Insults and death threats against Nadiya Lazzouni from a forensic linguistics perspective

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Abstract: This paper presents a comprehensive forensic linguistic analysis of insults and death threats directed at Nadiya Lazzouni, emphasizing the roles of semantics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics within legal contexts. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines qualitative and quantitative analyses to examine linguistic elements within legal frameworks, drawing on data from Lazzouni's personal social media account, where she disclosed the

threatening letter. Through a comparative legilinguistics perspective, the research elucidates how various legal systems interpret and enforce laws related to hate speech and threats. The findings reveal that the letter contains severe insults and death threats rooted in religious and racial identity, underscoring the legal challenges posed by multilingual and sociocultural variations in legal interpretation. This study highlights the necessity for standardized legal terminology and the development of forensic linguistic tools to enhance clarity and fairness in legal proceedings involving speech-related offenses. By integrating linguistic analysis with forensic and comparative legal methodologies, this research contributes to the broader discourse on multilingualism in legal practice and the effectiveness of legal communication in addressing hate speech and threats.

Penghinaan dan ancaman pembunuhan terhadap Nadiya Lazzouni dalam perspektif linguistik forensik

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menyajikan analisis linguistik forensik yang komprehensif terhadap penghinaan dan ancaman pembunuhan yang ditujukan kepada Nadiya Lazzouni, dengan menekankan peran semantik, pragmatik, dan sosiolinguistik dalam konteks hukum. Menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran, penelitian ini menggabungkan analisis kualitatif dan kuantitatif untuk memeriksa elemen linguistik dalam kerangka hukum, dengan mengandalkan data dari akun media sosial pribadi Lazzouni, tempat dia mengungkapkan surat ancaman tersebut. Melalui perspektif legilinguistik komparatif, penelitian ini mengungkapkan bagaimana berbagai sistem hukum menginterpretasikan dan menegakkan hukum terkait ujaran kebencian dan ancaman. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa surat tersebut berisi penghinaan berat dan ancaman pembunuhan yang berakar pada identitas agama dan rasial, yang menggarisbawahi tantangan hukum yang timbul dari variasi multibahasa dan sosiokultural dalam interpretasi hukum. Penelitian ini menyoroti kebutuhan akan terminologi hukum yang terstandarisasi dan pengembangan alat linguistik forensik untuk meningkatkan kejelasan dan keadilan dalam proses hukum yang melibatkan pelanggaran terkait ujaran. Dengan mengintegrasikan analisis linguistik dengan metodologi hukum forensik dan komparatif, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada wacana yang lebih luas mengenai

multibahasa dalam praktik hukum dan efektivitas komunikasi hukum dalam menangani ujaran kebencian dan ancaman.

Kata kunci: Comparative legilinguistics; multibahasa berkonteks hukum; linguistik forensik; terminologi standar; sosiolinguistik.

1. Introduction

Cases of language-related crimes remain common to this day, reflecting that the use of language is not yet fully understood as a tool for responsible communication. Language is a means of communication that consists of words, word groups, phrases, and sentences, used either orally or in writing it serves as a tool to express opinions and arguments to others. Language plays a crucial social role in facilitating communication within broader society (Keraf, 1994; Hualai, 2017). In the communication process, both the communicator and the interlocutor require linguistic skills to comprehend the content of the conversation. Therefore, the ability to use language is inherently studied within the discipline of linguistics itself.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language, specifically the study of all components of language. Linguistics is defined and translated from *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (2003) as the scientific study of language and its structure, including the study of grammar, syntax, and phonetics. Specific branches of linguistics include sociolinguistics, dialectology, psycholinguistics, computational linguistics, comparative linguistics, and structural linguistics.

The branch of linguistics known as sociolinguistics is the study of how social sciences or social interaction influence linguistics phenomena. Sociolinguistics serves six primary functions: expressive function (expressing the speaker's feelings), directive function (requesting someone to do something), referential function (providing information), metalinguistic function (commenting on language itself), poetic function (emphasizing the aesthetic qualities of language, such as in poetry, slogans, and rhythm), and phatic function (expressing solidarity and empathy towards others) (Holmes, 1992). Sociolinguists

often question the existence of language variation, arguing that it is not simply a product of irrelevant grammatical conditions but is influenced by various extralinguistic factors. These variations reflect the reality of a linguistically diverse society, far from the homogeneity envisioned by Chomsky. In fact, linguistic variation is shaped by a wide range of social, cultural, and contextual elements that go beyond mere grammatical rules, indicating that language is a dynamic social phenomenon rather than a static, uniform system.

Separating linguistics from other disciplines, particularly those that emphasize language as one of their foundational components, can create the misconception that linguistic issues can be resolved without taking into account the broader range of scientific perspectives that contribute to the study of language. These four branches phonetics, ethnolinguistics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics each provide essential insights into different aspects of language and its relationship with human experience. Ignoring these perspectives risks oversimplifying linguistic problems and failing to grasp the complex and interconnected nature of language fully.

