their children and older siblings. This expression of love and care becomes the focal point of the message, showing the depth of the family relationship and the care the speaker gives to his family members. Factors contributing to suicide, including family, social, and economic issues, have also been explored Triana et al., (2020), and authorship attribution techniques have been applied to verify the authenticity of suicide notes in legal contexts (Basim, 2012). These studies demonstrate the potential of forensic linguistics in understanding suicide notes and contributing to investigations in various fields, including psychology and law enforcement. This structure illustrates how the message reveals final feelings, urges, and possible difficult decisions before a possible extreme action.

### *3.3. Sentiment Analysis and Understanding Emotional Nuances in Suicide Note*

The message conveyed by the writer elicits a complex spectrum of emotions, which include sadness, despair, and a possible desire to end life. Phrases about separation from family members, such as "pergi dulu" and "Nurut uti, kong, tante, and om" convey the depth of sadness felt by the author, as well as illustrate how difficult the process of separation can be. The words "Belajar yang baik" meanwhile, hint at the possibility of a difficult decision, perhaps a last-ditch effort to leave a kind and meaningful message before taking the extreme step. A sense of desperation is also evident in the message, especially through the nuances of the words chosen.

However, in such despair, there are still clear expressions of love and care, such as "Love u kakak" which indicates that despite being faced with a difficult situation, the writer still feels a strong emotional connection towards his child. This shows that even though circumstances may be overwhelming, love and family bonds endure. This sentence also has an implied message, as it is the father's last words to his daughter before he too leaves.

The message gives serious clues about a very deep emotional state and possibly suicidal thoughts or intentions. Sihite et al., (2023) researched the forensic style of Per Ohlin's suicide note. This highlights the importance of recognizing and taking signs of emotional crises seriously and providing appropriate support and resources to individuals who are experiencing them.

## **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the findings uncovered a nuanced interplay of emotions, ranging from sadness and despair to expressions of love and care, reflected in the note's structure. Semantic analysis revealed deeper meanings, including concerns for loved ones, instructions to obey elders, and hints of financial burdens. Sentiment analysis highlighted the profound emotional turmoil experienced by the author, conveying a sense of separation and desperation alongside enduring familial bonds. Ultimately, the research emphasizes the critical importance of recognizing and addressing signs of emotional distress and suicidal ideation. By examining authentic suicide notes, researchers can gain valuable insights into individuals' psychological states, informing the development of effective intervention strategies and support systems. Understanding the linguistic characteristics and emotional nuances of suicide messages is paramount for early detection and prevention efforts, ultimately contributing to the promotion of mental well-being and the prevention of tragedies within communities.

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