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HATE SPEECH IN THE COMMENT SECTION OF THE X ACCOUNT OF THE MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

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Abstract

The X account of the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) of the Republic of Indonesia is intended to function as a medium of public information and transparency; however, its comment section frequently becomes a space for the dissemination of hate speech. This study aims to identify and describe the forms of hate speech in the comment section of the minister's X account using Searle's theory of illocutionary speech acts. This study employed a qualitative descriptive method. The data consisted of 42 hate-speech comments (N = 42) collected from comments posted on the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources' X account in response to a post published on September 17, 2025. Data were collected using non-participant observation (SBLIC), documentation, and purposive sampling, and were analyzed using linguistic and contextual analysis. The findings reveal four types of illocutionary speech acts: expressive (27 data; 60%), directive (9 data; 20%), assertive (8 data; 18%), and commissive (1 data; 2%), while no declarative speech acts were identified. The dominance of expressive speech acts indicates that hate speech is primarily used by netizens to express anger, disappointment, hostility, and contempt toward public officials rather than to provide rational criticism. From a forensic linguistic perspective, these linguistic patterns demonstrate a tendency toward emotionally driven cyber behavior that may constitute defamation, insults, intimidation, or threats, thereby potentially violating Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning the Second Amendment to Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions. The study highlights how hate speech on social media functions not only as a form of digital expression but also as a linguistic practice with significant legal implications in public communication.

Keywords

Hate Speech, Social Media X, Illocutionary Speech Acts, Forensic Linguistics, ITE Law

33 INTRODUCTION

The advancement of technology in the digital era has brought significant changes to society, particularly in the field of communication. One of the most prominent developments is the use of social media as a communication medium that enables individuals to connect quickly, broadly, and beyond geographical boundaries despite being in different locations. According to Aichner et al. (2021), social media is an internet-based platform that allows users to communicate, share information, build networks, and interact with others without the constraints of time and space. These platforms provide a digital space that supports the broad exchange of information and communication.

The X platform is one of the most interactive social media platforms, offering an open space for discussions, criticism, and responses to various public issues. However, this freedom has also contributed to the widespread emergence of hate speech. Heryanto (2017) argues that cyberspace enables limitless interaction, which often neglects communication ethics. Hate speech in this context is closely related to the characteristics of digital communication, which are frequently marked by uncontrolled expressions of hostility.

The phenomenon of hate speech commonly arises in issues that attract public attention, particularly political issues that often generate controversy. Ideally, social media should function as a medium for exchanging ideas and perspectives; however, in practice, it frequently becomes a space for spreading hatred (Ash-Shidiq & Pratama, 2021; Cahyono et al., 2023; Margono et al., 2024; Mulyanto et al., 2023). This condition is largely influenced by the freedom granted to social media users, who often post hateful comments toward certain parties without careful consideration. As stated by Ismanov et al. (2023), hate speech disseminated through social media can undermine trust, increase intolerance, provoke panic and incitement, and create tensions that may lead to conflict.

Public officials are among the groups most vulnerable to becoming targets of hate speech on social media (Sadat et al., 2022; Syehilla & Markhamah, 2026). For instance, the X account belonging to one of the ministers of the Republic of Indonesia, followed by approximately 12 thousand users, frequently receives offensive comments that exceed the boundaries of policy criticism. These comments contain not only criticism of governmental policies but also insults, defamation, and personal attacks. This phenomenon demonstrates how thin the line is between criticism and hate-based attacks in digital interactions, ultimately transforming social media accounts into spaces for the dissemination of online hate speech (Hutabarat & Radhiah, 2025; Kartika & Nurhayati, 2023; E. Putri & Rahayu, 2024; Syehilla & Markhamah, 2026).

In the digital era, language is no longer merely a medium of communication but can also function as evidence in legal proceedings. This perspective forms the foundation of forensic linguistics, an interdisciplinary field that examines the relationship between language and law. Forensic linguistics investigates how linguistic expressions may constitute, facilitate, or provide evidence of criminal acts. In the context of social media, written comments, posts, replies, and digital interactions are increasingly recognized as linguistic evidence because they contain traces of communicative intentions, linguistic cues, and contextual meanings that can be analyzed scientifically. Ntlu et al. (2025) argue that forensic linguistics plays a crucial role in investigating language crimes on social media by identifying abusive expressions, interpreting intended meanings, and linking linguistic patterns to potential legal violations. Likewise, Sousa-Silva (2024) emphasizes that cyber hate speech requires evidence-based forensic linguistic analysis because harmful meanings are often conveyed not only through explicit insults but also through contextual, implicit, and strategically constructed expressions. Furthermore, forensic linguistic studies demonstrate that linguistic analysis can assist courts in distinguishing hate speech from merely offensive speech by examining intent, contextual meaning, and the potential harm caused by an utterance (Lluch, 2023; Salado, 2022). Consequently, digital texts can function as corpus delicti, namely linguistic artifacts that provide evidence of criminal conduct, particularly in cases involving hate speech, defamation, threats, incitement, and online harassment.

