



## PERLOCUTIONARY ACT OF THE VERBAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN INDONESIA

### TINDAK PERLOKUSI KEKERASAN VERBAL TERHADAP PEREMPUAN DI INDONESIA

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#### Abstract

*What people say can bring about some reactions. These reactions are called a perlocutionary act. This paper is aimed at describing the perlocutionary act of verbal violence against women. The objective of this writing is to identify the perlocutionary acts the women as the victims of the violence verbally. The data were taken in DKI Jakarta and Sumatera Barat by using interviews, note-taking, recording, and questionnaires. There were around women as 30 respondents. These women were the victims of verbal violence domestically. The analysis was done by using the concept of speech act and verbal violence against women. The result of the analysis was descriptively and narratively done. Besides, the percentage was also used to highlight the number of occurrences of a certain perlocution. Having analyzed the data, it is found that there are four general reactions as the perlocution of the women, victims of verbal violence domestically. They are 1) arguing, 2) replying with the same words, 3) groveling, and 4) saying nothing but doing something like crying or being silent. 'Saying nothing' occurs more than others because the women surrendered with the circumstances that are also in line with the cycle of the violence itself.*

**Keywords:** perlocutionary act, verbal violence, violence, women

#### Abstrak

*Aksi yang terkandung dalam sebuah tuturan berpotensi membutuhkan reaksi. Reaksi ini disebut dengan tindak perlokusi. Salah satu bentuk tindak perlokusi ini tergambar dalam fenomena kekerasan verbal terhadap perempuan. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk memaparkan tindak perlokusi dalam aktivitas kekerasan verbal pada perempuan. Data diambil di wilayah DKI Jakarta dan Sumatera Barat melalui teknik interview, catat, rekam, dan menyebar kuesioner. Ada 30 perempuan yang dijadikan responden yang merupakan korban dan mantan korban kekerasan dalam rumah tangga. Analisis data menggunakan konsep tindak tutur dan kekerasan verbal terhadap perempuan. Hasil analisis dipaparkan secara*



*deskriptif dan apa adanya. Selain itu, digunakan juga persentase untuk memperjelas jumlah kemunculan jenis tindak perlokusi ini. Dari analisis data ditemuakn empat bentuk tindak perlokusi dalam aktivitas kekerasan verbal terhadap perempuan, yakni 1) berargumen ; 2) menjawab dengan tuturan/kata yang sama; 3) merendahkan diri; dan 4) tidak merespon apa-apa tetapi menangis. Bentuk keempat ini paling sering digunakan sebagai wujud kepasrahan pada keadaan.*

**Kata kunci:** *kekerasan verbal, kekerasan, perempuan, tindak perlokusi*

## 1. Introduction

Verbal violence is a kind of terrorism because women are put in the inconvenience. When people say something that insults and hurt women which brings about psychological misery or suffering, it can be categorized as violence (UU, 2004). The violence is identical to terrorism. Even terrorism is called as the apex of violence because it is addressed to innocent people (Revita, 2015). Because of the terror, many people become victims. These women suffered psychologically. Their mental is stressed which might cause death (Revita, 2016; Revita & Trioclarise, 2014).

The verbal violence is regarded as something common (Flood, 2014) because some people view it variously. In the sense that, the verbal violence cannot be physically proved. Thus, it is hard for others to identify that the utterances are categorized as violence. Moreover, when violence occurs in the domestic domain, some people think that it is the internal business of the spouse. Consequently, the surrounding just let the violence verbally done occur without having any reaction.

Such kind of response made the action of the violence against women get bigger and bigger (Cantwell et al., 2000). Even the violence against women is like the iceberg (Revita, Trioclarise, et al., 2017) that the peak looks very small; meanwhile, the foot is very large. From time to time, the number gets higher that is brought about by many factors. Among those, culture is one aspect that contributes to the increase in this number of violence (Flood & Pease, 2009).

