

Trends in Speech Act Research on Facebook, Instagram, and X: A Literature Review

Riza Gilang Ernawati¹, Nani Solihati^{2*}, Roissatunnisa Assholihah³, Imam Zubaidi⁴, Suryani⁵

Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA¹²³⁴⁵

Corresponding email : nani_solihati@uhamka.ac.id

Abstract: The use of Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter) has contributed to the development of pragmatic research, particularly studies on speech acts. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to analyze trends in speech act research on the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, and X during the period 2024–2025. The findings indicate that speech act research on social media in 2024–2025 is dominated by the platform X (47%), followed by Instagram (30%), and Facebook (23%). The most frequently used objects of analysis representing digital interaction are tweets or posts (59.26%) and comment sections (29.63%). In addition, illocutionary speech acts constitute the most frequently studied focus. These studies generally examine political communication/campaigns, local product marketing, the dissemination of issues or social criticism, and users' emotional expression on social media. Thus, research trends on speech acts in social media during the 2024–2025 period tend to focus on the analysis of illocutionary speech acts in various digital communication contexts, with tweets, posts, and comments as the primary objects of study, predominantly on the X, Instagram, and Facebook platforms.

Keywords: *speech acts, social media, literature review, research trends*

INTRODUCTION

The development of social media has transformed public communication practices from conventional patterns into digital communication that takes place rapidly, openly, and interactively. Users no longer act merely as recipients of information, but also as producers of information who actively construct discourse through various forms of speech. In this context, Facebook, Instagram, and X have become platforms that allow users to express opinions, provide feedback, build self-image, influence others, and participate in various social, cultural, economic, and political issues. These activities demonstrate that the use of language on social media serves not only to convey information but also to perform certain actions that have communicative purposes.

Although research on speech acts on social media continues to increase, most studies remain oriented toward the analysis of specific cases, such as public figure accounts, institutional accounts, or particular communication events. Research generally focuses on identifying types of speech acts and illocutionary functions within a single, specific object of study. As a result, not many studies have provided a comprehensive overview of the development of speech act research across various social media platforms, especially Facebook, Instagram, and X, within a specific period. Furthermore, there

are differences in communication characteristics on each platform that potentially influence the use of speech acts. Facebook tends to provide longer and more argumentative discussion spaces. Instagram highlights multimodal communication that blends visual and verbal elements. Meanwhile, X emphasizes short, fast, and text-based communication that is responsive to current issues. These differences in characteristics underscore the importance of research mapping to understand trends in objects of study, the types of speech acts investigated, and the developmental direction of research on each platform.

Based on an initial review of various publications from 2024–2025, it is evident that the number of speech act studies on Instagram and X has experienced a significant increase, whereas research on Facebook remains relatively scarce. However, until now, studies that specifically identify speech act research trends across these three platforms within a single, integrated analytical framework remain limited. This condition indicates a research gap that needs to be filled through a systematic literature review.

Unlike previous studies that focused on analyzing speech acts within a single account or a specific case, this study aims to map speech act research trends on Facebook, Instagram, and X during the 2024–2025 period. This study encompasses the identification of research themes, objects of study, the dominant types of speech acts investigated, the methodological approaches used, as well as remaining open research opportunities. Accordingly, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the development of speech act studies in digital communication, while serving as a foundation for the future advancement of pragmatic research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of the function of actions in language use is the primary focus of pragmatics, particularly the speech act theory developed by John R. Searle. This theory views that every utterance contains an action performed by the speaker to achieve a specific intent. Searle classifies speech acts into five main categories: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. In digital communication, these various forms of speech acts manifest in posts, comments, captions, replies, and tweets produced by social media users. Therefore, social media provides a vast space to examine how language is used as an instrument of social action within a digital environment.

The rising use of social media has also driven the development of speech act research in recent years. Various studies show that social media has become an important object of pragmatic study because it is capable of representing contemporary public communication practices. Research by (Sajida et al., 2024) regarding illocutionary speech acts in tweets from Anies Baswedan's X account found a dominance of assertive and directive speech acts used to convey political ideas, build image, and influence the audience. These findings demonstrate that speech acts play an important role in political communication strategies within the digital sphere.