The evidentiary value of digital texts is closely related to the analysis of communicative intention. Forensic linguistics does not focus solely on what is said but also on what the speaker intends to accomplish through language. In this regard, Searle's (1979) theory of illocutionary speech acts offers a valuable analytical framework because it enables researchers to identify the illocutionary force underlying an utterance, such as accusing, insulting, threatening, provoking, or inciting. Studies in forensic linguistics have demonstrated that speech-act analysis can assist legal interpretation by revealing the pragmatic function and intended effect of an utterance, thereby providing insight into the

speaker's mens rea or malicious intent (Carney, 2014; Macagno & Capone, 2016). The importance of intention has also been highlighted in legal interpretation studies, which argue that legal meaning is not limited to the literal content of an utterance but also includes the communicative act performed through language (Matczak, 2017; Tomar & Tiwari, 2022). This approach is particularly relevant in the Indonesian legal context, where the application of Articles 27A and 27B of Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions often requires an assessment of whether a digital utterance was intentionally directed to damage another person's reputation, humiliate, threaten, or provoke hostility. Therefore, the integration of forensic linguistics and Searle's illocutionary speech act theory provides a robust theoretical basis for examining hate speech on social media, as it allows researchers to analyze not only the linguistic form of an utterance but also the communicative intention and potential legal consequences embedded within it.

From a pragmatic perspective, hate speech can be categorized as an illocutionary speech act because it is produced with a specific communicative purpose and is intended to influence, attack, intimidate, or alter the attitudes and behavior of others (Christensen, 2019; Fahmi et al., 2025; Oktaviani & Nur, 2022). Illocutionary speech acts function to convey the speaker's intentions through language, making them particularly useful for understanding how hate speech operates in online communication (Oktaviani & Nur, 2022; Siregar et al., 2024; Ubaidillah & Wijana, 2021). Expressions of insult, accusation, ridicule, provocation, and threats are not merely linguistic forms but also social actions performed through language (Clara et al., 2026; Oktaviani & Nur, 2022). Accordingly, the analysis of illocutionary acts enables researchers to identify the pragmatic functions underlying hate speech and to distinguish legitimate criticism from utterances intended to harm, humiliate, or incite hostility toward particular individuals or groups.

Therefore, determining whether an utterance constitutes hate speech requires more than identifying offensive words or expressions. It necessitates an examination of linguistic form, communicative intention, contextual meaning, and potential legal implications through the perspective of forensic linguistics. Such an approach is particularly important in digital environments where harmful meanings are frequently expressed implicitly and strategically. As regulated in Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning the Second Amendment to Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions, linguistic evidence may assist in identifying acts of defamation, insults, threats, and other forms of hate speech that potentially violate legal provisions. Based on this perspective, the present study analyzes hate speech found in the comment section of the X account of the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources of the Republic of Indonesia by employing Searle's theory of illocutionary speech acts within a forensic linguistic framework to identify both the communicative functions and the potential legal violations contained in the comments.

Previous studies on hate speech in social media generally fall into three major strands. The first strand focuses on identifying the linguistic forms and characteristics of hate speech. Studies by Dewiyana et al. (2023), Widyatnyana et al. (2023), and Abdullah et al. (2025) demonstrate that hate speech on social media commonly appears in the forms of insults, defamation, blasphemy, provocation, incitement, and the dissemination of false information. These studies reveal that hate speech functions only as a medium for expressing negative emotions but also as a discursive strategy for influencing public opinion and constructing social or political identities.

The second strand examines hate speech from a forensic linguistic and speech act perspective. Suryani et al. (2021) identified various forms of hate speech directed at celebrities on Instagram, including insults, defamation, and incitement. More recently, Hariyanto (2026) investigated hate speech targeting the Indonesian celebrity Sarwendah on Instagram and found that most hateful comments were realized through expressive illocutionary acts, particularly accusations, insults, and defamatory statements with potential legal implications. The study also emphasized the importance of integrating speech act theory with forensic linguistic analysis to reveal the pragmatic functions underlying hateful expressions.

The third strand highlights the broader social and ethical dimensions of hate speech in digital communication. Paillin et al. (2026), through a critical discourse analysis of hate speech in TikTok comments, demonstrated that hate speech is often constructed implicitly through sarcasm, delegitimization, negative evaluations, and rhetorical strategies rather than direct insults. Their findings suggest that digital platforms function not only as communication spaces but also as arenas where social judgments, power relations, and ideological contestations are reproduced through language.

Although these studies have significantly contributed to understanding hate speech in digital environments, they predominantly examine celebrities, influencers, political candidates, or public figures whose visibility is largely shaped by entertainment or electoral politics. Consequently, hate speech is generally interpreted as a reaction to personal behavior, public image, or political preferences. Much less attention has been paid to hate speech directed at cabinet ministers whose public visibility is closely associated with the formulation and implementation of state policies.

This gap is particularly important in the context of the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) of the Republic of Indonesia. Unlike celebrities or social media influencers, the Minister of ESDM occupies a strategic policy-making position that directly affects public interests through decisions concerning fuel prices, mining governance, energy subsidies, electricity policies, and natural resource management. These policy domains frequently generate public controversy because they involve economic interests, environmental concerns, and social justice issues. Consequently, comments directed at the Minister of ESDM are not merely personal evaluations but often represent public responses to governmental policies. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the language used in such comments reflects the interaction between citizens and state authority, making it a distinct communicative context compared with hate speech directed at celebrities or ordinary public figures.