Violence against women can be divided into four (Sinha, 2013). They are physical, psychological, sexual, and economical violence. Physical violence relates to the physic; psychological violence is in line with the mental or psychology; sexual violence is the violence relates to sexual intercourse; economic violence means that the violence occurs in the economic domain such as the coercion of women to work for money to support the life of the house.

Among the four kinds of violence against women, psychological violence against women is very difficult to be identified. It is associated with the evidence. There is nothing that can be used as proof of the action of verbal violence. The violence can be perceived by the victims, the women. In Pragmatics, it is called a perlocutionary act (Austin, 1962)--what people say may insult others and be felt by the hearers. The perlocutionary act becomes the effect of what the speakers say (Searle, 1979).

It is, then, becoming the concern of this article that when being the victims of the violence verbally, the women may react with different responses. The response can be in terms of linguistic signs in the form of words and utterances and nonlinguistic signs, such as being silent or just dropping the tears. Women are not those to be victimized but must be protected.



Phenomena of verbal violence are like things that are ordinary. Nothing is regarded as ridiculous in this verbal violence. It is because of the verbal violence related to how language is used as a means of communication.

Language use deals with other people. When doing communication, there must be others with whom a speaker interacts. It is due to some utterances that need the reaction and response of the hearer. The response is in line with what the speaker says. Possibly, the response is totally different from what the speaker means. It is called as the speech act of perlocution or perlocutionary act.

Speech act means an action performed via language (Revita, 2013; Austin, 1962; Oishi, 2006; Searle, 1968). The speech act is divided into three. They are the locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is the act of saying something. An illocutionary act is an act of doing something. The perlocutionary act is the effect of the utterance or what the speakers said. For examples are as follows:

1) Husband: *Iyo co itu nan rancak. Caliek se lah anak tu makan tana! Taruih selah main hape tu!*

‘It is a very good job. Just let your son eat the land! Keep playing hand phone!’

Wife : *Ndak nampak dek awak do, Da.*

‘I did not see anything, Da.’

(Revita, Trioclarise, et al., 2017)

The dialogue 1 involved a husband and his wife. When arriving at home, the husband looked at his son’s mouth was full of the land. It seems like he just ate the land because the son is still 2 years old and he did not understand that the land is allowed to be eaten. His mouth was full of dirt; meanwhile, he saw his wife was busy with the handphone. It made him mad. The husband then said, ‘*Iyo co itu nan rancak. Caliek se lah anak tu makan tana! Taruih selah main hape tu!*’

What is being said by the husband is categorized as a locutionary act. What the speaker is saying is what is literally written or comprising some words arranged in the form of the utterance. What is being said is not only informing something but containing the action. Like the utterances above in which semantically, the speaker means to praise the hearer. The speaker even asked the hearer to keep playing the handphone and just ignored the son. However, if these utterances are related to the context, what the speaker said is totally different from what he means. He intentionally commanded his wife to keep eyes on the son. The wife was not supposed to chat busily with others and made the son did something dangerous.

The husband was very angry with the hearer. The anger was politely delivered because the intonation and the tempo of the utterances were very slow. His anger was seen from the eyes and the reaction of directly holding the son while cleaning the son’s mouth with his hand. Thus, it is clearly seen that the locution and the illocution are contradictive. What is being uttered was in contrast with what he means.



Such utterances brought about the reaction of the wife by directly stop playing her handphone. She quickly came closer to her husband to hold the son while saying, '*Ndak nampak dek awak do, Da.*' This utterance and the reaction of the hearer is called as the perlocution of the speech act (the effect of saying something). The hearer reacted after hearing what the speaker said. Even the hearer was afraid of knowing that her husband was mad because of her attitude that ignored the son.

The perlocutionary act might be often found in communication in a society. As long as the language is used for communication, the perlocution may exist. In a conversation, the speaker may ask the hearer to do something and this hearer may react based on what the speaker says or even refuse to do it. For example is as being seen in the following dialogue 2.