In particular, sociolinguistics plays a vital role in addressing linguistic issues by examining the intricate relationship between language and the social factors that influence it. This branch of study allows for a deeper understanding of how language functions within various social contexts, exploring how factors like class, gender, ethnicity, and power dynamics shape the way people use and perceive language. Sociolinguistics provides valuable insights into how language is not just a tool for communication, but also a marker of identity, a means of social interaction, and a reflection of societal norms and values. Without incorporating the sociolinguistic perspective, one risks missing the richness of linguistic variation that emerges from the social fabric in which language is embedded.

Another branch of linguistics is semantics, which is of study of the meanings or interpretations contained within a language. Semantics can be understood in both a board and narrow sense (Tarigan, 1985). Semantics refers to the relationship between signs and the objects they represent, which is the focus of the sign studies. According to the theory developed by Ferdinand de Saussure, the meaning is the 'understanding' or 'concept' associated with a linguistic sign. Semantic meaning is the

relationship between the language symbol and what it represents. It is the connection between a word and the concept it denotes (Chaer, 1994). Semantic meaning is related to sign and objects (Levinson, 2001). The meaning of a vocabulary item in a language can be understood through contextual analysis of sentences, lexical meanings in dictionaries, and contrasting meanings by comparing one word with another (Samsuri 1988; Chaer, 1994; Kridalaksana, 2007). Other than semantics, another branch of linguistics is pragmatics. According to Morris, as cited by Levinson in his book *Pragmatics* (1983), pragmatics is part of the science of signs or semiotics. Pragmatic legal linguistics that used in this study focuses on processes that contribute to the formation of meaning in law. Its fundamental concepts are grounded in developments in linguistic and philosophical pragmatics. By employing pragmatic theoretical approaches, this field aims to clarify how legal language functions and to identify new areas of pragmatic relevance in the study of legal language. Levinson further states that this field focuses on the interpretation of signs or language (the relations of signs to their interpretation) the scope of pragmatics differs from the other two fields, syntax and semantics. In syntax, the study focuses on the formal relationships between signs (the formal relation to signs to one another), while in semantics, the study is centered on the relationship between signs and the objects they refer to (the relations of sign to objects to which the signs are applicable).

This article will combine the three branches of linguistics and integrate them into forensic linguistics, which discusses language-related crimes. The study follows up on a murder threat and insult received by Nadiya Lazzouni, a journalist at a Saudi-owned news channel based in France. On April 6, 2021, she received a threatening letter through la Poste France, with an envelope marked "A NADIYA LAZZOUNI CONFIDENTIEL". She posted a photo of the threat letter on her Instagram account to ask what actions the French government would take, tagging the accounts @marleneschiappa, @gerald_darmanin, and @emmanuelmacron. Macron, the President of France, was tagged along with two other accounts representing the French government. This research will examine how forensic linguistics, a field that applies language in the context of law and

identify the *Code Pénal*[1] that can be applied to the assassin based on the letter that was sent as well as the potential imprisonment and fines obtained, incorporates sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and semantics to investigate the case from a linguistic perspective. Legal issues and the enforcement of the law have been longstanding challenges faced by humanity. Disciplines such as fingerprint analysis and shoeprint evidence, which have a history that spans much longer, have long been established as crucial tools in the judicial process. In other words, the existence of these disciplines is vital and has been seamlessly integrated into the role of humans within the legal system. Their contributions are indispensable in the administration of justice, helping to establish the truth in legal proceedings and ensuring that the judicial process is fair and based on solid evidence. These fields have evolved, adapting to new technological advancements, yet their importance in forensic investigations remains unwavering. Their continued development highlights how critical the intersection of science and law is in achieving justice.

Based on the article titled "*Analisis Kasus Pembunuhan dan Pemerasan Menggunakan Teori Linguistik Non-Kepengarangan: Sebuah Kajian Linguistik Forensik*" obtained results that forensic linguistics can be used as a method to analyze cases of murder and cohesion, and persuasion (Satria, 2016). The study titled "*Kajian UU MD3 Revisi 2018 dalam Perspektif Linguistik Forensik*" (Santoso, W. J., & Auliyak, M. A., 2019) shares several key factors and serves as a relevant reference, particularly regarding the application of sociolinguistics. It highlights social class as the primary factor behind the violations and employs lexical semantics and pragmatics for its analysis. As seen in the article "*Studi Kasus Linguistik Forensik: Analisis Profiling Catatan Bunuh Diri Marjorie Raymond*" (Auliyak, M. A., & Santoso, W. J., 2019), a semantic and pragmatic analysis reveals the presence of both positive and negative lexicons. There lexicons appear in utterances conveyed directly and literally, indirectly and literally, as well as directly but non-literally. Another article that employs forensic linguistics as an analytical tool is "*Kejahatan Bahasa*

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[1] The *Code Pénal* is a criminal code enacted during Napoleon's reign, replacing the 1791 Criminal Code. Among other provisions, this code reinstated life imprisonment as well as branding punishment.

di Wilayah Hukum Papua Barat: Kajian Linguistik Forensik" which discusses defamation, insults, and fraud (Warami, 2022). Other than that, two articles, there is article titled "Foundations of Pragmatic Legal Linguistics" (Galdia, 2022) which have the same technic with this article is pragmatics and used to legal linguistics aspect as well. Furthermore, according to the article titled "*Kajian Komparatif Onomatope dalam Webtoon Bahasa Indonesia dan Bahasa Prancis*" (Fikiyah, R. A., & Santoso, W. J., 2024), explain that a comparative study is conducted to identify the similarities and differences of a phenomenon. However, in this article, the comparative approach is used to show how the laws in French and Indonesia differ, despite addressing similar violations.

