DYSPHEMISM IN THE YOUTUBE COMMENTS SECTION: INSIGHTS FROM NIKOCADO AVOCADO'S "TWO STEP AHEAD" VIDEO

Dina Oktaviana[1], Tri Arie Bowo[2], Bob Morison Sigalingging[3]

Universitas Bangka Belitung[1,2,3]

dinaoktaviana21.do@gmail.com, triariebowo@ubb.ac.id, bob-morison@ubb.ac.id

Abstract

Dysphemism is characterized by the use of harsh or negative language to describe someone or something in an unfavorable manner. Its presence is widespread in both direct communication and digital interactions. Dysphemism often serves as an outlet for emotions such as anger, frustration, or disapproval. This study focuses on the types and effects of dysphemism in YouTube comments on the video Two Steps Ahead by Avocado Nicokado. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method to identify dysphemistic expressions based on Allan and Burridge's (2006) framework. They define dysphemism as a linguistic strategy that replaces neutral expressions with more explicit, making their framework well-suited for analyzing its types and effects. A total of 42 selected comments contained 25 dysphemistic words and 15 dysphemistic phrases, with words appearing 45 times and phrases 20 times. The identified types of dysphemism include 10 taboo terms, 4 instances of profane swearing, 3 animal comparisons, 3 dysphemistic epithets, 10 imprecations and epithets, 1 -IST dysphemism, and 9 insult terms. Based on these types, dysphemism is predominantly used for insult and mockery, though it can also convey surprise or support in certain contexts. Besides, through interviews, 42 comments were analyzed to understand the effects of dysphemism, with 10 key comments chosen as the main reference. The findings indicate that dysphemism reinforces the normalization of offensive language, promotes trolling behavior, shapes public perceptions of content creators, and deepens polarization in online interactions. The study provides insights into how understanding dysphemism supports constructive interactions in digital communication.

Keywords: *dysphemism; types; effects; nikocado avocado; YouTube comment*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a cornerstone of human civilization. Its influences the development and continuity of societies (Purba et al., 2024). Male and Sbastian (2024) highlight its importance in conveying messages and supporting social interactions. In the modern digital age, communication has changed dramatically.

Boestam and Derivanti (2022) explain that communication now extends beyond traditional face-to-face exchanges to include virtual interactions on various online platforms. These platforms enable immediate communication worldwide, improving connectivity like never before (Apriyani, 2023). Zulkifli and Bakar (2024) highlight that online media has been a key factor in this shift, altering how people connect, share information, and engage with content. This includes platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and content-sharing sites like blogs and podcasts.

Among these platforms, YouTube is the most prominent video-sharing site attracting a broad audience ranging from children to adults. Alshamrani et al. (2021) explain that YouTube serves multiple purposes by providing entertainment and functioning as a replacement for traditional television. Additionally, Aiswarya & Rajeev (2024) notes that YouTube not only enables users to share videos but also provides a variety of social features, including subscriptions, live chat, community posts, likes, dislikes, shares, and comments. These elements make YouTube a versatile platform for both entertainment and social engagement.

The comment section on YouTube is a key feature that encourages interaction and engagement between content creators and their audiences. According to Moller and Boukes (2022), it serves as a platform for users to provide feedback, share thoughts, and ask questions, promoting discussion around the video. This space allows creators to directly respond to comments, clarify content, or acknowledge suggestions, strengthening their connection with viewers. Through the exchange of ideas, both positive feedback and constructive criticism contribute to the improvement and creativity of content.

Positive feedback is essential as it boosts a creator's confidence and motivates continued content creation (Pokharel & Bhatta, 2021). On the other hand, constructive criticism offers creator's valuable insights that can help them refine their work. However, Prasetyo and Wahyudin (2019) note that inappropriate language can sometimes be used in comments, leading to potential offense. For instance, consider the YouTube comment: "Guys, I don't see the hype with this guy. He's just a guy that lost weight, so stop hyping this **monkey** up like he is God or something." In this context, the word "monkey" carries a

strong negative connotation, as it is often used to demean Nikocado by likening him to animals perceived as inferior or unintelligent. This shift from a neutral meaning to an offensive one illustrates the concept of dysphemism.