2) Speaker: **Will you help to drop me to the nearest market, please?**

Hearer : **I am sorry because I still have something to do.**

The speaker and the hearer are friends. The speaker wanted the hearer to drop her to the nearest market because she would buy something. The utterance **Will you help to drop me to the nearest market, please?** contains an action of a directive in which the speaker instructed the hearer to drop her. What the speaker intended is that the hearer will drop her to the market as she asked. Unfortunately, the hearer refused it because he has something to do. It means that the hearer does not follow the direction of the speaker. Such a reaction or response is called the perlocutionary act.

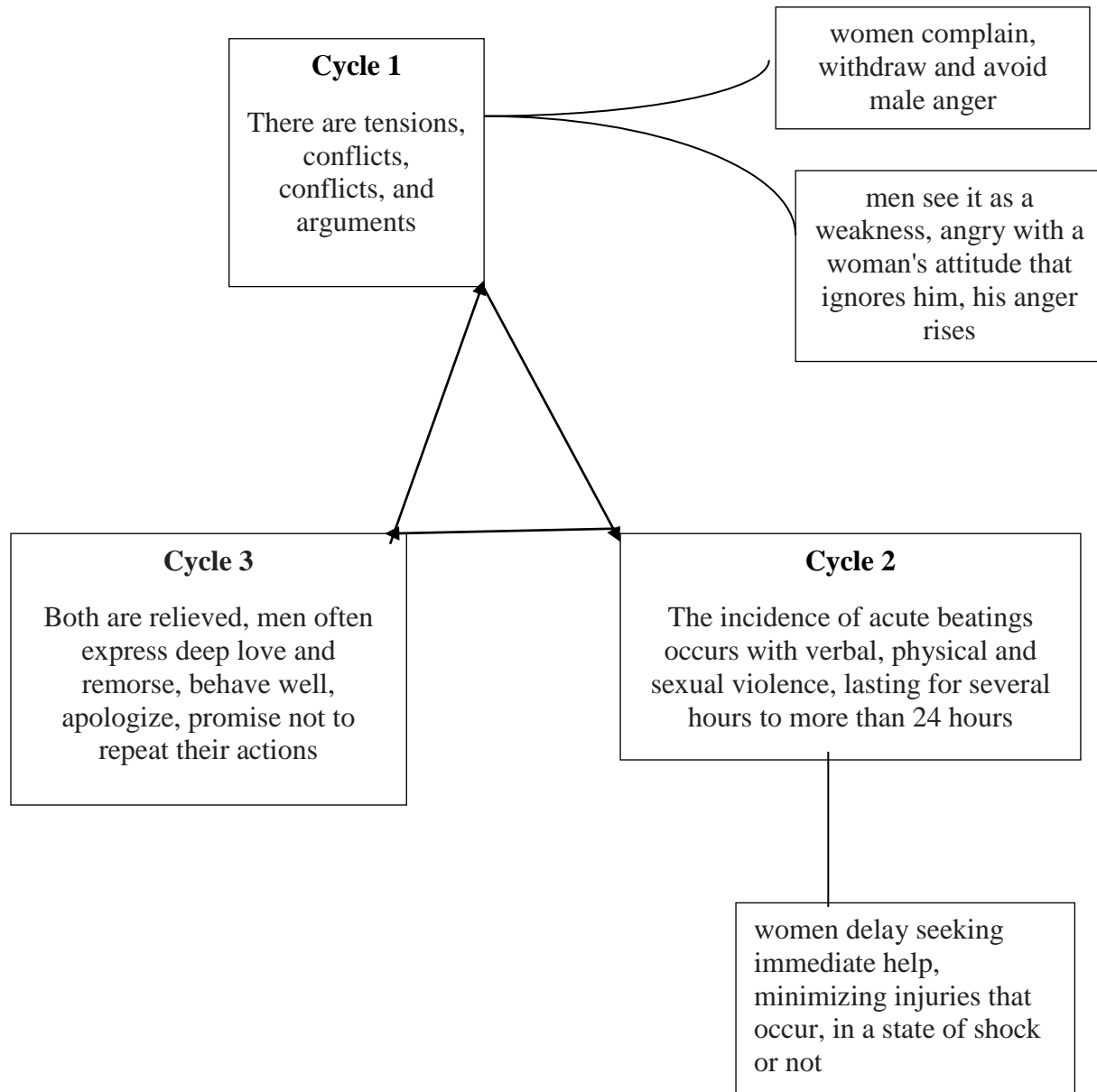
Perlocution as the reaction of the utterance totally depends on how the participants of the conversation have shared knowledge. Shared knowledge is the foundation of the participants in a conversation. The shared knowledge is commonly named as context (Leech, 2014; Ike Revita, 2013). The context will decrease the possibility of being miscommunication. Therefore, the communication can run smoothly because each participant has a similar understanding of every aspect of the conversation (Revita, Trioclarise, et al., 2017).