On the Instagram platform, research by (Mayyola, 2023) showed that posts on the @Sandiuno Instagram account were dominated by directive, expressive, and representative speech acts, which serve to build interaction with followers and convey social messages to the public. The results of this study reveal that Instagram is not only a medium for sharing visual content, but also a means of persuasive communication that utilizes language as a tool to influence audiences. Other studies also indicate that speech acts on social media are no longer limited to interpersonal communication.

Speech acts are utilized across various contexts, such as political communication, digital marketing, education, social campaigns, religious communication, to the formation of public opinion. This development marks an expansion in the scope of pragmatic studies from offline communication toward more complex and dynamic digital communication.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to map research trends on speech acts in social media, specifically Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter), during the 2024-2025 period. A literature review was chosen because this study does not collect primary data from these social media platforms; instead, it conducts an in-depth analysis of various scholarly sources by examining 30 relevant studies related to speech acts on these social media platforms within the specified period. The process of searching and collecting journals was carried out with the assistance of the Publish or Perish (PoP) software on the Google Scholar database. The inclusion criteria for the selected journals required articles published within the 2024-2025 range that had undergone a selection process to ensure their alignment with the topic. This literature review enables the researcher to obtain a comprehensive overview regarding speech act research on social media and to construct a scholarly synthesis concerning the trends or dynamics of research related to speech acts on Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter).

The literature review method is a critical and systematic research design that involves the process of identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing scholarly works produced by previous researchers. In its execution, this study follows the stages of a literature review. These include: 1) problem formulation, by determining a specific topic and formulating clear research questions to establish inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature search; 2) comprehensive literature search using formal scholarly journals; 3) data evaluation, where the collected literature is screened by analyzing methodological quality, validity, and relevance to the topic so that it is qualified to be included in the research analysis; 4) data analysis and interpretation of the selected literature by performing a synthesis, which involves breaking down information, identifying patterns, recognizing gaps, and organizing them chronologically and topically, rather than merely summarizing abstract contents; and 5) presentation of results by compiling a systematic report (Booth, A, 2025).

The research subject consists of scholarly documents relevant to the topic, specifically speech act research on social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter) during the 2024-2025 period. The research population comprises journal articles, along with books as additional references. From this population, a literature sample was obtained based on inclusion criteria, namely studies in pragmatics focusing on speech acts on Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter), published in journals, and relevant to the topic within the 2024-2025 period. The data collection technique was conducted using documentation techniques, which involved gathering various scholarly publications that matched the research criteria and topic. The researcher used several keywords to facilitate the search, such as “speech acts on Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter),” “pragmatic study,” and set the search timeframe to the 2024-2025 period.

The research instrument in this literature review is a journal data table used to record the identity of the literature, such as title, author, year, and platform, as well as the method, theory, and main findings. This instrument helps the researcher maintain consistency throughout the analysis process and minimize bias in interpretation. Following this, data analysis was performed using content analysis techniques to interpret and synthesize each piece of information contained in the selected literature. The analysis steps include a comprehensive reading of each piece of literature, identifying main topics related to speech acts on social media, classifying findings into categories, and compiling a comprehensive synthesis. Through the results of this analysis, a systematic overview of speech act research trends on social media within the 2024-2025 timeframe is obtained. With this methodology, the study is expected to provide an academic contribution in the form of a comprehensive literature mapping, uncovering gaps from previous research, enriching findings related to pragmatic studies on social media, and offering recommendations to develop pragmatic research on a broader scale.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Based on the collection and selection of literature published between 2024 and 2025, 30 research articles addressing speech acts on the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter) were identified. The studies employed a pragmatic approach, utilizing speech act theories proposed by Searle, Austin, and Leech, as well as other pragmatic theories. Among the analyzed articles, X (Twitter) was the subject of 14 studies, making it the most frequently studied platform. Meanwhile, there were 9 articles focusing on Instagram and 7 on Facebook. Additionally, some studies examined combinations of other platforms, such as YouTube and TikTok.