Therefore, this article will explore the role of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and semantics in forensic linguistic analysis and identify relevant legal implications based on the laws in France, using data from the murder threat letter received by journalist Nadiya Lazzouni. Additionally, the study aims to determine the frequency of appearances of each applicable *Code Pénal* section, calculate the percentage of each part, and provide a conclusion based on the analysis results.

2. Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of linguistic factors within the context of forensic linguistics. The primary framework for this analysis is forensic linguistics to analyze linguistic factors by integrating sociolinguistics and semantics to uncover elements of threats and insults within the murder threat letter received by Nadiya Lazzouni. From a forensic linguistics perspective, evidence must be based on absolute certainty through logical reasoning and observations derived from thorough analyses. The fundamental principles of forensic linguistics aim to avoid errors in analyzing legal texts or cases (McMenamin, 2002). Forensic linguistics serves as a bridge between language and law, identifying issues with linguistic considerations, linguistic and legal proof, and utilizing linguistics as a

tool to uncover types of language crimes. This approach emphasizes the significance of the text and context in forensic linguistic analysis, the sequence of events as a key element in identification, and the role of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts in supporting forensic linguistics (Gibbons, 2003; Warami, 2014). Qualitative research methodology is descriptive and tend to use analysis. It aims to understand phenomena experienced by the subject of research (Moleong, 2013). Descriptive research present findings in the form of research articles. According to qualitative research methodology, various techniques can be used for data collection (Sugiyono, 2012). In this study, the descriptive approach is used to provide explanations after presenting the analysis results in the form of data tables other than that in this study, the analysis method was also used to express the meaning of the principle of the language of legal proceedings in a modern, legal and democratic country.

3. Data Collection, Presentation and Analysis

The data for this study comprises a publicly shared death threat letter directed at Nadiya Lazzouni, obtained from her posts on Twitter. The selection criteria for legal texts included relevance to hate speech and death threats, jurisdictional applicability, and alignment with legal precedents, ensuring that the legal framework corresponds with the nature of the threats and applicable laws in the relevant jurisdiction. The data collection process involved several systematic steps:

1. Identification: The initial step involved identifying pertinent data, focusing on the death threat letter published by Nadiya Lazzouni on her Twitter account.
2. Verification: The authenticity of the source was verified by examining the original post on Twitter, including metadata analysis, to confirm that the data remained unaltered and authentic. This step aligns with methodologies for evaluating the reliability of social media data for research purposes.
3. Ethical Considerations: Given that the threat was publicly shared by the victim, its use adhered to ethical principles, ensuring

transparency while avoiding privacy violations. The study also considered potential risks to the victim and other involved parties, balancing the obligation to conduct scientific research with the need to protect individuals from harm. This approach is consistent with ethical guidelines in social media research, which emphasize the importance of privacy, anonymity, and informed consent.

By implementing a rigorous and ethically sound data collection process, this study ensures the reliability and credibility of its findings while upholding legal and academic standards. The meticulous selection, verification, and ethical considerations applied throughout the research not only safeguard the integrity of the study but also set a responsible precedent for analyzing publicly available social media content. This approach strengthens the validity of the investigation, ensuring that the findings contribute meaningfully to the broader discourse on online threats, digital forensics, and legal frameworks.

The data presentation in this research is segmented using a semantic and pragmatic approach by identifying the forms of expression used in Twitter threads. These expressions are categorized into three types: Insult, Death Threat, and Racism. The categorization process was conducted manually by highlighting occurrences in a table, followed by descriptive statistical analysis to determine their frequency. To calculate the frequency of occurrences, the following basic formula was used:

$$F = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$$

F = Frequency percentage of each category
n = Number of occurrences of a specific category
N = Total number of analyzed expressions

To analyze the data, this research adopts linguistic approaches focusing on semantics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. Semantics and pragmatics are used to identify meanings embedded within the available data, while sociolinguistics helps uncover the social background of the murder threat letter's composition.

This analysis emphasizes the importance of understanding how different languages reflect cultural and social contexts. By focusing on the diversity of linguistics represented in each language, the study aims to uncover the complexities of language use in legal contexts, particularly in relation to threats and insults. The concept of *superdiversity*[2] can also be applied in analyzing these two languages. French exhibits significant variation in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary across different regions, such as France, Canada, and Francophone African countries. Meanwhile, Indonesian shows variations in dialect and regional language influences, especially in urban areas that serve as centers of interaction for various ethnic groups. Thus, the linguistic diversity between Indonesian and French reflects how historical, social, and political factors shape language development. Both languages evolve within different multilingual contexts yet similarly illustrate how language functions as both a communication tool and a symbol of identity in an ever-changing society. However, accepting data-mined results without a proper contextual understanding can result in misleading interpretations and perpetuate existing biases (Smith, 2020).