As noted by Pascarina (2018), dysphemism is a rhetorical device frequently encountered in everyday conversations and various forms of entertainment media. Allan and Burridge (2006) further explain that dysphemism involves words or phrases that carry negative connotations, affecting both the subject being described and those who perceive the statement. Since negative connotations are heavily influenced by subjective interpretation and context, determining whether a term qualifies as dysphemistic requires an analysis of how and why it conveys offense. Therefore, dysphemism often creates tension in communication and can impact relationships between individuals and groups. Allan and Burridge (2006) categorize dysphemism into seven types: taboo terms, profane swearing and profane oaths, comparisons of people to animals, dysphemistic epithets, imprecations, -IST dysphemism, and insulting terms.

One type involves taboo terms, which relate to bodily functions, sex, death, violence, and sacred concepts. Words like "asshole," "prick," and "shit" are common examples. For instance in the sentence "This whole situation is just shit." Profane swearing and profane oaths form another type. Originally, the verb "swear" referred to making a solemn promise or declaration, often invoking God or a sacred object to emphasize the seriousness of a statement. Over time, this shifted, and swearing, such as using terms like "hell" in phrases like "Go to hell," became a dysphemistic act aimed at expressing anger or insulting someone (Elleonora, 2017).

Comparisons of people to animals also serve as a type of dysphemism, often pointing out perceived negative traits in humans. For instance, calling someone a "monkey" to demean an individual by likening him to animals perceived as inferior or unintelligent. Dysphemistic epithets focus on physical traits seen as abnormal, for example in this comment, "He just looks **sickly skinny**" to insult Nikocado's physical appearance.

Imprecations and epithets related to mental disorders or subnormality are also a form of dysphemism. Labels like "crazy" or "insane" are often used to

mock someone's mental health. –IST dysphemisms, arising from social biases like sexism, racism, speciesism, classism, ageism, and other forms of prejudice, serve to marginalize and degrade individuals. Terms like "nigger" or "gay" target people based on their race or gender, reinforcing harmful stereotypes and dehumanizing them. Lastly, insulting terms that make harsh negative judgments about a person's character—such as calling someone a "loser" or "failure"—aim to diminish their self-worth and dignity.

Based on the types discussed earlier, dysphemism, characterized by using negative or offensive language to describe individuals, groups, or concepts, can significantly shape how they are perceived (Allan & Burridge, 2006). While it often triggers negative effects, it can also serve other purposes depending on the context. Kafi and Degaf (2021) suggest that stronger language can be used to emphasize a point or add humor, such as calling someone "a walking disaster" in a playful conversation to make the comment funnier without malice. However, in a serious setting, the same remark could be perceived as insulting. In media, dysphemism is frequently used to grab attention and provoke strong emotional responses, often painting the subject in an unjustly negative light (Rina et al., 2024). Over time, it can reinforce biases, desensitize audiences to extreme remarks, and normalize them. This type of language can express criticism, contempt, or dissent, while also fostering a sense of solidarity within specific groups (Laili, 2009).

Several studies have explored the types and functions of dysphemism in different contexts. For example, Yetty and Bambang (2022) analyzed euphemism and dysphemism in the Kampar community, focusing on their impact on politeness in communication. Mulya et al. (2021) examined dysphemism in Indonesian high school students' conversations, categorizing the types of dysphemism based on Allan's theory. In film analysis, Pretty Sitanggang et al. (2020) applied Allan & Burridge's theory to identify dysphemism types and their functions in the "Deadpool" movie, with a focus on humiliation. Hadi and Rosita (2023) explored dysphemism in the movie script of "Ronny Chieng: Asian Comedian Destroys America!" considering the influence of cultural background on its use. Similarly, Maulana et al. (2020) analyzed dysphemism in the Prohaba

newspaper and identified various types, focusing on insults. However, these studies do not examine the effects of dysphemism on emotional responses or behaviors, which is one of the focal points of the current research.

This is particularly relevant in the case of Nikocado Avocado, the online alias of Nicholas Perry, who has sparked controversy and gained attention through his provocative mukbang videos. Before the release of "Two Step Ahead", Nikocado had been absent for nine months, leading many to believe he had passed away. However, in the video, he suddenly claimed that he had been gone for two years. During that time, he had actually been consistently uploading pre-prepared videos while secretly focusing on working out to lose weight. This revelation shocked viewers, as they were confronted with his drastic physical transformation. As a result, many subscribers and viewers shared their reactions in the comment section, ranging from positive feedback to harsh criticism. Given this, analyzing the comments on his content provides valuable insight into how dysphemism influences emotional and behavioral responses.