Distribution of Research by Platform

Platform	Number of Articles	Persentase
X (Twitter)	14	47%
Instagram	9	30%
Facebook	7	23%
amount	30	100%

Data tersebut menunjukkan bahwa X (Twitter) masih menjadi ruang digital yang paling banyak dilirik bagi peneliti dengan kajian pragmatik. Karakteristik platform yang berbasis teks dan diskusi publik memungkinkan analisis tindak tutur dilakukan secara komprehensif dibandingkan platform lain yang lebih berorientasi visual.

Distribusi Berdasarkan Objek Penelitian

Research Object	Number of Articles	Persentase
Comment section	8	29,63%

Tweets and/or posts	16	59,26%
Meme	1	3,70%
Apology video	1	3,70%
Reels video	1	3,70%
amount	27	100%

The data indicate that the primary subjects of analysis in pragmatic studies—across social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter)—are posts (comprising images and captions) and tweets (text-based content). The remaining content consists of memes or videos.

Regarding research themes, four key trends have emerged during the 2024–2025 period, as outlined below.

No.	Research Theme	Dominant Platform
1.	Speech acts in political communication/campaigning	X
2.	Expressive speech acts in the comments section	X and Instagram
3.	Social criticism and public issues	X, Instagram, and Facebook
4.	Analysis of offensive language and digital speech	Instagram and X
5.	Speech acts and politeness	Facebook
6.	Focus on the realm of social media communication.	Facebook

The results of the study also indicate that the most widely used research method is descriptive qualitative with documentation, observation, and note-taking techniques. Furthermore, most of the studies focus on identifying the types of speech acts and communicative functions that emerge in their interactions within those social media platforms. The most extensively researched type of speech act is the illocutionary speech act, specifically the assertive, directive, and expressive categories. Research on Instagram shows that user comments contain many expressive speech acts in the form of criticism, appreciation, and even sarcasm. Assertive speech acts also dominate the research on the X platform, which is further enriched by directive speech acts, where both categories are utilized to convey opinions, information, and persuasion regarding various issues, especially political ones.

DISCUSSION

The Dominance of Illocutionary Speech Acts in Social Media Research

In pragmatic studies, speech acts are a theme that researchers never fail to choose as a research topic, whether in texts, broadcasts, or social media as the selected object of study. This article is no exception. The researcher screened dozens of journals and found that speech acts were the most widely researched theme, which is why this article focuses solely on speech acts, particularly

on social media. More specifically, the journal findings reveal that illocutionary speech acts became the most extensively examined theme throughout 2024-2025 on Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter). In the context of social media, illocutionary speech acts are employed for purposes such as conveying information, criticism, invitations, branding, and influencing public opinion. The following discussion elaborates on the use of illocutionary speech acts on political accounts and product promotion accounts that utilize these speech acts as an effective communication strategy to achieve specific goals.

Illocutionary speech acts were dominantly researched by targeting posts during campaign periods, such as in the study by (Sajida et al., 2024), which examined the X account of Presidential Candidate Number 1, Anies Baswedan, from September 2023 to February 2024. That study identified illocutionary speech acts spanning four categories, namely assertive, expressive, commissive, and directive, with assertive speech acts being the most dominant. The remaining types were expressive illocutionary speech acts in the form of thanking, congratulating, and praising; commissive illocutionary speech acts in the form of promising; and directive illocutionary speech acts in the form of questioning, inviting, and requesting. This aligns with the study by (Ardini et al., 2024), which examined illocutionary speech acts in tweets from Gibran's account during the campaign period. That study yielded 7 assertive utterances, 5 directive utterances, 4 expressive utterances, 6 commissive utterances, and 4 directive utterances. However, it did not delineate the categories of each utterance as comprehensively as the study by (Sajida et al., 2024).