To avoid the bias, implementation of qualitative method in more statistical approach is needed. The Mann-Whitney U test is the best statistical method for this study as it handles non-parametric linguistic data without assuming normality. Given that the research categorizes threats based on semantic and sociolinguistic features, this test effectively compares median ranks between independent groups, making it ideal for analyzing linguistic patterns (Nachar, 2008). Its use ensures that findings are empirically grounded, strengthening the legal applications of forensic linguistic analysis (McKnight & Najab, 2010). This test is particularly useful for comparing linguistic variations in threat categories, such as direct vs. indirect threats or explicit vs. implicit hate speech. By identifying significant differences, it reinforces legal arguments on how threats should be classified under *Code pénal* provisions.

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[2] Superdiversity by Oxford Bibliographies is the concept that describes the multidimensional and dynamic diversification of society caused by increasing global migration.

4. Results and Findings

This study examines several factors, including insults and death threats, as they relate to the case of Nadiya Lazzouni. The insults analyzed are not confined to race or religion but also extend to sexual insults, which fall under the category of sexual harassment. These insults are subject to varying legal consequences, with severity increasing depending on whether they pertain to general matters, race, religion, beliefs, or sexual references. The death threats analyzed in this study include explicit threats to cause destruction and specific statements detailing how the writer intends to harm or kill Nadiya Lazzouni. Below is the content of the death threat letter received by Nadiya Lazzouni.

Insults constitute a criminal offense (beleediging) as defined by legal statutes, both in general and specific forms, to ensure legal protection against such offenses. The insults examined in this study refer to the French law, *Code Pénal*, particularly Titre II: Des contraventions contre les personnes, Chapitre Ier: Des contraventions de la 1re classe contre les personnes, Section 1: De la diffamation et de l'injure non publiques, R. 621-2 Décret 93-726 1993-03-29, which states: "*L'injure non publique envers une personne, lorsqu'elle n'a pas été précédée de provocation, est punie de l'amende prévue pour les contraventions de la 1re classe.*" This excerpt translates to: "Insults directed at a person that are non-public in nature, provided they were not preceded by provocation, are punishable by a fine stipulated for first-class offenses."

Additionally, according to the *Code Pénal*, *Loi n°2005-47 du 26 Janvier – art. 9 () JORF 27 Janvier 2005 en vigueur le 1er Avril 2005*, the fines for each class of offense are specified as follows: First class: up to 38 Euros, Second class: up to 150 Euros, Third class: up to 450 Euros, Fourth class: up to 750 Euros, and Fifth class: up to 1,500 Euros. Based on the legal provisions outlined above, the following are data points that meet all the criteria for insults and threats as identified in this study.

No	Quote	Category	Translation	Analysis
1	*Tu fermes ta gueule et tu dégages*	Command	Shut your mouth and leave	Semantic: Direct meaning indicating a harsh instruction to be silent and go away.
2	*Gardes ton chiffon*	Command	Keep your rag (hijab)	Pragmatic: "Chiffon" is used in a derogatory manner to refer to the hijab, implying an insult towards a religious symbol.
3	*Nous vous expulserons au bulldozer*	Threat	We will expel (destroy/evict) you with a bulldozer	Semantic: Explicit meaning of a threat involving forced eviction or destruction using heavy machinery.
4	*Certains appelerons leur mère avant de prendre une balle dans la nuque*	Threat	Some will call their mother before being shot in the back of the head	Semantic: Direct meaning indicating a death threat.
5	Promènes ta bouche à pipe dans la maghreb	Command	Take your pipe mouth (referring to oral sex) to Maghreb	Pragmatic: Contains sexual harassment and an insult targeting a specific group (Maghreb).
6	*Putes islamistes*	Insult	Islamist whores	Semantic: Explicit use of "putes" (whores) to insult a group associated with Islam.

7	*Chiffon*	Insult	Rag (hijab)	Pragmatic: "Chiffon" is used to demean the hijab as a religious symbol.
8	*Cervelle de merde*	Insult	Shit brain/stupid	Semantic: Direct meaning that insults someone's intelligence.
9	*Race de merde*	Insult	Filthy/lowly race	Semantic – Explicit use to degrade a certain race.
10	*Bouche à pipe*	Harassment & Insult	Pipe mouth (oral sex)	Pragmatic: An expression with an implied meaning related to sexual insult.
11	*Nous visiterons les quartiers de «non france»*	Racism	Not considered part of France	Semantic: Expresses discrimination against a group seen as outsiders in France.
12	*La france sera vierge de tout musulman et islamiste*	Threat	Threat of genocide against a specific group	Pragmatic: Suggests ethnic cleansing with an implied violent context.

**Table 1. Semantics and Pragmatics Analysis of Nadiya Lazzouni's Threat Letter**

After categorizing the quotes into pragmatic and semantic analysis, the datasets need to be presented in the table that incorporates the French Penal Code Categories and Frequency Analysis.