Based on the description above, this study focuses on the types and effects of dysphemism in the comments of the "Two Step Ahead" video, published on January 7th, 2024, on the Nikocado Avocado YouTube channel. Unlike previous studies that relied on traditional media such as films or news articles, this research uses user-generated comments on YouTube as its data source. The purpose of this study is to explore the types of dysphemism and how dysphemistic language affects viewers or subscribers emotional responses and behaviors in an online community. The findings of this research can offer valuable insights into the effects of dysphemism on online communication and contribute to a deeper understanding of how language shapes social dynamics in digital platforms.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative method to investigate and gather information on the types and effects of dysphemism found in YouTube comments. As Creswell (2013) explains, qualitative research focuses on collecting data in the form of words or images instead of numbers. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to thoroughly examine the types and effects of dysphemism,

with a particular focus on a pragmatics perspective. This approach aimed to analyze specific words, phrases, and their contextual meanings within communication. Therefore, this study utilizes YouTube comments from the video "Two Step Ahead" on the Nikocado Avocado YouTube Channel as the primary data, while responses from an interview serve as the secondary data.

The data was obtained from comments on the video "Two Step Ahead," uploaded to the Avocado Nicokado channel on September 7th, 2024. To manage the extensive dataset of comments, a purposive sampling technique was adopted. This technique focused on selecting longer comments from subscribers that contained dysphemistic words and phrases and facilitated the identification of relevant data for analysis. Additionally, to ensure the validity of the study's secondary data, the interview was conducted with a single participant who met specific criteria: a verified and experienced social media enthusiast with intermediate English proficiency.

The data collection process included several steps. First of all, the Nikocado Avocado YouTube channel was accessed, and the popular video "Two Step Ahead" was selected, with 49 million views and 304,726 comments. Next, the comments were examined to identify dysphemistic words and phrases. Relevant comments were recorded through screenshots and note-taking, and the identified terms were cross-checked for accuracy. Finally, the collected data was organized into a table for analysis.

Table 1. Data collection of dysphemism

No.	Dysphemism	Occurrences	Types of Dysphemism						
			TT	PSPO	CPA	DE	IE	-IST	TI
1.	Shit								
2.	Ant								
3.	…								
	Total								

All the codes are explained below.

TT: Taboo Terms   IE: Imprecations and Epithets

PSPO: Profane Swearing and Profane Oaths   -IST: -IST Dysphemism

CPA: Comparisons of People with Animals   TI: Terms of Insult

DE: Dysphemistic Epithets

The data analysis is carried out through several steps. The first step involves categorizing the YouTube comments based on the types of dysphemism identified in Allan and Burridge's (2006) framework. As provided in the table below.

Table 2. Data analysis of dysphemism

No.	Dysphemism	Occurrences	Types of Dysphemism						
			TT	PSPO	CPA	DE	IE	-IST	TI
1.	Shit		✓						
2.	Ant				✓				
3.	…								
	Total								

All the codes are explained below.

TT: Taboo Terms   DE: Dysphemistic Epithets

PSPO: Profane Swearing and Profane Oaths   IE: Imprecations and Epithets

CPA: Comparisons of People with Animals   -IST: -IST Dysphemism

                                                  TI: Terms of Insult

Next, the effects of dysphemism are analyzed, focusing on its impact on the tone, emotion, and intent behind the comments, as well as how it shapes interactions among users. The final step involves identifying patterns and themes to understand the broader effect of dysphemism on communication within the YouTube platform. The findings are then organized to highlight the types of dysphemism and their effects on communication and interaction within the comments.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Types of Dysphemism Analysis in YouTube Comments on Nikocado Avocado

Based on Allan and Burridge's (2006) framework, 42 comments that met the research criteria were selected. Out of a total of 304,726 comments, both those containing dysphemism and those that do not, there are 42 long comments that contain dysphemism and meet the criteria of this dysphemism study. Meanwhile, the other comments either do not contain dysphemism or only contain it in a shorter form. These comments contained 25 dysphemistic words and 15 dysphemistic phrases, with the words appearing 45 times and the phrases 20 times. The analysis identified various types of dysphemism, including 10 instances of taboo terms, 4 cases of profane swearing and oaths, 3 occurrences of animal comparisons, 3 dysphemistic epithets, 10 instances of imprecations and epithets, 1 case of an -IST dysphemism, and 9 occurrences of insult terms. A complete breakdown is provided in the table below.