Another limitation of previous studies is their primary emphasis on categorizing the forms or characteristics of hate speech. While several studies have adopted forensic linguistic approaches, most have stopped at identifying linguistic features and speech acts without systematically examining whether such utterances potentially violate specific legal provisions. The legal dimension of hate speech, particularly its relationship with the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law), remains insufficiently explored. As a result, there is still limited understanding of how particular speech acts may function as linguistic evidence in determining potential legal violations in digital communication.

This study addresses these gaps by examining hate speech in the comment section of the X account of the Indonesian Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources through the combined perspectives of Searle's illocutionary speech act theory and forensic linguistics. Unlike previous studies, this research not only identifies the types and functions of hate speech but also evaluates their potential legal implications under the ITE Law. By focusing on a strategic government official whose online interactions are closely linked to public policy disputes, this study provides a broader understanding of the relationship between language, power, public criticism, and legal accountability in Indonesia's digital public sphere.

The novelty of this study lies in three aspects. First, empirically, it investigates hate speech directed at a cabinet minister responsible for strategic public policies, a context that remains underexplored in previous studies. Second, theoretically, it extends the application of illocutionary speech act theory within forensic linguistics by linking pragmatic functions with legal interpretations of hate speech. Third, practically, it offers a framework for assessing potential violations of the ITE Law through linguistic evidence, thereby contributing to both forensic linguistic scholarship and the development of responsible digital communication practices.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to investigate hate speech in the comment section of the X account of the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) of the Republic of Indonesia. The study focused on comments responding to a post published on 17 September 2025. The post was selected purposively because it generated intensive public reactions related to issues surrounding fuel distribution, the operation of private fuel stations, foreign investment in the energy sector, and public trust in national energy governance. These issues attracted substantial public attention and triggered heated discussions among social media users. Evidence of this context can be observed in comments referring to Shell, private fuel stations, foreign investors, fuel stock restrictions, and allegations concerning Pertamina's fuel management. Consequently, the comment section became a discursive space in which criticism, dissatisfaction, hostility, and hate speech toward the minister were publicly expressed. This socio-political situation constituted an important extralingual context because the production and interpretation of hate speech cannot be separated from the policy controversy that surrounded the post.

The data source consisted of comments posted under the selected post. Data collection was conducted through non-participant observation (*Simak Bebas Libat Cakap/SBLC*) and documentation techniques. The researchers observed the interaction without participating in the discussion and archived the comments through screenshots and digital documentation.

The data selection process was conducted in several stages. First, all comments posted under the selected post were collected. Second, duplicate comments, irrelevant comments, and comments containing only emojis or symbols were excluded. Third, the remaining comments were examined to distinguish objective criticism from hate speech. Objective criticism was defined as comments containing evaluations, disagreements, or policy criticism supported by arguments and not directed toward the minister's personal dignity or identity. In contrast, hate speech was identified through indicators such as insults, humiliation, derogatory labeling, verbal aggression, hostile expressions, intimidation, threats, and statements intended to demean or attack the minister personally. Based on these criteria, 42 comments were identified as containing hate speech and subsequently selected as the research data.

Data analysis was conducted using the distributional method and the extralingual equivalent method. The distributional method was applied to examine linguistic features within the comments, including lexical choices, sentence structures, and expressions indicating hostility, insults, threats, or intimidation. Meanwhile, the extralingual equivalent method was employed to relate linguistic expressions to contextual elements outside language, such as the topic of the minister's post, the socio-political circumstances surrounding the issue, and public reactions to the policy being discussed.

The extralingual equivalent method was applied by relating linguistic expressions in the comments to contextual factors outside language. For example, utterances such as "Shell yg lu susahin stoknya," "sabotase SPBU swasta," and "lu paksa beli di Pertamina" were not interpreted solely as linguistic structures but were analyzed in relation to public perceptions regarding fuel distribution policies, private fuel retailers, and state-owned energy management. Through this procedure, the analysis identified how policy-related dissatisfaction was transformed into personal attacks, insults, threats, and other forms of hate speech directed at the minister.

The analytical procedure consisted of five stages. First, hate speech comments were identified and coded. Second, each comment was classified according to Searle's (1979) categories of illocutionary speech acts, namely assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative acts. Third, linguistic indicators of hate speech were analyzed using the distributional method. Fourth, the communicative intentions and contextual meanings underlying the comments were interpreted through the extralingual equivalent method. Finally, the findings were related to relevant provisions of Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE Law) to identify their potential legal implications.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the findings, a total of 42 instances of hate speech were identified in the comment section of the X account belonging to the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) of the Republic of Indonesia. These data consisted of several types of illocutionary acts, namely assertive, directive, expressive, and commissive acts, as presented in the following table.

Table 1. Types of Illocutionary Acts in Hate Speech within the Comment Section of the X Account of the Indonesian Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources

No	Type of Illocutionary Act	Number of Data	Percentage
1	Assertive	8	18%
2	Directive	9	20%
3	Expressive	27	60%
4	Commissive	1	2%
5	Declarative	0	0%
	Total	42	100%

Table 1 shows an analysis of the types of illocutionary acts in 42 hate speech data found in the comments section of the Indonesian Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources' account X.