Type	Penal Code	Sanctions/Penalties	Amount
Insult	222-33	2 years' imprisonment, €30,000 fine	7
Insult	621-2	Max fine of €38	4
Death Threat	222-17	6 months – 3 years' imprisonment, up to €45,000 fine	4

Death Threat	222-18	5 years' imprisonment, €75,000 fine	9
Racism	625-8-1	Max fine of €1,500	5
Total			29

Table 2. Categorization Based on French Penal Code

In order to sum up the categorization made based on penal code to more comprehensive visualization. The following diagram illustrates the frequency distribution of penal code violations.
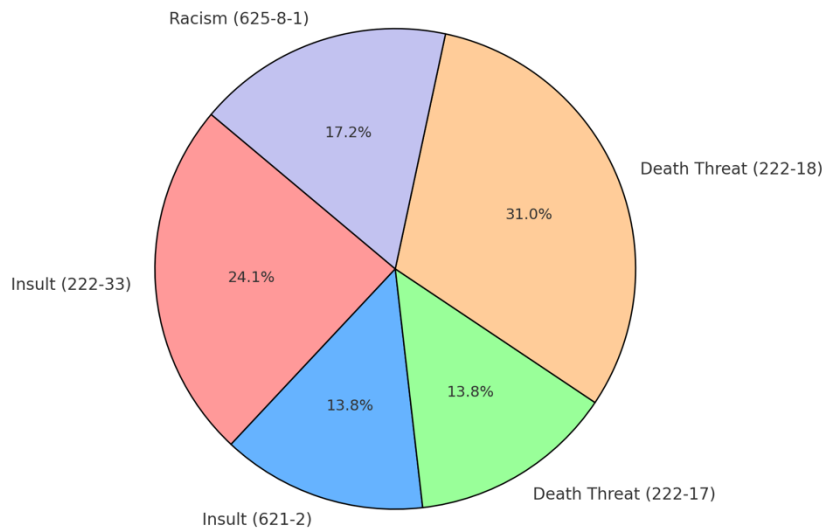
Diagram 1. Frequency Distribution of Penal Code Violations

To statistically validate the differences in the occurrence of various penal code violations within the analyzed threat letter, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. The objective was to determine whether significant differences exist in the frequency of: (i) Insults vs. Death Threats, (ii) Racism vs. Other Penal Code Violations (Insults + Death Threats). The process analysis is presented below.

Step	Insult (7,4) vs. Death Threats (4,9)	Racism (5) vs. Other Violation (7,4,4,9)
Step 1: Define Groups	Group 1: Insults (7, 4) Group 2: Death Threats (4, 9)	Group 1: Racism (5) Group 2: Other Violations (7, 4, 4, 9)
Step 2: Rank all values	4 → Rank 1.5 4 → Rank 1.5 7 → Rank 3 9 → Rank 4	4 → Rank 1.5 4 → Rank 1.5 5 → Rank 3 7 → Rank 4 9 → Rank 5
Step 3: sum of ranks (R_1)	Insults: 4.5 (Ranks 3, 1.5) Death Threats: 5.5 (Ranks 1.5, 4)	Racism: 3 (Rank 3) Other Violations: 12 (Ranks 1.5, 1.5, 4, 5)
Step 4: Calculate U statistic	$U1 = (2 \times 2) + \frac{2(2+1)}{2} - -4.5 = 1.5$	$U2 = (1 \times 4) + \frac{1(1+1)}{2} - -3 = 2.0$
Step 5: Determine p-value	p = 1.0 (Not significant)	p = 1.0 (Not significant)
Step 6: Interpretation	No significant difference between insults and death threats.	No significant difference between racism and other violations.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U Test Calculation Process

The implementation of the Mann-Whitney U test significantly enhances the robustness and empirical validity of the findings in this study. Given the ordinal nature of the dataset – comprising frequency distributions of various penal code violations – this non-parametric test was the most appropriate statistical approach. The results indicate no statistically significant difference between insults and death threats (p = 1.0) or between racism and other violations (p = 1.0). These findings underscore the argument that the distribution of these categories is relatively uniform, demonstrating that the threat letter does not singularly emphasize one type of linguistic aggression but instead deploys a systematic and multifaceted strategy of intimidation.

5. Discussion

After examining the data and analysis, this study establishes three key discussions, each of which explores specific aspects of the case from different perspectives. The first discussion focuses on the role of language in threatening discourse, analyzing how specific linguistic choices contribute to the construction of threats and hate speech. This section examines the use of derogatory language, implicit and explicit threats, and the broader impact of language in reinforcing power imbalances and intimidation tactics. Through semantic analysis, the study reveals the hidden meanings of the words and phrases used in the threat letter to Nadiya Lazzouni and shows how linguistic strategies shape the perception and severity of threats.

The second discussion will address the legal and social implications of hate speech, comparing the legal frameworks of different jurisdictions and analyzing how laws are applied to combat these crimes. This section examines how the French Code Pénal classifies and punishes hate speech, particularly in cases of intimidation and discrimination on the basis of religion, gender or ethnic origin. It also compares the French legal approach with the Indonesian legal framework, such as the KUHP and the UU ITE, highlighting the main differences in enforcement, punishments, and societal attitudes toward hate speech. In addition to the legal perspective, this section also examines the broader societal consequences of hate speech, particularly its role in perpetuating systemic discrimination and social exclusion.