In addition to presidential and vice-presidential candidates who actively use social media for campaigning, political parties have also kept pace, such as the Gerindra Party, which endorsed Prabowo-Gibran as the presidential and vice-presidential candidate pair. A study by (Salsabilla et al., 2025) conducted from March to April 2024 discovered at least 44 types of illocutionary speech acts with categories just as specific as Sajida's (2024) study, but with the addition of several forms and subcategories, including directives in the form of suggesting, commissives in the form of offering, and expressives in the form of laughing, grieving, hoping, and laziness. Furthermore, there is also a study by (Palupi, 2025) that conducted research on "buzzer 02," specifically the X account @PartaiSocmed, regarding the illocutionary speech acts in each of its tweets. That study produced results similar to previous studies regarding campaign periods. However, in this study, there was an addition of the declarative illocutionary speech act function, although assertive utterances remained the most frequently found, followed by expressive and directive utterances. This study leaned more toward depicting the function of illocutionary speech acts, where, as a buzzer, the account conveyed more reports and complaints regarding injustices in the campaign carried out by competing candidate pairs.

Illocutionary speech acts do not only emerge as a research theme by targeting politics as the main issue during campaign periods. Another study by (Febriani, 2025) conducted research with local product advertisements as the object of study. That study concluded that illocutionary speech acts can be utilized to drive consumer action through invitations, gentle commands, or statements that highlight product advantages. The research demonstrates that social media can be utilized as an effective marketing medium. However, it requires the preparation of specific linguistic strategies to create a favorable communicative effect regarding digital marketing. A similar finding is found in the study by Hibatullah (2024), which analyzed posts on X aimed at promoting K-Pop merchandise from the account @sellkpopfess. That study showed that the forms and functions of illocutionary speech

acts in promoting goods can employ both direct literal and non-literal strategies. In addition, it also serves a competitive function that is engaging, as well as fostering cooperation among sellers due to shared interests.

Other categories of illocutionary speech acts were also found in the study on the Instagram account @taulebih.id (Nafi et al., 2025). That study found that representative speech acts dominated the social media account in the form of statements, reports, and explanations of information to its followers. Furthermore, this aligns with the study by (Sari et al., 2025) that targeted the account of a famous motivator of his time, Mario Teguh. That study stated that the dominant category of illocutionary speech acts was the directive form, such as advice and invitations. This corresponds with the background of the account owner acting as a motivator. It indicates that illocutionary speech acts not only make the audience understand what someone is actually saying, but also what is actually expected or intended to be done through their words. Directive speech acts were also the most frequent finding in a study on the comment section of the KPU_RI social media account (Yuliawan & Riau, 2024). The directive forms in that study included requesting, inviting, suggesting, and urging, which were performed by netizens in comments on the account's posts. Observing the situation throughout 2024, which was still closely tied to the campaign period, this serves as evidence that the public, as political targets, also frequently employ illocutionary utterances, particularly directives. Given the controversies at that time, the directive utterances of netizens showed that they expected the KPU, as a state institution, to constantly remain autonomous and independent.

Research on Instagram focuses more on identifying the types and functions of illocutionary speech acts within posts and comment sections. Meanwhile, research on Facebook tends to link the use of speech acts with aspects of linguistic politeness. Studies on the Facebook platform relate to identifying the forms of speech acts used by netizens, while also associating speech acts with violations of politeness principles that frequently emerge in digital interactions.

Various studies on the Facebook platform show trends that are more diverse and tend to be confrontational. A study by (Fauzi & Fikriyyati, 2025) showed a dominance of illocutionary speech acts in the forms of suggesting (42.6%), requesting and commanding (40.4%), and insulting (17.0%), reflecting a tendency toward aggressive ideological debates. A similar trend was found in a study by (Lian, 2024), which showed that on the group page "Viktor Lerik Bebas Berbicara," the violation of the maxim of relevance was the most dominant because many comments deviated from the topic and shifted into humor, rendering them irrelevant.

Meanwhile, a study by (Syahid., 2025) showed a dominance of expressive speech acts in the form of insults, alongside other findings showing relatively scattered instances of assertives, directives, and commissives, which reinforces the strong expression of negative emotions on social media. This is in line with (Butar-butur & Isman, 2022), which demonstrated a dominance of accusing, mocking, and criticizing utterances, whereas the study by Wahidah (2025) showed a dominance of illocutionary speech acts at 66.67%, signaling a tendency toward using utterances that convey actions, such as sarcasm. Consistent with this, a study by (Nur et al., 2025) showed a dominance of giving commands and requesting (17% each), while other forms stood at 5%, reflecting a strong emotional response and the function of comments as a space for digital mobilization and solidarity.