¹² Illocutionary acts, according to Searle's theory, encompass various types of speech acts that differ ³ based on the speaker's intended purpose or intent.

Assertive Illocutionary Acts

This type of illocutionary act aims to convey information or statements that function to express something that is considered true or false. In this study, there are eight data points with a percentage of 18% classified as assertive illocutionary acts, namely utterances that express opinions or claims about certain issues without involving requests or commands.

Data 1. *"Semua masyarakat gk ada yg suka ma manusia ini. Dosanya terlalu besar bikin rakyat sengsara. Mau hapus komen. Hapus noh semua gk suka ma lo. Muak banget harus disatroni rumahnya biar sadar."*

Data 1 shows an assertive illocutionary act, which refers to utterances that express what the speaker believes, assumes, or considers to be true. Therefore, the realization of assertive illocution is in the form of statements. The sentence *"Semua masyarakat gk ada yg suka ma manusia ini"* is a claim ⁷ believed by the speaker, @Vino72352, who assumes that all Indonesian citizens do not like the presence of the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources of the Republic of Indonesia. This is further emphasized by the statement *"Dosanya terlalu besar bikin rakyat sengsara,"* which indicates the speaker's belief that the minister has committed significant wrongdoing that has caused public suffering.

Both statements reflect the characteristics of assertive speech acts as proposed by Searle, which function to state opinions, evaluate, and express belief. Thus, the utterances in Data 1 are subjective and cannot be empirically verified in a comprehensive manner.

In addition, the comment also contains an implicit threat. This is indicated by the word *"disatroni,"* an informal form of *"menyatroni,"* meaning to visit or come ¹ suddenly. This expression can be interpreted as a threat and may potentially violate Article 27B of Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 2024 concerning the second amendment to Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions, ¹⁶ which regulates threats and intimidation through electronic media. The criminal sanction is stipulated in Article 45 paragraph (3), with a maximum imprisonment of 12 years and/or a maximum fine of IDR 200 billion.

Data 2. *"selama ini rapat lu cuma bongong ya?! presiden aja nekanin investasi asing, bahkan pemerintah pajak aja udh kasih fasilitas banyak buat investor asing bahkan investor dalam negeri. tapi lu malah nyusahin para investor asing, contohnya shell yg lu susahin stoknya. menteri ga becus!!."*

Data 2 contains assertive illocutionary acts in the form of statements. The utterance *"Selama rapat lu cuma bongong ya?!"* reflects the speaker's belief that the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources does not understand or properly engage in discussions. The speaker further claims that the minister's policies contradict the president's directive to encourage foreign investment, thereby causing difficulties for investors. Such utterances indicate criticism based on the speaker's perceived truth regarding governmental performance and policy implementation, particularly in relation to investment management and energy regulation. However, the utterance also potentially constitutes defamation, as it contains expressions that attack the dignity and reputation of a public official. The language used does not merely reflect criticism but also conveys ²⁰ a derogatory tone expressed publicly in digital space. Therefore, this utterance may fall under Article 27A of Law Number ¹⁵ of 2024 concerning defamation in electronic information and transactions. The criminal sanction is regulated in Article 45 paragraph (1), with a maximum imprisonment of 6 years and/or a maximum fine of IDR 1 billion.

Data 3. *"Eh bahlul.. IQ lu berapa si? Kok bisa lu kepikiran sabotase SPBU Swasta? Tolong lah.. Oonnya jangan kelewatan.. Lu dzolimin ratusan juta rakyat Indonesia.. Lu paksa beli di Pertamina yang belum lama ini OPLOS bahan bakarnya.. Dan rakyat Indonesia udah pake itu bertahun2..."*

The ¹⁹ utterance in this comment belongs to assertive illocutionary acts. The speaker strongly criticizes the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources through accusations, insults, and evaluative statements. The utterance *"lu dzolimin ratusan juta rakyat Indonesia"* and *"Pertamina yang belum*

lama ini OPLOS bahan bakarnya” reflect the speaker’s perceived truth and belief regarding governmental actions that are considered harmful to the public.

Following Searle’s theory, assertive speech acts express propositions that are believed to be true by the speaker. In this case, the speaker expresses anger and distrust toward the minister based on perceived facts.

The utterance is directed personally and contains emotionally charged language, making it non-neutral and non-argumentative. It also constitutes hate speech and defamation as it attacks an individual with negative and accusatory expressions that may harm reputation. As it is disseminated through social media, it potentially violates electronic information law. Therefore, the utterance is associated with Article 27A of Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning defamation in electronic information and transactions.

Directive Illocutionary Acts

Directive illocutionary acts are utterances intended to request, command, or instruct others to perform a certain action. In the dataset, there are nine data points with a percentage of 20% categorized as directive illocutionary acts, indicating that a considerable portion of hate speech contains requests, commands, or encouragement for others to act in a specific way.

Data 4. *“Kalau gabisa kerja mending bunuh diri aja lo semua.”*

The utterance *“mending bunuh diri aja lo semua”* clearly indicates a directive illocutionary act as it explicitly instructs or commands the addressee, in this case referring to public officials such as the Minister of Trade and the President of the Republic of Indonesia, to commit suicide. According to Searle, directive speech acts are utterances intended to command, request, or encourage the hearer to perform an action desired by the speaker.