No.	Dysphemism	Occurrences	Types of Dysphemism						
			TT	PSPO	CPA	DE	IE	-IST	TI
1.	Shit	5	✓						
2.	Ant	1			✓				
3.	Pathetic	1							✓
4.	Waste of Skin	1							✓
5.	Sunk so low	1							✓
6.	Sheep	1			✓				
7.	Monkey	1			✓				
8.	Bullshit	1		✓					
9.	Silly	2							✓
10.	The fuck	3	✓						
11.	Crazy	4					✓		
12.	Autistic	1					✓		
13.	Cringe	5							✓

No.	Term	Count							
14.	Cocky	1							✓
15.	Poor mindset	1							✓
16.	Stupid	4					✓		
17.	Damn	4		✓					
18.	Joke	1							✓
19.	Jokes on you	1							✓
20.	Deadass	1		✓					
21.	A bit dumb	1					✓		
22.	Fuck up	2	✓						
23.	Death	1	✓						
24.	Goddamn	1	✓						
25.	Sociopathic - Narcissistic	1					✓		
26.	Jerk	1					✓		
27.	Freakin' insane	1					✓		
28.	Insane	2					✓		
29.	Hell	1	✓						
30.	Ass	1	✓						
31.	Holy Shit	3	✓						
32.	Fucking	1	✓						
33.	Nut	2					✓		
34.	Oh my God	1		✓					
35.	Killed	1	✓						
36.	Peasant	1						✓	
37.	Sickly Skinny	1				✓			
38.	Overweight weirdo	1				✓			
39.	Skinny weirdo	1				✓			
40.	Self-absorbed Narcissist	1					✓		
	Total	**65**	**10**	**4**	**3**	**3**	**10**	**1**	**9**

Based on the data, the identified dysphemisms will be analyzed in terms of their types and effects, with a particular focus on a pragmatics perspective. The first type to be discussed is Taboo Terms.

1. Taboo Terms

Taboo terms refer to words or phrases that are considered socially unacceptable or offensive in particular contexts. Allan and Burridge (2006) identify taboo terms involving bodily functions (like sweat, feces, and urine), sexual organs and acts, death, disease, and killing, including hunting and fishing. In this research, ten taboo terms were found, such as *shit, the fuck, fuck up, death, goddamn, hell, ass, holy-shit, fucking*, and *killed*. For instance, in the comment below.

@robinw9405 4 bulan yang lalu
nah... if he was really experimenting shit, he wouldnt really look so cocky with that two steps ahead shit.. he prolly had a bad time and he lost weight to take a revenge from the people... prolly its a surgery... not a real healthy way to lose weight...
Terjemahkan ke bahasa Indonesia
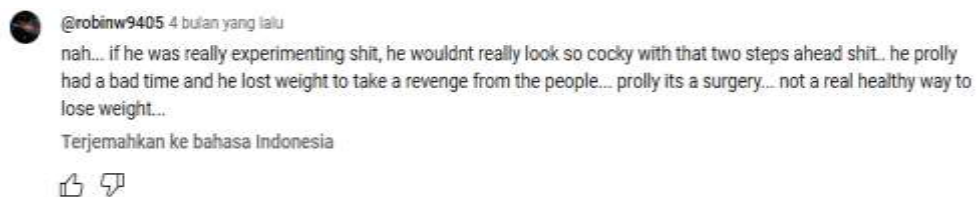
Figure 1. A comment with the taboo term '*shit*'

As Allan and Burridge (2006) state in their book, the word '*shit*' falls under the category of bodily effluvia dysphemism, which refers to terms describing bodily functions or excretions. However, Christian (2014) notes that '*shit*' is used more frequently than '*feces.*' In the comment example, the dysphemism reinforces a negative view of Nikocado Avocado, with the commenter seeing his weight loss as deceitful and manipulative. Moreover, the repetition of the word '*shit*' amplifies the mockery and skepticism.

The taboo word in the comment, such as '*shit*' allows the commenter to vent frustration, anger, or irritation toward Nikocado's behavior and appearance after releasing the video. Similar to Narti et al. (2022) statement that the word '*shit*' is considered taboo because it is viewed as offensive and is often used as a powerful expression of emotions like frustration, anger, and despair. As noted in Anggita (2015) journal, taboo words like '*shit,*' can be used to mock something when the speaker holds a negative perspective.