When miscommunication occurs in the conversation, the anger might come up. It is what happened in verbal violence toward women in which the reaction of the women in their communication with men was not matched. It triggered the fury of the men. Consequently, women were not only verbally violated but also physically. It can be due to the response of the women (Revita, Wekke, et al., 2017).

As the action which breaks the law, the verbal violence toward women is playing an important role as the trigger of the beginning of the cycles of the violence. The violence has three cycles that will occur and reoccur. From time to time, the level of violence is increasing.

The 1<sup>st</sup> cycle is about the conflict between husband and wife. Because of the anger, the husband will say something categorized as verbal violence. The women sometimes prefer being silent because they do not want to have a further quarrel. However, the husbands think that these women ignore them. It will make the husband's wrath. The 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle comes up in which the verbal violence is then followed by the physical one. The women may get hurt because of this. It will last around 24 hours or more. Finally, both husband and wife relieved because the husband feels sorry about what happened. He, then, says love, expresses his apology, and promises not to repeat. They become in a normal situation until the next violence occurs with similar cycles but

worse. In other words, the level of violence is crueler. The cycles of the violence against women can be seen in the following figure 1.



**Fig.1 The Cycles of Violence against Women**

Source: Jones, 2014





## 2. Research Method

This writing is about the perlocutionary act of women as victims of verbal violence. The aim of the writing is to identify the perlocutionary act of the utterances categorized as verbal violence. The research was conducted in two provinces in Indonesia (DKI Jakarta and Sumatera Barat). These two provinces were selected as the area of the research because DKI Jakarta was noted as the province with the highest violence in Indonesia ((Komnas Perempuan, 2017) but not Sumatera Barat. Nevertheless, in Sumatera Barat, the violence toward women is possible to occur and increase from time to time. Thus, this possibility can be prevented, as the seeds were identified.

The data were any reaction and response of 70 women as the victims of the violence when they were verbally violated. These women were from DKI Jakarta (40) and Sumatera Barat (30). In collecting data, the observational method (Sudaryanto, 2015) was implied with note-taking and recording techniques. The interview was also conducted. The respondents were interviewed using the open-ended survey. It was done to dig the information and context of the conversation.

The analysis was done using the concept of perlocutionary by Austin (1962; Searle, 1969; and Revita, 2013). Besides, the concept of violation toward women is related to the law on the protection of women from the violence, namely Law number 23 of 2004. The result of the analysis is descriptively and narratively done. Some charts, tables, and figures are used to support the analysis. Moreover, the percentage was also used to identify the number of occurrences of each perlocution. This percentage is to get the average of the occurrence of the perlocution of the violence by using the following formula:

$$\text{Average} = \frac{\text{The number of data}}{\text{The whole number of data}} \times 100\%$$

## 3. Result and Discussion

Ideally, perlocution must be in line with the illocution. It implies that what the speaker intended in a conversation must be fully caught by the hearer. The reaction of the hearer should meet the need of the intention of the speaker or the illocution. However, such an ideal way of communication can not always happen. The reaction may diverse from the expectation. This can be seen in the situation where verbal violence occurred and the perlocution of the women as the victims.