The utterance by user @seolbeom reflects an implicit expectation that public officials who are perceived as incapable of performing their duties should resign or stop their actions. This is reinforced by the clause *“Kalau gabisa kerja,”* which expresses anger or disappointment toward the perceived situation.

This utterance may potentially violate Article 27B of Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 2024 concerning the second amendment to Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions regarding threats and intimidation. The statement is considered dangerous as it may induce psychological pressure, fear, and mental distress. Consequently, it may be interpreted as incitement leading to self-harm. The applicable criminal sanction includes a maximum imprisonment of 12 years and/or a maximum fine of IDR 200 billion.

Data 5. *“Woyyy hytamm mending lu mundur aja gk ush jdi pejabat rakyat lu kinerja lu aja kek kontoll.”*

The utterance in Data 5 demonstrates both expressive and directive illocutionary acts. The phrase *“Mending lu mundur aja gk ush jdi pejabat rakyat”* represents a directive act in the form of a command or instruction for the official to resign from their position. Meanwhile, the expressions *“Hytamm”* and *“kontolll”* function as expressive acts, indicating anger and insult.

The comment posted by @goskap123 reflects strong dissatisfaction with the performance of the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, accompanied by a demand for resignation. The use of both directive and expressive speech acts highlights that the speaker not only criticizes but also verbally attacks the target by using derogatory language.

This utterance may potentially violate Article 27A of Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning defamation in electronic information and transactions. The criminal sanction for this offense is a maximum imprisonment of 6 years and/or a maximum fine of IDR 1 billion, as the utterance contains insulting expressions directed at an individual in a public digital space.

Data 6. *“gue tuntutan lu di hadapan Tuhan, ... di dunia pun gue berdoa semoga azab lu disegerakan untuk lu dan anak cucu lu.”*

The utterance in this comment belongs to directive illocutionary acts. The speaker expresses statements such as “*gue tuntutan lu di hadapan Tuhan*” and “*gue berdoa semoga azab lu disegerakan untuk lu dan anak cucu lu.*” Linguistically, these utterances not only express emotional outbursts but also indicate an expectation that a certain consequence will occur to the target through a higher entity, namely God.

According to Searle’s theory, directive speech acts include requests, wishes, curses, or utterances that aim to influence actions through another party. In this case, although the speaker does not directly act upon the target, the utterance directs a request to God to carry out a negative consequence.

The utterance reflects the speaker’s desire for future punishment and suffering directed at the target. Although not a direct threat, it constitutes a form of curse and indirect intimidation. It expresses hostility and resentment toward the target, extending even to their descendants.

From a legal perspective, this utterance may potentially fall under Article 27A of Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning defamation and electronic-based threats, as it contains elements of insult and intimidation transmitted through electronic media.

Expressive Illocutionary Acts

Expressive illocutionary acts are used to express feelings, emotions, or psychological reactions toward a situation or agent. Based on Table 1, 27 data points (60%) are categorized as expressive utterances, indicating that the majority of hate speech is in the form of emotional expressions or dissatisfaction toward public officials or certain situations.

Data 7. “bahlul kontrol gausa jadi menteri, jadi supir angkot aja.”

The utterance in Data 7 demonstrates expressive illocutionary acts. The word “*bahlul*,” which in Indonesian colloquial usage refers to stupidity, is employed by user @KurniawanE7137 to express anger and dislike toward the target. This is further reinforced by the phrase “*gausa jadi menteri, jadi supir angkot aja*,” which functions as an insult and implies social degradation.

The comparison between the position of a minister and a minibus driver indicates a social hierarchy, where the speaker considers a lower-status occupation more appropriate for the target. Thus, the utterance contains derogatory and humiliating expressions.

The word “*kontrol*” is also a vulgar insult used to express strong emotional anger. Overall, the utterance contains defamation and insult, and may potentially violate Article 27A of Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 2024 concerning the second amendment to Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions, with a maximum penalty of 6 years imprisonment and/or a fine of IDR 1 billion.

Data 8. “Heh babi ireng jelek nyusahin rakyat mending lu lengser dah dari jabatan lu Indonesia kacau gara² orng jelek item dekil kyak lu.”

The utterance in Data 8 contains expressive, directive, and assertive illocutionary acts. The expressive component is reflected in phrases such as “*babi ireng jelek*” and “*orng jelek item dekil*,” which express anger, dislike, and contempt. These expressions are used to insult and degrade the target.

The directive act is found in the phrase “*mending lu lengser dah dari jabatan lu*,” which functions as a command for the official to resign from their position. Meanwhile, the assertive act appears in the statement “*Indonesia kacau gara² orng jelek item dekil kyak lu*,” which reflects the speaker’s belief that the target is responsible for national disorder.

According to Searle’s theory, expressive acts reflect the speaker’s psychological state. In this case, the utterance conveys strong negative emotions, including anger and contempt toward the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources of the Republic of Indonesia.

The utterance constitutes defamation and insult, as it contains derogatory remarks, physical degradation, and accusations that damage the target’s reputation in public space. Therefore, it may violate Article 27A of Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning defamation in electronic information and transactions.