The third section examines the interplay between gender, social class, and ethnicity in hate speech, highlighting how these factors influence both the language used in threats and how such incidents are detected and addressed. Using sociolinguistic analysis, this section explores how identity markers, such as being a Muslim woman of Maghrebi descent, influence the severity and nature of hate speech directed at individuals like Nadiya Lazzoun. The discussion will also highlight how historical and cultural contexts contribute to the marginalization of certain groups and show that hate speech is not just a single act of hatred, but part of a larger pattern of discrimination rooted in social structures. The results suggest that to effectively

address hate speech, it is necessary to recognize these interconnected factors in order to develop more comprehensive legal and social strategies to combat discrimination.

The Role of Language in Threatening Discourse

The linguistic elements in the threat letter received by Nadiya Lazzouni are categorized into semantic and pragmatic analyses, revealing the multifaceted nature of the insults employed. Insults are not merely directed at the recipient personally; they extend to her religious identity and ethnic background, showcasing a broader societal context of discrimination and hostility. For instance, terms such as "*putes islamistes*" (Islamist whores) and "*chiffon*" (rag, referring to the hijab) serve as stark illustrations of both gendered and religious insults. These terms not only attack Nadiya as an individual but also aim to dehumanize her by targeting her identity as a Muslim woman. The use of such derogatory language functions pragmatically to marginalize and devalue the recipient, reinforcing negative stereotypes associated with her religious and ethnic background.

In analyzing the semantic aspects of the language used, it becomes evident that the choice of words is deliberate and calculated. The term "*putes islamistes*" is particularly striking, as it combines a gendered insult with a religious connotation, effectively weaponizing both aspects of Nadiya's identity. This dual-targeting is not an isolated phenomenon; it reflects a broader trend in hate speech where individuals are attacked not just for their actions but for who they are. The implications of such language extend beyond the individual, contributing to a culture of intolerance and hostility towards specific groups. In Indonesia, similar cases have emerged, where public figures and ordinary citizens alike have faced threats and insults that target their religious beliefs and ethnic identities. For example, the case of Ahok, the former governor of Jakarta, illustrates how political discourse can devolve into personal attacks that exploit religious sentiments, leading to widespread public outrage and violence.

Pragmatically, the language in the threat letter serves to establish power dynamics between the sender and the recipient. By employing derogatory terms, the sender attempts to assert dominance

and control over Nadiya, positioning her as inferior and unworthy of respect. This aligns with the findings of various studies on hate speech, which indicate that such language is often used to intimidate and silence marginalized voices. The threat letter not only seeks to harm Nadiya personally but also aims to send a message to others who may share her identity or beliefs, effectively discouraging them from expressing themselves openly. This tactic of intimidation is evident in other cases in Indonesia, where individuals have faced backlash for speaking out against dominant narratives or challenging societal norms. The case of the activist who received threats for advocating for LGBTQ+ rights highlights how language can be weaponized to suppress dissent and maintain the status quo.

Moreover, the linguistic analysis reveals the role of context in shaping the meaning of the insults. The threat letter was not written in a vacuum; it is situated within a specific socio-political landscape that influences how language is interpreted. In Indonesia, where religious and ethnic identities are often politicized, the language used in the threat letter resonates with broader societal tensions. The use of terms that invoke religious imagery or stereotypes can incite fear and reinforce existing prejudices, making the threat more potent. This phenomenon is not unique to Indonesia; it is a global issue where language is manipulated to exploit societal divisions. The case of Nadiya serves as a microcosm of these larger dynamics, illustrating how individual experiences of hate speech are intertwined with collective societal narratives.

In addition to the semantic and pragmatic analyses, it is essential to consider the emotional impact of the language used in the threat letter. The choice of words is not only a reflection of the sender's intent but also a means of inflicting psychological harm on the recipient. Insults that target personal and group identities can lead to feelings of fear, isolation, and vulnerability. Nadiya's experience is emblematic of the emotional toll that such threats can take, as they not only challenge her sense of self but also her place within her community. This emotional dimension is echoed in similar cases in Indonesia, where individuals have reported long-lasting psychological effects following incidents of hate speech. The case of a journalist who faced online harassment for her reporting on sensitive issues illustrates how the

emotional fallout from such experiences can hinder individuals from engaging in public discourse.

Furthermore, the analysis of the threat letter highlights the importance of addressing the underlying societal attitudes that perpetuate such language. The use of derogatory terms is often rooted in deeply ingrained biases and stereotypes that are perpetuated through cultural narratives and media representations. In Indonesia, the portrayal of certain religious and ethnic groups in the media can contribute to the normalization of hate speech, making it more acceptable for individuals to express discriminatory views. This cycle of prejudice and discrimination underscores the need for comprehensive educational initiatives that promote understanding and tolerance among diverse communities. By challenging the narratives that underpin hate speech, it is possible to create a more inclusive society where individuals are not subjected to threats based on their identity.