However, taboo terms can also be used with a positive intention, as seen in the comment below.

Figure 2. A comment with the taboo term '*holy shit*'

'*holy shit*' is an informal English exclamation that pairs the word '*holy,*' meaning sacred or divine, with a crude slang term for feces (Wanodya et al., 2024). Citing from Online Urban Dictionary (2025), the phrase '*holy shit*' is used to express extreme surprise, shock, disbelief, or intense emotion. Aditia's (2011) study states that the '*holy shit*' phrase is a phrase of surprise expression. In the same way, the example comment reflects a surge of emotional intensity, as the commenter expresses both astonishment and relief, feeling pleasantly surprised by the transformation. Although taboo terms like *holy shit* are often considered rude or negative, the context and intonation used can significantly alter its meaning.

2. **Profane Swearing and Profane Oaths**

The verb *swear* originally referred to making a solemn vow or assertion, often invoking God or a sacred object to underscore the gravity of the statement and the possible repercussions of falsehood. In this research, four profane swearing and profane oaths were found, such as *damn, deadass, bullshit,* and *oh my god*. For instance, in the comment below.
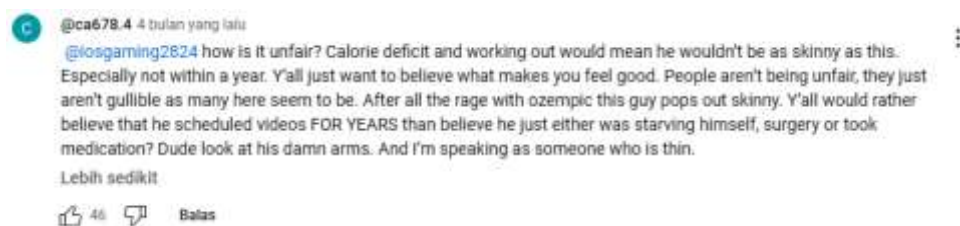

Figure 3. A comment with the profane swearing '*damn*'

The word *damn is* a swear word that people use to show that they are annoyed, disappointed, etc. In Nurhayati's (2007) study, the swear word *damn* is used to express annoyance and anger. Similarly, in the example comment, the commenter employs strong language to convey frustration and irritation, likely aimed at those who have unquestioningly accepted Nikocado's transformation. The phrase "look at his damn arms" adds a dramatic effect, further amplifying the sensationalism surrounding his weight loss. This reflects how dysphemism in media captures attention and stirs strong emotional reactions. However, the word damn does not always convey a negative tone. In the collected data, it was also found to be used in a positive context, for example in this comment.

Figure 4. Another comment with the profane swearing *'damn'*

In this context, the word *damn* serves as an informal expression used to emphasize a reaction or emotion. Here, *damn* conveys surprise and approval, reflecting the speaker's strong positive reaction to Nikocado's transformation. In conclusion, although *damn* is classified as a dysphemism, its meaning varies depending on the context, allowing it to express both negative and positive emotions, such as frustration or surprise.

3. Comparisons of People with Animals

The use of animal names in dysphemism is commonly aimed at emphasizing negative traits attributed to humans. This often draws from cultural stereotypes or folk perceptions regarding the appearance, behavior, or qualities of particular animals. In this research, three comparison of people with animals was found, such as *ants, sheep,* and *monkey*. For instance, in the comment below.
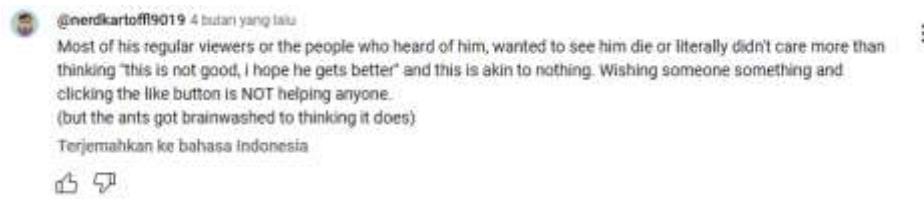
Figure 5. A comment with the comparisons of people with animals *'ant'*

An *ant* is a small insect that is recognized for its segmented body, antennae, and ability to form intricate social colonies or nests. However, citing from Online Urban Dictionary (2025), the term *ant* is also used to describe someone who is perceived as insignificant, small, or easily overlooked, often emphasizing their lack of importance or power in a situation. The sentence "but the ants got brainwashed to thinking it does" likely refers to something Nikocado said, where he metaphorically described his audience as "ants." As Nisa (2024) illustrates, this type of comparison can exemplify the act of making an inappropriate and demeaning analogy between a person and an animal.