Data 9. “*bacot lu alien setengah botak, mati ae Sono, muak gw liat jidat Segede dosa lu itu.*”

The utterance in Data 9 is classified as an expressive illocutionary act containing insult and hate speech. Expressions such as “*bacot lu alien setengah botak,*” “*mati ae sono,*” and “*muak gw liat jidat segede dosa lu itu*” are used to express disgust, anger, and personal resentment toward the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources.

According to Searle, expressive acts reflect the psychological condition of the speaker. This utterance clearly demonstrates a highly negative emotional state directed at a public official.

Although the phrase “*mati ae sono*” is not a literal command, it functions as an exaggerated emotional expression of hatred and resentment. The utterance does not contain SARA elements but focuses on personal attacks. From a forensic linguistic perspective, it constitutes hate speech in the form of personal insult disseminated through social media.

Therefore, the utterance may violate Article 27A of Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning defamation in electronic information and transactions, as it contains insult directed at an individual through electronic media.

Data 10. “*udh hitam, dekil, ga guna lagi, nyusahin hidup orang, goblin hitam. bro kapan mau ke kubur bro. hidup lu nyusahin rakyat terus. emg anak babi engkau.*”

The utterance in Data 10 is categorized as an expressive illocutionary act directed at a public official, namely the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources. The speaker uses a series of derogatory expressions such as “*dekil,*” “*ga guna,*” “*goblin hitam,*” and “*anak babi.*”

According to Searle’s theory, this utterance is expressive in nature because it reflects negative psychological attitudes such as hatred and insult. The intention is to humiliate and degrade the dignity of the target in public discourse.

The utterance does not function as a directive or assertive statement but rather as an emotional release of hatred. The repeated use of derogatory diction strengthens its expressive intensity and indicates hostility toward the target.

Thus, the utterance constitutes defamation and insult, which may potentially violate Article 27A of Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning defamation in electronic information and transactions.

Data 11. “*HEH MANUSIA IBLIS, lo gak ada otak ya? Gara² lo YA... orang² sekarang jadi gak punya pekerjaan, emang dasar lo ya mentri TOLOL OTAK UDANG, UDAH BURUK RUPA, BURUK JUGA KELAKUANNYA. AMIT AMIT NAJIS GUA HUUEEEKKK CUIIIHH 🤢 DASAR BURUK RUPA.*”

The utterance in Data 11 belongs to expressive illocutionary acts containing insults and verbal abuse. The speaker expresses strong anger and hatred, as reflected in phrases such as “*manusia iblis,*” “*tolol otak udang,*” and “*dasar buruk rupa.*”

According to Searle, expressive acts are used to convey the speaker’s psychological state. In this case, the utterance reflects extreme negative emotions directed toward the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources.

The utterance does not contain informational or directive content but is purely an emotional outburst. The use of highly vulgar and exaggerated diction intensifies the expressive force and demonstrates hostility toward the target.

Therefore, the utterance constitutes personal insult and defamation disseminated through social media, and may potentially violate Article 27A of Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning electronic defamation.

Commissive Illocutionary Acts

Commissive illocutionary acts function to express the speaker’s commitment or intention to perform a future action. Based on Table 1, only one data point (2%) is categorized as a commissive act, indicating that very few hate speech utterances contain promises or commitments to act in the future.

Data 12. “*Lu mau reshuffle, apa mundur sendiri, apaa rumah lu di massa rakyat?*”

The utterance in Data 12 is categorized as a commissive illocutionary act. The phrase “*Lu mau reshuffle, apa mundur sendiri*” functions as a conditional directive, while the subsequent expression “*apa rumah lu di massa rakyat?*” intensifies the utterance into a form of threat.

According to Searle’s theory, commissive speech acts involve the speaker’s commitment to a future action. However, in this context, the utterance reflects an implied commitment to collective action in the form of mass mobilization if the addressee does not comply with the implied demands.

The utterance is not merely informational or evaluative but functions as a means of coercion and pressure directed toward the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources of the Republic of Indonesia. It implicitly threatens unrest or mass action targeting the official’s residence.

Thus, the utterance constitutes intimidation and threat directed at an individual rather than a group. Since it is delivered through social media, it may potentially violate Article 27B of Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 2024 concerning the second amendment to Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions, which regulates threats, intimidation, or coercion via electronic media.

Declarative Illocutionary Acts

No data were found in the declarative category, indicating that none of the hate speech utterances function to directly bring about institutional changes, declarations, or status transformations.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that social media has become a dynamic platform for Indonesian society to express opinions, emotions, anger, and disappointment. As explained by Amiruddin et al. (2024), social media functions as a global stage where individuals can share stories, support, and criticism toward existing authorities. Criticism expressed on social media is influenced by several factors, including differences in opinion, emotional expression, personal dislike, and environmental influences (Prasetyo et al., 2024). This finding confirms that hate speech disseminated through social media is not merely intended for entertainment or produced by coincidence; rather, it often contains particular intentions and objectives, such as degrading an individual’s dignity, causing harm, or provoking the public (Purnama et al., 2024). From a pragmatic perspective, hate speech should not be viewed solely as offensive language, but as a form of social action that performs specific communicative and ideological functions within digital environments. Pragmatic approaches emphasize that language is used to accomplish social goals and negotiate relationships rather than merely convey information (Kádár & Haugh, 2013). In this sense, hate speech functions as a discursive practice through which speakers express hostility, construct group identities, legitimize ideological positions, and reinforce social boundaries (Määttä, 2023). Within digital platforms, such expressions operate not only as acts of insult or emotional release but also as strategic communicative actions that reproduce power relations and mobilize collective attitudes toward targeted groups (Assimakopoulos et al., 2017; Parekh, 2006). Recent scholarship increasingly views hate speech as a strategic discursive practice through which social identities are constructed, ideological boundaries are maintained, and distinctions between in-groups and out-groups are reinforced within digital public spheres. Rather than functioning solely as expressions of hostility, hate speech contributes to the reproduction of social polarization and the normalization of exclusionary ideologies across online communities (Kentmen-Cin, 2025; Nasution et al., 2026; Utami et al., 2025).