Legal and Social Implication

The linguistic expressions examined in this discussion reveal significant legal and social implications, particularly within the French legal framework. Phrases such as "*promènes ta boucne à pipe dans le Maghreb*" and "*saloperie d'islamiste*" exemplify multi-dimensional offenses that encompass sexual, racial, and religious insults. These expressions are not merely offensive; they carry deep-rooted discriminatory undertones that specifically target certain communities. Under Article R. 621-2 of the French *Code Pénal,* such insults are classified as non-public offences, punishable by fines. However, due to their sexual and racial implications, these phrases may also be prosecuted under stricter laws addressing sexual harassment and racial discrimination, as outlined in Articles R. 222-33 and R. 625-8-1, respectively. This illustrates the comprehensive legal approach adopted by French authorities to combat hate speech and protect the dignity of individuals and communities.

In addition to insults, direct threats such as "*nous vous expulserons au bulldozer*" and "*il se remplira de ta cervelle de merde*" escalate the severity of the offences into the realm of criminal

intimidation. These threats imply physical harm and psychological intimidation, categorizing them as serious offenses under the French *Code Pénal*. Article 222-17 classifies threats of violence as punishable by up to six months in prison and fines of up to 7,500 Euros. However, if threats are documented in writing or target specific individuals, penalties can increase to three years of imprisonment and fines of up to 45,000 Euros. This stringent legal stance underscores the importance of protecting individuals from acts of intimidation that could jeopardize their safety and psychological well-being.

A particularly concerning aspect of the analyzed threats is their documented and repeated nature. Expressions like "*nous viserons mieux*" and "*certains appelleront leur mère avant de prendre une balle dans la nuque*" illustrate premeditated violence, emphasizing the perpetrators' intent to inflict harm. Under Article 222-18, threats that involve coercion or direct orders to act can lead to even more severe penalties of up to five years in prison and fines reaching 75,000 Euros. Furthermore, if the perpetrator has a close relationship with the victim, such as a familial bond, penalties escalate further under Article 222-18-3, highlighting the gravity of threats within personal and social relationships. These legal provisions reinforce the necessity of addressing threats with the full force of the law to prevent violence and maintain public order.

The legal comparison between France and Indonesia further illustrates how different legal systems address similar issues. While both countries acknowledge the severity of hate speech and threats, the French *Code Pénal* explicitly categorizes offences based on intent, repetition, and medium of communication. In contrast, Indonesia's legal framework, as outlined in the KUHP, differentiates between threats and murder, treating them within a broader context of criminal acts. France, however, provides a more detailed legal approach, with separate provisions for verbal insults, threats, and coercive acts. This distinction underscores the necessity for tailored legal responses to various forms of hate speech and intimidation, ensuring that each case is addressed with appropriate legal measures.

The Interplay of Gender, Social Class, and Ethnic Factors in Hate Speech

The death threat letter addressed to Nadiya Lazzouni can be examined through the lens of social and cultural factors, which provide deeper insight into the motivations and ideologies of its author. Gender plays a central role in the construction of the letter's language, as the author employs terms that are explicitly misogynistic, reinforcing traditional power imbalances between men and women. The choice of words such as *saloperies* and *putes* highlights an intent to degrade women, particularly through the use of language that objectifies and insults them. Moreover, the phrase *boucne à pipe* further solidifies the assumption that the writer is male, as such terminology is typically used within male-dominated spaces where degrading language against women is normalized. This aligns with broader cultural patterns in which verbal aggression is often employed as a means of asserting dominance, particularly in contexts where patriarchal values are deeply ingrained. Thus, the linguistic choices in the letter are not merely random insults but rather indicators of a social and cultural structure that allows gendered hostility to manifest in written threats.

The social class of the author is another crucial aspect to consider, as their linguistic choices suggest a background where vulgarity and hostility are common means of expression. The frequent use of crude and offensive language suggests that the author may come from a lower or lower-middle-class environment where formal education and exposure to diverse perspectives might be limited. "Language use is often a reflection of one's social standing", as sociolinguists argue, and in this case, the aggressive tone and lack of sophistication in the writing may indicate a setting where such expressions are normalized. However, it is important to recognize that individuals from any social class can adopt aggressive language under certain conditions, particularly when driven by strong personal beliefs or ideological motivations. Moreover, the possibility that the letter was authored by someone following instructions from a more influential figure cannot be dismissed, as language is often weaponized by those in power to incite hostility among lower social groups. This highlights how social class does not operate in isolation but intersects with broader

socio-political dynamics that shape the author's choice of words and expressions.

Ethnic identity also plays a significant role in the construction of the letter's message, as the author expresses a strong sense of nationalistic pride and exclusivity. The assertion that *la France sera vierge de tout musulman et islamiste* demonstrates an explicit rejection of religious and ethnic diversity, reinforcing the idea that France should belong solely to a particular group. This aligns with a broader cultural and social movement in which nationalism is framed as a defense against perceived external threats, particularly those associated with immigration and religious minorities. The author's declaration that they are neither Muslim nor an immigrant further suggests an effort to distinguish themselves from marginalized groups, reinforcing a sense of belonging to an "authentic" French identity. Such rhetoric reflects deep-seated xenophobia, which has been historically used to justify exclusionary policies and social discrimination. It also illustrates how language serves as a powerful tool in constructing social hierarchies, where certain ethnic and religious groups are positioned as outsiders in their own country.