Illocutionary speech acts dominate pragmatic research on Facebook, Instagram, and X, with X indicating a tendency among researchers to focus their attention on the intention, purpose, and function of utterances used in interacting within the digital space. Furthermore, it signifies that communication on social media is viewed not only as a means of conveying information but can also influence, invite, convince, and even criticize. In addition, the characteristics of the X platform—which is text-based, open, and facilitates massive public interaction—make it a rich source of data to be examined from various forms of speech acts. Thus, the research trends in 2024-2025 indicate that the analysis of illocutionary speech acts remains the primary focus in understanding communication practices and user interaction dynamics on social media.

Posts and Comments as Representations of Digital Interaction

The results of the literature review reveal that posts and comments are the objects of study most frequently utilized in pragmatic research on social media. Both are selected because they are considered representative of digital interactions that occur naturally among social media users. Moreover, today's era demands the public to actively use social media for diverse purposes. Through posts, users can convey ideas, opinions, criticism, or emotional expressions. Not to forget, for individuals running businesses, social media can be leveraged as a promotional medium, as is currently practiced by people across all walks of life. Meanwhile, comments serve as an arena for mutual responses, enabling two-way communication akin to face-to-face encounters. Therefore, both forms of interaction are deemed capable of authentically depicting the public's language practices in the digital space.

Social media posts are a combination of visual elements and text, through which users can convey information, opinions, invitations, or various other forms of messages to fellow users. The effectiveness of a post is determined not only by the message conveyed but also by the characteristics of the posting account. By having many followers, the audience reached through a post will be broader, so the message conveyed will generate diverse responses. The responses provided by both followers and non-followers can increase netizen engagement with the uploaded content. The higher the engagement, the greater the likelihood that the message will receive attention, acceptance, or amplification by other users. Additionally, some accounts verified by certain platforms will gain financial benefits. This condition ensures that every post from an account with a large following carries a stronger power of influence, while also serving as a reflection or representation of the account owner, otherwise known as personal branding.

From the researcher's perspective, posts or comments become captivating objects of study to investigate. A study by (Apriliany et al., 2024) used posts from the X account @Convomfs as a data source and found that the dominant form expressed was the expressive illocutionary speech act. In line with this, research on the "Marah-Marah" (Venting) Community on the X platform (Nova & Winarti, 2024) demonstrated that members' posts were indeed used as a medium to express anger through profanity. Furthermore, the findings also show that posts serve not only as a means of conveying information but also as a space for emotional and social expression for digital media users. Video-form posts on social media were also examined by Piantari (2024), using social media apologies as the object of study. The research results indicate that the speaker's presupposition and knowledge influence the pattern of apology speech acts used in digital communication. These findings also

demonstrate that posts become a medium for constructing meaning and social relationships through the language choices and forms utilized.

Research was also conducted on personal accounts, namely the account of the former Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Susi Pudjiastuti, who frequently posts random tweets. As a figure long known to the wide public through her actions in the maritime sector and public policy, each of her posts captures the attention of netizens. Her self-image as a highly vocal figure ensures that various tweets are understood not merely as personal expressions, but also as a form of communication that can influence public perception and responses. A study by (Sari et al., 2024) found that her tweets contained various forms of utterances, such as statements, hopes, suggestions, congratulations, and commands. Meanwhile, another study (Neyarasm, 2024) showed that tweets were used as a means to convey criticism through irony, sarcasm, hyperbole, and rhetorical statements, particularly those related to politics. That study illustrates that tweets serve as a representation of digital interaction that allows anyone to openly convey views, criticism, or responses to various social issues, especially politics. Open responses on social media regarding social issues have also become a research object, such as netizens' responses to the fatherless issue in a study by (Wulandari, 2024). That study showed that netizens' responses to the issue were associated with expressive utterances, such as blaming, complaining, underestimating, insulting, apologizing, hoping, congratulating, and rejecting.