Several findings in this study reveal forms of insult manifested through dehumanization, such as equating individuals with animals, as well as through abusive expressions targeting physical appearance. These findings are consistent with previous studies, which have shown that dehumanizing language and appearance-based insults are commonly employed as linguistic strategies to degrade an individual’s dignity, undermine their social value, and express hostility toward the target (Enock & Over, 2023; Sajarwa et al., 2026; Susilowati et al., 2026). These hate speech texts carry specific intentions, including the release of emotions such as anger, hatred, or annoyance. In many cases, such expressions function not only to demean but also to attack an individual’s dignity and honor. Hayati et al. (2025) state that insults constitute one form of hate speech aimed at humiliating, degrading, or disparaging individuals through attacks on physical aspects or comparisons with animals. Similar patterns have been identified in previous studies of hate speech on social media, where users employed derogatory labels such as “*stupid*,” “*pig*,” “*dog*,” and other pejorative expressions to humiliate,

ridicule, and diminish the social standing of targeted individuals (A. D. Putri et al., 2020). These expressions represent forms of dehumanization because they reduce the target to negative stereotypes or animalistic attributes, thereby denying their dignity and social worth. Previous studies have demonstrated that dehumanizing language functions as a discursive strategy that weakens empathy toward the target, normalizes hostility, and legitimizes further verbal aggression and social exclusion (Alrefaee & Pasaribu, 2025; Sajarwa et al., 2026; Suryanovika & Affini, 2023; Susilowati et al., 2026).

Another prominent finding is hate speech characterized by commands, demands, and expectations directed toward public figures. Such utterances are intended to influence interlocutors to perform particular actions such as resigning from office or accepting certain consequences. In line with the theory proposed by Searle (1979), directive speech acts function to influence the behavior of interlocutors. However, within the context of hate speech, this function shifts into a means of intimidation. Several data examples contain commands and prayers with threatening nuances that may trigger psychological pressure. This finding is consistent with Noviyanti et al. (2022), who argue that hate speech in the form of threats possesses a strong provocative force and may lead to legal consequences. Ubaidillah and Wijana (2021) further explain that directive hate speech is not merely intended to convey information but to encourage compliance, incite hostility, dismantle the identity of the targeted party, or even promote the exclusion of particular groups from public life. Consequently, directive hate speech possesses a stronger social impact because it seeks to transform emotions and prejudices into concrete social actions.

Furthermore, this study also identified hate speech characterized by statements, accusations, and judgments that are perceived by speakers as truthful despite being highly subjective. Expressions claiming that public figures are “*menyengsarakan rakyat* [oppressing the people],” for instance, demonstrate attempts by speakers to frame personal opinions as universally accepted facts. This finding supports the study conducted by Widyatnyati et al. (2023), which emphasizes that hate speech in the form of declarative statements is frequently used to shape public opinion and potentially damage the reputation of targeted figures. Such findings align with Speech Act Theory, which explains that assertive utterances may function as instruments for presenting subjective evaluations as objective realities. In political discourse, these utterances contribute to the construction of ideological narratives and influence public perceptions regarding the legitimacy of public officials (Rajabul et al., 2026).

Lastly, the least frequent finding concerns hate speech containing threats. Ginoga et al. (2024) explain that threats are associated with the use of language intended to pressure or intimidate others. The findings of this study demonstrate forms of intimidation implying the possibility of violence involving groups or masses. Threats within hate speech texts function not only as expressions of anger but also as attempts to exert psychological pressure. Saha (as cited in Amelia et al., 2023) explains that the psychological impacts of hate speech include negative emotions such as anger, sadness, stress, fear, discomfort, and low self-confidence, all of which may lead to psychological distress. Moreover, Irawan (as cited in Amelia et al., 2023) states that victims of hate speech, particularly threats, may experience short-term effects such as dizziness and hypertension, while more severe consequences may include suicidal tendencies. From a forensic linguistic perspective, these threats are particularly significant because they demonstrate how language can function as a tool of intimidation capable of producing measurable psychological harm and potentially triggering real-world consequences (Fadhilrohman et al., 2024).