In this context, the term brainwashed implies that the commenter perceives Nikocado's audience as uncritically absorbing his influence rather than actively evaluating his content. By comparing them to ants, the commenter emphasizes a perceived loss of individuality or autonomy, portraying the audience as mindlessly following a set path, similar to ants in a colony. This comparison strengthens the notion that the viewers are viewed as easily controlled or lacking independent thought, which the commenter considers demeaning.

4. Dysphemistic Epithets

Derogatory terms that focus on physical traits deemed unusual emphasize physical differences in a negative light, reflecting societal standards of what is regarded as "normal." In this research, three dysphemistic epithet was found, such as *sickly skinny, overweight weirdo,* and *skinny weirdo*. For instance, in the comment below.
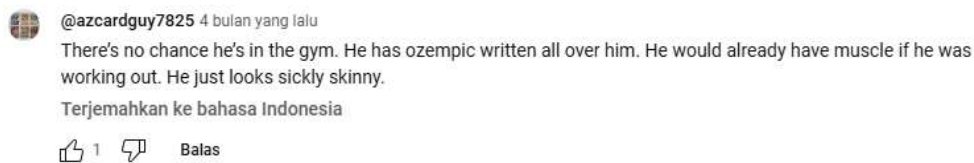
Figure 6. A comment with the dysphemistic epithets *'sickly skinny'*

The term *sickly skinny* is a derogatory dysphemism used to criticize someone's physical appearance, implying that their thinness is not just a natural trait but a result of illness or weakness. By pairing *sickly* with *skinny*, the commenter suggests that the individual appears frail and unhealthy.

5. Imprecations and Epithets

Subnormality or mental disorders carry derogatory connotations, not only intended to belittle and demean individuals but also to reinforce harmful stereotypes about cognitive abilities and mental health. In this research, ten imprecations and epithets were found, such as *crazy, autistic, stupid, a bit dumb, sociopathic-narcissistic, insane, freakin' insane, nuts, self-absorbed narcissist,* and *jerk*. For instance, in the comment below.

Figure 7. A comment with the imprecations and epithets '*sociopathic narcissistic*'

The term sociopathic-narcissistic refers to a combination of traits linked to antisocial and narcissistic personality disorders, where sociopathy involves a lack of empathy, disregard for others, and manipulative behavior without remorse, while narcissism is marked by an inflated self-importance, a need for admiration, and emotional detachment. In this context, the commenter acknowledges an achievement but criticizes Nikocado's behavior as self-serving and manipulative, suggesting that his actions are intended to attract attention or maintain control. The mention of an "insanely manufactured" voice and speech implies that his persona is exaggerated or deliberately crafted to create a false impression.

6. -IST Dysphemism

Dysphemism based on social biases like sexism, racism, speciesism, classism, ageism, and other prejudices serves as insults that degrade and exclude individuals, stripping them of their humanity. In this research, one –IST dysphemisms were found, such as *peasant*. For instance, in the comment below.
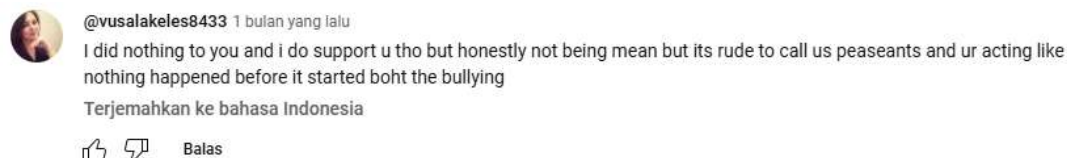

Figure 8. A comment with the –IST dysphemism *'peasant'*

Peasant refers to a person who works in agriculture, especially one who is a small-scale farmer or laborer, often in a rural or traditional setting. The commentator seems to interpret Nikocado's words, which are actually neutral or polite, as insulting or demeaning. This shows how readers can interpret dysphemism in the subtext, depending on the tone or context of the conversation. The use of the word 'peasant' here reinforces social class stereotypes, belittles those referred to as such, and serves to convey insult and negative prejudice.