There are four kinds of responses or perlocutionary act of women as the victims of violence. They are 1) arguing, 2) replying with the same words, 3) groveling, and 4) saying nothing but doing something like crying or being silent.

### Arguing

Arguing, in this case, refers to the reaction of women to defend themselves from the violence. The defense can be in the form of an argument or denying the allegations given. For example is as follows:

- 3) A : *Kamu memang perempuan kurang ajar.*  
'You are indeed a cheeky woman.'



B : ***Kamu yang membuat aku begitu.***  
'You made me like that.'

The dialogue involved a husband and his wife. The husband got angry with his wife because of something. He then labeled the wife as the 'cheeky'. This utterance is categorized as violence because it insulted the hearer. However, the wife replied it by saying ***Kamu yang membuat aku begitu.*** She did not let her husband accused her and gave label so. Thus, she argued that she became like that because of her husband. There is an argument in the hearer's reaction. She refused to be accused as the cheeky woman. This argument is a way to react or deny what her husband said.

Replying with the same words often occurred when both participants are emotional. When two people interact emotionally, each of them might not relent. They may dispute until one of them give up or stop. It can be seen in the following example:

4) A : *Kau yo co baruak mah.*  
'You are like a monkey.'

B : ***Waang co baruak juo.***  
'You are also like a monkey.'

The couple in data 4 was very emotional. Both were quarreling that none of them wanted to relent and stop. The quarrel got worse because each of them started to insult others by labeling their spouse with the animal--monkey. It was started by the husband. The wife did not want to lose. She then replied with a similar word and said that her husband is also like a monkey.

The reply of the speaker B is the reaction of a woman who had been insulted. As being labeled like the monkey, the woman directly replied similarly. What she did means to remind the husband that she did not deserve to be treated harshly. She is a wife that needs to be tenderly and well treated.

### Groveling

Groveling indicates the respect to others. When a husband violated his wife, but the wife still grovels, it reflects that she does not want to argue. For some women from some cultures, the husband must be respected. Whatever the husbands say, they must obey and may not argue. Groveling became the choice to react toward the utterances even though it is insulting. For example is reflected in dialogue 5.

5) A : *Apo nan tantu dek kau. Ndak kameh ciek alah e do.*  
'What do you know? Nothing is well-done.'

B : ***Wak salah, Da. Tolong diaja wak, Da!***  
'I am wrong. Please teach me!'

B's husband was angry with his wife because the husband regarded that the wife knew nothing about what he asked. For Minangkabau people, such an utterance is regarded as rude and very insulting. The wife, however, said 'sorry' and asked her husband to teach her for that disability and imperfectness. She realized that it is her husband who must teach and guide her for goodness.



Even though being violated, the wife was still patient facing his husband, no argument and no denying. Accepting any accusation from the husbands is one way of a wife to avoid a further quarrel. Moreover, groveling is regarded as obedience. Some women think that they must do and follow what their husbands said. They do not need to argue or refuse. Even when being violated, groveling is regarded as wise cause indicating the dedication toward the husband.

Once being violated, the women may react variously. However, there are also women who just say nothing and prefer to be silent. When being violated, what she can do is only crying and saying no words. For example is reflected in dialog 6 – 7 below.

6) A : *Kamu ini benar-benar menjadi perempuan tak berguna.  
Percuma aku menikahimu .*

‘You are useless? It is useless to marry you.’

B : **(Crying)**

7) A : *Manyasa den kawin jo kau. Indak baguno.*

‘I regretted marrying you. You are useless.’