The most significant finding of this study is the dominance of expressive illocutionary speech acts. This result suggests that hate speech on the social media platform X primarily functions as a medium for expressing emotions rather than merely conveying information or proposing actions. However, the predominance of expressive speech acts should not be interpreted solely as spontaneous emotional catharsis. Rather, it reflects broader socio-psychological dynamics within contemporary digital communication. The relative anonymity of social media, the absence of direct face-to-face interaction, and algorithmic systems that reward emotionally charged content create conditions that encourage users to express anger, disappointment, and hostility more openly. Research on hate speech directed at Gus Miftah similarly found that expressive speech acts accounted for approximately 60% of all hate speech data, while most hateful comments originated from anonymous accounts and received higher engagement than neutral comments (Fahmi et al., 2025).

This phenomenon can be interpreted through the concept of *affective publics* proposed by Papacharissi (2015), which suggests that online communities are often organized around shared

emotions and sentiments rather than purely rational deliberation. In digital environments, collective feelings such as anger, empathy, hope, or outrage function as connective forces that mobilize participation, shape public discourse, and foster a sense of community among users. Emotional expressions of anger, frustration, and resentment become collective resources through which users establish solidarity with like-minded individuals while positioning public officials as symbolic representations of broader social grievances. Therefore, expressive hate speech functions not only as a form of personal emotional release but also as a mechanism for constructing collective identities and reinforcing ideological boundaries. Hate speech is often employed to build group identity, strengthen a sense of belonging, and distinguish the in-group from perceived out-groups. In this regard, hate speech serves to “shield and siege identity” by protecting and simultaneously restricting group identity through the creation of social and ideological boundaries (Korichi & Ghounane, 2023). Furthermore, hate speech does not merely express negative emotions; it operates within specific ideological frameworks that legitimize hostility toward other groups. Through the repeated use of derogatory language, stereotypes, and exclusionary narratives, hate speech becomes a vehicle for the reproduction of ideology and the reinforcement of collective identity among its speakers (Määttä, 2023). Consequently, expressions of hate in digital spaces should be understood not simply as manifestations of individual emotions, but also as collective ideological practices that foster group solidarity and maintain symbolic boundaries between “us” and “them” (Korichi & Ghounane, 2023; Määttä, 2023). Recent studies on political hate speech in Indonesia similarly conclude that emotionally charged language serves as a strategic political instrument that intensifies polarization and reshapes perceptions of political legitimacy in digital public spaces (Rajabul et al., 2026).

This interpretation carries important implications for forensic linguistics. The dominance of expressive speech acts suggests that hate speech directed toward public officials cannot always be dismissed as mere emotional outbursts. Repeated acts of ridicule, humiliation, dehumanization, and symbolic attack may gradually contribute to the delegitimization of public figures by portraying them as incompetent, immoral, or unworthy of public trust. In this sense, expressive hate speech performs a dual function: it serves as a vehicle for emotional catharsis while simultaneously operating as a discursive strategy of symbolic delegitimization. This finding is consistent with critical pragmatic studies showing that hate speech functions through the reproduction of negative stereotypes, prejudice, and hostility that may damage social cohesion and public trust (Fadhurrohman et al., 2024).

Therefore, this study confirms that hate speech directed toward public figures on social media constitutes not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a social, political, and legal issue. The findings reinforce previous studies conducted by Abdullah et al. (2025), Putri et al. (2024), Widyatnyana et al. (2023), Noviyanti et al. (2022), and Suryani et al. (2021), which explain that hate speech on social media aimed at attacking an individual's honor and reputation may potentially violate the Indonesian Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law) as well as the Criminal Code (KUHP). Furthermore, the findings support contemporary cyber-pragmatic perspectives that view online hate speech as a performative social practice through which language is used not only to express emotions but also to construct social realities, influence public perception, and contest political legitimacy within Indonesia's digital public sphere.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, comments posted on the X account of the Indonesian Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources contain speech acts that potentially violate legal provisions regulated under the Indonesian Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law). These comments predominantly employ expressive illocutionary speech acts, indicating that netizens intentionally express feelings or attitudes such as disappointment, anger, and frustration toward the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources. In contrast, declarative illocutionary speech acts were not identified in the comments analyzed on the X social media platform. Most comments posted by netizens were associated with defamation, insults, and incitement against others. Therefore, this study demonstrates the interdisciplinary relationship between forensic linguistics and pragmatics within a legal perspective. Furthermore, the findings provide an understanding that any content posted on social media, particularly negative or hate-related comments, may carry potential legal consequences. The findings of this study go beyond linguistic analysis, contributing to discussions on digital ethics, online communication, and legal awareness in social media. It reveals that hate speech on social media reflects

both individual emotions and broader social tensions, impacting public perception, social harmony, and psychological well-being. In forensic linguistics, these findings can help identify linguistic indicators of hate speech in digital spaces and inform future research on language, social behavior, and cyber law enforcement. Recommendations include raising awareness among social media users about ethical communication and legal consequences, enhancing digital literacy programs in schools and government agencies, and encouraging law enforcement to apply forensic linguistics in evaluating hate speech. Future research should explore hate speech across various platforms and sociopolitical contexts for more comprehensive insights. In conclusion, hate speech on social media is both a linguistic and social-legal issue, with significant implications for individuals and society. Given the increasing use of social media, it is crucial to promote ethical communication, digital responsibility, and legal boundaries. Collaborative efforts from society, educational institutions, researchers, and legal authorities are key to fostering a healthier digital communication environment.

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