7. Terms of Insult

Insulting or disrespectful terms are words that make harsh negative assessments of a person's character, typically to belittle or humiliate them. In this research, nine terms of insult were found, such as *pathetic, waste of skin, sunk so low, silly, cringe, cocky, poor mindset, joke* and *jokes on you*. For instance, in the comment below.
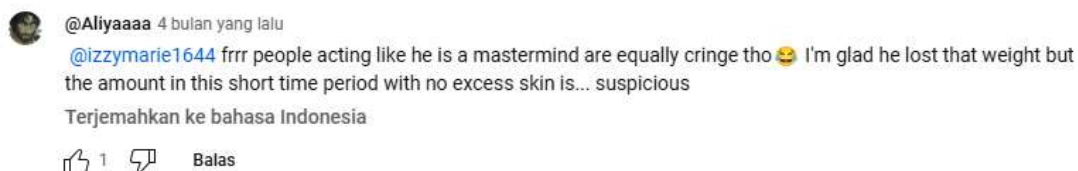

Figure 9. A comment with the terms of insult *'cringe'*

According to the Online Urban Dictionary (2025), the term *'cringe'* refers to the feeling of discomfort or secondhand embarrassment towards something considered awkward, inappropriate, or embarrassing. In this context, *'cringe'* is used as a dysphemism to express the speaker's disapproval of others' views on Nikocado's behavior. The commenter may feel that those who justify Nikocado's actions are doing so in a misguided way. The use of *'cringe'* highlights a negative emotional reaction to the situation.

B. Effects of Dysphemism in YouTube Comment on Nikocado Avocado

Based on the previously discussed types of dysphemism found in comments on Nikocado Avocado's content, it can be concluded that dysphemism also serves as a way for social media users to express their opinions. As a common linguistic feature in online communication, dysphemism influences social media users in different ways (Khasan et al., 2014). Analysis of 42 comments through interviews identified ten key comments—Datum 1, 3, 4, 6, 16, 19, 21, 24, 27, and 29—that highlighted various effects of dysphemism, including its normalization, the reinforcement of trolling behavior, its role in shaping perceptions, and its contribution to polarization. The following section will provide a more detailed discussion of these effects.

1. Normalization of Dysphemism

On digital platforms like social media, interactions are often filled with negative comments due to the emotional distance created by the lack of face-to-face communication. This allows users to freely post derogatory or offensive remarks without considering their impact, making dysphemism a routine part of online discourse. As seen in the word *shit* (figure 1), dysphemism is used to express skepticism, provoke reactions, or gain attention. The commenters employ dysphemistic language to question the authenticity of Nikocado Avocado's weight loss, demonstrating how harsh judgments have become normalized in online discussions. Meanwhile, the phrase *holy shit* (figure 2) highlights how dysphemism is also present in positive comments, where intense and informal language helps create a sense of intimacy and engagement between users and the content creator.

This pattern reflects the evolving linguistic norms in online communities, where extreme or taboo language is used for both criticism and admiration. Phrases like "holy sh*t" (figure 2) show that such words are not always meant to be hostile but can indicate familiarity and enthusiasm. Users often employ identical terms in different contexts, with intent determined by the surrounding interaction. As a result, dysphemism has become an ingrained part of social media communication, whether to attract attention, express emotions, or foster a sense of belonging in digital interactions.

2. Reinforcement of Trolling Behavior

Trolling behavior is prevalent in online interactions, particularly in YouTube comment sections, where users deliberately provoke others to elicit emotional reactions. The term trolling originates from mythology, referring to a creature that exists solely to disturb and frustrate others, much like internet trolls who exploit anonymity to attack users with provocative comments (Zarenti & Katsadoros, 2023). Their goal is not meaningful discussion but rather to create chaos and derive satisfaction from stirring conflict. As Allan and Burridge (2006) note, dysphemism can serve as an outlet for frustration or a tool for intentional harm. This is evident in Figure 1, where a commenter questions the authenticity of Nikocado Avocado's weight loss in a condescending manner, using dysphemistic terms like *cocky* and *shit* while speculating that the transformation was due to surgery rather than genuine effort. The comment not only undermines Nikocado's achievement but also provokes his fans, demonstrating how trolls craft narratives to incite doubt and hostility. This behavior fosters a toxic online environment where inflammatory language escalates conflicts, discourages meaningful discussions, and normalizes negativity, often influencing others to engage in similar trolling behavior.