In addition to uploads, the comment section is also a vital part of communicating on social media. Not only functioning as a means to provide feedback, the comment section also acts as an interaction space among users that allows various forms of utterances and linguistic strategies to emerge. Through comments, users can convey a variety of messages and emotional responses. In research, comments frequently become interesting objects of study to investigate, especially on the Instagram platform. A study by (Titahena, Merlyn., 2025) found that user comments demonstrated the application of the maxims of tact, approbation, sympathy, and agreement in digital interaction. The discussion of maxims is still closely related to speech acts in terms of utterance meaning. Similar results were found in a study by (Hartono, 2025), which showed that comments become a space where various forms of politeness as well as violations of politeness principles emerge in online communication. Furthermore, research by Andriani (2024) also discovered that user comments contained functions of accusation, confirmation, criticism, and expressions toward an issue that was being widely discussed.

The representation of digital interaction was also observed through video-based content. One of the objects of study was Instagram reels videos on the account @helobagas by Annisa (2024). That study found that the utterances in reels videos contained forms that satisfied the cost-benefit scale, the indirectness scale, and the social distance scale. The findings also indicate that audiovisual content is currently favored by the public, thus dominating today's social media. This can be influenced by eye-catching visualization, as well as the account owner's audio which possesses soothing vocal characteristics, complete with a pleasing choice of background music. The presence of verbal and nonverbal elements allows for the formation of meanings that are more complex than text-based communication due to the emotional engagement being touched. Through pragmatic study, researchers can identify the speaker's intent, context, and how linguistic strategies are realized and understood in audiovisual-based digital communication.

Variations in the objects of study were also observed in research that utilized cross-platform comment sections. A study by (Nakula et al., 2024) on a combination of Instagram, X, and YouTube media found that positive politeness strategies were more dominant than negative politeness. This is in line with a study by (Fadhilah & Arimi, 2024) which used Facebook and X comment sections as data sources to identify speech acts that potentially contain elements of defamation. These findings indicate that comments do not merely function as responses to a post, but also serve as an arena for meaning negotiation, expression of attitudes, and even social conflict in the digital space.

Observing how posts and comments become objects of study in pragmatic research brings the realization that social media currently stands as the primary representation of digital interaction. The dominance of these two objects indicates that researchers tend to utilize communication forms that emerge naturally in the activities of social media users. Through posts and comments, various linguistic phenomena such as promotion, emotional expression, social criticism, language politeness, hate speech, and public opinion formation can be observed directly and in real time. Consequently, posts and comments have become the most relevant data sources for understanding digital communication trends on Facebook, Instagram, and X.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The evolution of social media platforms—such as Facebook, Instagram, and X—has transformed communication patterns from traditional, conventional modes into interactive, large-scale digital exchanges. The unique characteristics of each platform influence how users communicate; the study reveals that Facebook tends to foster argumentative discourse, Instagram emphasizes visual-multimodal content, and X (Twitter) relies on brief yet highly responsive text-based interactions. A systematic literature review of 30 scholarly articles indicates that X (Twitter) remains the most frequently studied digital space (14 articles or 47%), followed by Instagram (9 articles or 30%) and Facebook (7 articles or 23%).

The primary subjects of pragmatic research on social media during the 2024–2025 period were tweets or posts (59.26%) and comment sections (29.63%), thereby reflecting natural digital interactions. From a pragmatic perspective, illocutionary speech acts—specifically the assertive, directive, and expressive categories—were the most widely studied types during this period. These findings indicate that research trends regarding speech acts on social media focused on analyzing the intent and function of utterances across various digital communication contexts. These contexts ranged from political communication and campaigning (particularly on X) and digital marketing or local product advertising to the voicing of social criticism, the expression of emotions (such as profanity or digital outbursts), and the analysis of linguistic politeness—and violations thereof—within comment sections. The majority of pragmatic studies on social media during this period employed a descriptive-qualitative approach. Meanwhile, data collection relied on documentation, observation (*simak*), and note-taking (*catat*) techniques to identify the communicative functions of utterances in real-time.

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