B : **(Saying nothing but crying.)**

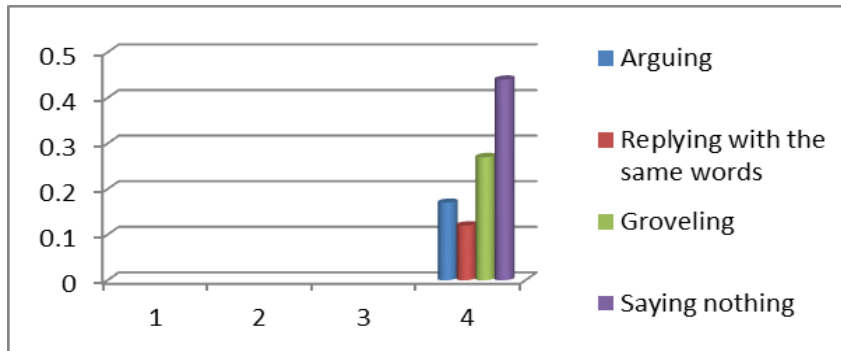
In giving the response toward their husbands’ utterances, both women in dialog 6-7 above said nothing but crying. Her husband spoke very rudely and impolitely but she just reacted with crying. She did not argue nor reply. Crying is what she only can do. The reaction or perlocutionary of the hearer did not stop their violation. The husbands got angrier. He became very emotional and began to smack the wife with the ashtay.

Some women preferred saying nothing to argue or refuse. It is due to their consideration that to reduce the inconvenient situation, being silent becomes the choice. Furthermore, some women do not want to dispute anything that can create a quarrel between them. Silence is the safest way to stop the anger of the husband, even the real says differently. Most husband even gets angrier when he listened to no reply from his wife when he got angry. This husband is probably to do harsher action to violate the wife (Glass et al., 2017).

The last perlocution of the verbal violence, saying nothing, occurs as the most among the previous three. This is due to the women regarded that when they reacted by arguing or clarifying, the husbands will be more emotional. To avoid the fight among them, these women preferred not to reply or just be silent. In fact, such a way of thinking is wrong because the husbands become mad. These husbands thought that their wives ignore what they say. Consequently, the verbal violence will be followed by the physical one.

These perlocutions of the speech act as the effects of the violence then can be generally categorized into two. They are 1) the perlocution of speech act which is verbally done and 2) the perlocution of the speech act by using body language. The occurrence of the perlocutionary of verbal violence against women is demonstrated in chart 1 below.





**Chart 1. The Occurrence of Perlocutionary Act of the Violence toward Women**

The occurrence of each form of the perlocution of the speech act of verbal violence against women is various. The use of 'saying nothing' is estimated by 44 %, followed by groveling (27%), arguing (17%), and replying with the same words (12 %). It can be seen in the below table 1.

**Table 1. The Percentage of Each Type of Perlocution**

No.	Types of Perlocution	The Occurrence (%)
1	Arguing	17
2	Replying with similar words	12
3	Groveling	27
4	Saying nothing	44

Saying nothing occurs more than arguing, replying with the same words, and groveling because most women do not want to fight. They just wanted to avoid the emergence of new problems. So, by having silent and saying nothing, they expected that everything would stop. The husbands will not violate them anymore. This is in line with replying with the same words as the smallest percentage of reacting toward the violence (12 %). Replying with the same words is similar to mocking and explicitly opposing the husbands. If it happened, the physical violence followed by other acts of violence would come up (Revita, Trioclarise, et al., 2017).

These reactions of the women who were violated by the husband do not change the situation much (Uthman et al., 2009). Even women are more harmful. The partner keeps violating them with the higher frequencies and more cruel action. Reacting verbally or nonverbally seem useless because still many women become the victims of violence (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006).

#### 4. Conclusion

Violence toward women must be prevented because women are not objecting or things to be insulted. Women are humans that need to be protected and to be far from the violence. Nobody may insult these women for whatever reasons are.



Even though there has already been a law to protect women from violence, many women still become victims of violence. It is due to various backgrounds. No matter how women as the victims can react variously when they were violated. These reactions, which are called the perlocutionary act, do not influence the number and the quality of violence. From time to time, the number of violence is getting higher (KOMNAS, 2019). There must be certain strategies designed to prevent women from violence by all lines.

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