3. Comments Shape the Perception of a Content Creator

In online spaces like YouTube, audience comments play a significant role in shaping public perception of content creators, reinforcing specific narratives through both praise and criticism. As Allan and Burridge (1991) noted, dysphemism influences how individuals, groups, or concepts are perceived. This

is evident in Nikocado Avocado's viral video "Two Steps Ahead", where reactions vary between admiration and skepticism. Figure 7 illustrates a negative perception, with a commenter labeling Nikocado as a "sociopathic narcissistic," implying that his transformation is driven by a need for attention rather than genuine self-improvement, potentially influencing others to adopt a similar view.

In contrast, Figure 4 presents a more positive perspective, as the commenter expresses both surprise and admiration for his weight loss. The phrase "damn good for him" emphasizes approval, with damn intensifying the supportive tone rather than conveying negativity. This choice of words suggests that the commenter perceives Nikocado's weight loss as an impressive and commendable achievement. Additionally, their statement "I was worried I was gonna see he passed" implies a prior concern for his well-being, reinforcing a shift in perception—from expecting negative news to recognizing a successful transformation.

These differing reactions demonstrate how audience comments actively shape a creator's public image—some, like in Figure 4, view Nikocado's weight loss as an achievement, while others, as in Figure 7, dismiss it as a calculated act. Ultimately, whether through praise or criticism, audience perceptions contribute to constructing the public narrative surrounding Nikocado Avocado within digital communities.

4. Splitting Opinions: The Polarization Effect

Nikocado Avocado's content sparks polarized discussions within social media communities, where audience engagement fuels contrasting reactions—ranging from admiration to criticism. His behavior, often perceived as theatrical or self-destructive, provokes debate, with some seeing him as an entertainer while others view him as manipulative. Figure 5 highlights this divide through the term ant, which Nikocado uses to describe his audience—embraced by some but resented by others who see it as demeaning. Similarly, Figure 8 further illustrates this division, where a commenter critiques Nikocado for calling his audience peasants, a term that reinforces his provocative persona but risks alienating viewers and normalizing toxic interactions. These examples show how his engagement

strategies both attract loyalty and fuel backlash, creating an environment where dysphemism plays a central role in shaping discussions.

Ultimately, this analysis builds on previous studies by emphasizing the tangible effects of dysphemism—normalizing harsh language, reinforcing trolling behavior, shaping public perception, and deepening polarization—demonstrating that dysphemism in YouTube comments is not just an individual expression but a phenomenon shaped by online interactions.

CONCLUSION

This study explores the types and effects of dysphemism in online discussions by applying Allan and Burridge's (2006) framework to YouTube comments, specifically under Nikocado Avocado's Two Step Ahead video. A total of 42 comments meeting the research criteria were analyzed, revealing 25 dysphemistic words and 15 phrases, with words appearing 45 times and phrases 20 times. The identified types of dysphemism included taboo terms, swearing, animal comparisons, dysphemistic epithets, imprecations, -IST dysphemisms, and insult terms. To examine the effects of dysphemism, 10 key comments from the dataset were further examined through interview, highlighting its role in normalizing harsh language, reinforcing trolling behavior, shaping perceptions of the creator, and deepening audience polarization.

The study found that the use of dysphemism varies by context, with 32 comments employing it negatively—through mockery, criticism, or belittlement—while 10 used it positively to express support or familiarity. This suggests that dysphemism in online discussions is not always harmful but can also strengthen social bonds, depending on intent and interpretation. However, its presence can make content more susceptible to criticism, as some commenters expressed offense. As a result, content creators must develop resilience and self-awareness to navigate online discourse, particularly when facing harsh feedback.

Recognizing its effects helps individuals become more mindful of their language choices and create more constructive online interactions. Additionally, understanding the reasons behind dysphemistic expressions enables readers to navigate and respond to negative comments more effectively. The findings also

support broader discussions on digital communication by shaping approaches to content moderation and language use on social media. Furthermore, this study provides a foundation for future research on dysphemism in various online contexts by exploring cultural perspectives and strategies for understanding the dynamic of digital interaction.

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