Taken together, the linguistic elements of the death threat letter reveal the intersections of gender, social class, and ethnicity in shaping the author's worldview. The language choices reflect not only personal prejudice but also broader social narratives that marginalize women, lower-class individuals, and ethnic minorities. In this sense, the letter is not merely an isolated act of hostility but rather a reflection of deeper cultural tensions within French society. Furthermore, the legal consequences outlined in the *Code Pénal* reinforce the severity of such actions, demonstrating that threats rooted in gender-based, class-based, and ethnic-based discrimination are taken seriously under French law. The existence of layered legal provisions for defamation, sexual insults, and death threats underscores the recognition that hate speech has far-reaching social implications beyond its immediate impact on the victim. Thus, an analysis of the letter through sociocultural factors highlights not only the motivations of the author but also the broader ideological frameworks that sustain such expressions of hostility.

To further substantiate the sociolinguistic findings, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to assess the statistical significance of

the different categories of violations present in the letter. This non-parametric test was chosen due to the ordinal nature of the dataset, which consisted of frequency distributions of various penal code violations, including insults, death threats, and racist remarks.

The results of the test indicated no statistically significant difference between insults and death threats ($p = 1.0$) or between racism and other violations ($p = 1.0$). These findings suggest that the distribution of linguistic aggression in the letter is relatively uniform. This means that the author does not emphasize one type of verbal hostility over another; rather, they employ a systematic and multifaceted strategy of intimidation. Such an approach indicates a deliberate attempt to target multiple aspects of the victim's identity, using a combination of misogynistic, xenophobic, and class-based derogatory language.

The absence of a significant difference in the U test results supports the argument that hate speech in the letter is not a spontaneous emotional outburst but rather a structured expression of discrimination. This aligns with sociolinguistic theories, particularly those advanced by William Labov, which suggest that language variation is influenced by social factors such as gender, class, and ethnicity. The findings reinforce the notion that the author's linguistic choices reflect deep-seated biases and broader ideological frameworks that perpetuate exclusion and hostility within French society.

Furthermore, the statistical uniformity observed in the U test underscores the pervasiveness of hate speech as a sociocultural phenomenon. It highlights how different forms of verbal aggression – whether based on gender, social class, or ethnicity – are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. This insight is crucial for policymakers and legal authorities, as it suggests that combating hate speech requires a comprehensive approach that addresses multiple layers of discrimination simultaneously. The legal provisions under the *Code Pénal*, which impose heavier penalties for offenses involving racial or gender-based insults, reflect an acknowledgment of this intersectionality in legislative frameworks.

6. Conclusion

The importance of linguistic analysis in the legal context, especially in hate speech cases, cannot be overemphasized. This study will show how the fields of semantics and sociolinguistics have a significant impact on the interpretation and classification of hate speech, as was demonstrated in the case of Nadiya Lazzouni. Semantics allows for a careful examination of the language used in threatening letters, ensuring that each word and phrase is not only interpreted literally, but also analyzing the underlying meanings that may indicate intent, prejudice or implicit aggression. By combining these linguistic elements with the relevant provisions of the *Code Pénal*, legal professionals can create a clearer framework for determining the appropriate legal sanctions. As Smith (2020) warns, interpreting linguistic evidence out of context can lead to distorted legal conclusions, which is why it is crucial to apply semantic analysis with precision and careful consideration. Beyond the technical aspects of meaning, sociolinguistics offers a broader lens for understanding the social and cultural factors that influence hate speech. The language used in threat letters is not autonomous, but reflects deeper social structures such as power dynamics, historical discrimination and entrenched prejudices related to gender, ethnicity and religion. By applying the sociolinguistic theory proposed by William Labov, we can trace the origins of hate speech and understand the motives behind its use. This perspective is crucial because it highlights the systemic nature of discriminatory language and reinforces the argument that tackling hate speech requires more than law enforcement – it requires a broader societal shift in attitudes and speech. Johnson (2019) highlights this point, noting that while legal sanctions act as a deterrent, the real progress lies in bringing together legal, social and human rights perspectives to ensure a comprehensive and just response to hate speech. Combining semantic and sociolinguistic approaches in forensic linguistics strengthens legal research by providing a structured method for analyzing the meaning and impact of language on criminal behavior. Forensic linguistic analyses ensure that hate speech is not judged solely on the basis of subjective interpretations but is examined in a systematic way, reducing

the risk of misclassification and ensuring the fair application of the law. This multidisciplinary approach highlights the evolving role of language in legal proceedings and shows how linguistic expertise can improve the accuracy and effectiveness of judicial decisions. The study highlights the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to tackling hate speech. While a purely legal perspective is necessary, it may not be able to fully understand the complexity of language and its social implications. By combining linguistic insights with legal analyses, policy makers and legal professionals can develop more nuanced strategies to combat hate speech while defending fundamental rights. Moreover, this approach underlines the need for continued scientific attention to issues of language, discrimination and social justice to ensure that responses to hate speech are not only punitive but also constructive and contribute to a more inclusive and just society.

Conflict of interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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AI was not used in the paper.

Statement of Contributions

The authors contributed equally to the preparation of the manuscript

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