

ANALYSIS OF SEMANTIC DENSITY IN SELECTED CUSTOMS REGULATIONS FOR PASSENGERS

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

1.1. Background

In law, language is used as a medium of interaction to implement rules and regulations. Language and law are approximately related to form the terminology of legal language. The language of the law often creates problems because it is meant for a specific community, so the language is specific in words and structure. Thus, society is often disadvantaged because legal texts become difficult to understand. Semantic density determines whether the sentences are easily understood or not. This then indicates that further study on semantic density is worth investigating because it might help people construct a more reader-friendly text.

Determination of a text's complexity can be seen from several things such as passive complexion, wordiness, using more terminology, abbreviations, long phrases and noun phrase type (Balmford, 2017). This study then analyzes part of the noun phrase to prove that a text contains high complexity.

The language of the law is usually characterized by its complex terms and structures. For example, some legal terms are misused, such as passengers taking advantage of the customs regulation with ambiguous meanings. A word and term in the sphere of law must meet two characteristics in semantics: the words and terms must have a mono-semantic character or only have one meaning, and the terms must be nicely defined, simple, and clear (Soeroso, 2006). To demonstrate the two criteria, the study will employ Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) with an emphasis on semantic density.

To help meet two characteristics for law documents, plain language movement is needed. Plain language movement is a movement that seeks to make legal documents clearer and easier to understand. Balmford (2017) mentioned that this movement initially aims to improve access to justice and enable consumers to make more informed decisions. In order to gain success, the followers of this movement decide to avoid some characteristics which make a passage or document harder to understand, such as too much using terminologies, abbreviations, long phrases, noun phrases, and wordiness. For this study, the researcher will only examine phrases, or noun phrases to be exact, in order to acknowledge whether the chosen data for the study is complex or not.

Research indicated that research on semantic density is still limited. It is found that previous studies mostly focused on semantic waves. For example, analysis of semantic waves of knowledge blindness in classroom practices (Ramadhan, 2019). Cranwell and Whiteside (2020) investigated semantic density and semantic gravity waves Profile of Teachers When Discussing Electrophilic Aromatic Substitution. While on the contrary, the project of semantic density, studies conducted by Fisilla and Gunawan (2020) focused on semantic density in legal documents, is quite problematic. Legal documents are related to the rights and obligations of other people, so a correct understanding of the text is essential so that no one is abused because of a misunderstanding of legal texts.

1.1. Justification

Since the legal text significantly impacts the people who need it, it is then necessary to learn more about how the text is constructed to fulfill a person's rights and obligations to avoid inaccuracy that can cause a problem. As a citizen, it is highly recommended to be aware of the law. The law, as expressed in written regulations and policies, must be fully comprehended by the general public. For that reason, it is vital to understand how the legislation is expressed in words and terms. If a legal text is criticised for being abstruse and incomprehensible to the general public, the problem mostly lies on the language.

In other words, people must be able to not only see the transparency in the process of law making, but also to understand the content inside of the law itself (Goźdz-Roszkowski, 2011). Moreover, since the law is a by-product of language, it is vital to make the meaning as clear as possible to avoid misunderstanding. Because each sector has its own language, it could be challenging to grasp the meaning of the words, phrases, and clauses that construct the legal system as a whole. As a result, barriers and confusion might arise, and justice will not be served. Legal language tends to recognize specific terminologies, so it becomes a problem itself when a number of compositions and legal terms turns out to be elusive, convoluted, and ambiguous (Sidharta, 2017). Hence, the necessity of language text studies needs to be encouraged, including an investigation of the text's semantic density.

Indonesian has been accepted as a national language and a symbol of national unity (Wright, 2014). Furthermore, the widespread literacy and knowledge of Indonesian are undeniable. Some setbacks in the implementation of the national language (such as in higher education) have led at least one observer to call it only a "partial success".

The range of thought, experience, and expression that modern Bahasa Indonesia may use to communicate with subtlety, grace, and exactness is mediocre According to Australian

scholar John (cited in Anwar 1980).

Therefore, this research is about the customs regulation for passengers because there is a party that is at a disadvantage while importing and exporting goods that are carried by passengers. Efforts were made to reveal the most frequent complexity level that occurred in chosen data, where changes in semantic density forces become essential for the development of understanding. In the analysis process, this current study uses Legitimate code theory (Martin, Maton, Doran, 2019) on semantic density.

1.1. Research Questions

The study focuses on the questions which are formulated as follows:

1. How is semantic density manifested in the selected legal documents?
2. What is the most common noun phrase found in the selected legal document?
3. What does the most common noun phrase mean in the context of legal documents?

1.2. Research Objectives

Semantic studies are studies that actually deal with meaning which is divided into two, namely semantic gravity and semantic density. As stated by Maton (2013), once it moves across towards stronger (+) semantic density, it moves to the intense complexity in terms of representation. The objectives of this study are to find semantic density that manifests in selected legal documents and investigate the context's most frequent appearance and the complexity of the noun phrases found in the selected document. It is then recognized to help the academic world to develop the readers' understanding of a text.