

From Official Speech to Public Emotions: A Pragmatic Discourse Analysis in Political Communication

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Abstract

In today's political communication, spontaneous statements by public officials spread quickly through digital media and strongly influence public opinion. Because these statements are produced without careful preparation, they often trigger intense emotional reactions and public polarization. However, systematic linguistic research on this phenomenon, especially in the Indonesian context, remains limited. The present research aims to examine the forms of speech acts in spontaneous political utterances, the patterns of public response they generate, and the sociolinguistic contexts that shape their interpretation. This study uses a qualitative approach with pragmatic discourse analysis, integrating Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969, 1979) speech act theory, stance detection for public response analysis (ALDayel & Magdy, 2021), and Hymes' (1974) Speaking model in a three-stage framework. This combination enables simultaneous examination of linguistic structures and sociolinguistic contexts. Data were drawn from ten unplanned statements by the Regent of Pati, Central Java, Indonesia, during a doorstep interview, recorded and shared via the official YouTube channel. Findings show the speech acts comprised directives (50%), commissives (40%), and representatives (10%). Directives, often challenging or commanding in a provocative tone, were the main triggers for criticism (67.7%) and sarcasm (6.1%) on social media. Commissives, emphasizing an uncompromising stance, strengthened perceptions of resistance to dialogue and mobilized regional opposition (26.2%). Representative acts, framed as claims "for the people," failed to mitigate criticism and instead raised debates on credibility. Stance detection revealed polarization: 67.7% of responses fell into the *Against* category, 26.2% indirectly aligned with *Favor* toward opposition movements, and 6.1% employed sarcasm or humor as symbolic resistance. No neutral or purely informative responses were found. Hymes' Speaking model identified contextual amplifiers, including the interview's confrontational setting, direct targeting of individuals, and rapid digital dissemination, which intensified virality and polarization. The absence of diplomatic political language, despite formal freedom of expression, contributed to perceptions of arrogance. Overall, the study demonstrates that the form, tone, and context of spontaneous political speech acts significantly shape public responses. Provocative directives and rigid commissives escalate polarization, while unsupported representative claims fail to restore credibility. The implication is that public officials need to communicate in a more convincing, open, and careful manner, as well as pay attention to the long-term impact of their choice of words, tone, and media used, especially in an era of openness and rapid flow of information on social media.

Keywords: political communication; SPEAKING Model; Speech Acts; spontaneous utterances; stance detection.

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamics of political communication, the phenomenon of public officials or politicians issuing spontaneous statements without thorough preparation is a common occurrence. These

unplanned utterances usually arise from urgent situations, direct interaction with the media, or high political pressure. In communication studies, these types of statements are considered unplanned utterances, namely, speech produced spontaneously and informally without careful planning. This differs from planned utterances, which are formal, carefully structured, and consider their communicative consequences (Gabler et al., 2023). Despite their spontaneity, every statement from a public figure retains significant meaning because it is delivered by a party with authority and extensive social influence (Handayani, 2023).

Linguistically and socially, spontaneous utterances can have complex consequences. From a linguistic perspective, inappropriate word choice has the potential to trigger misunderstandings or misinterpretations. Syauket et al. (2024) emphasize that word choice, intonation, and political communication approach serve as strategic tools capable of influencing how the public views and responds to politicians and various political issues. From a social perspective, this can spark controversy, negatively shape public opinion, and even trigger an image crisis that is difficult to recover from. In the context of political communication, this risk is even greater, because poorly-considered statements can quickly be politicized or exploited by opponents to reinforce a particular narrative. Furthermore, unclear and poorly-planned statements can be exploited by certain parties to distort or mislead the message (Firmantoro, 2025).

The role of mass media and social media also amplifies the impact of these statements. Conventional media can frame politicians' statements within narratives that guide reader opinion, while social media allows public reactions to spread quickly, massively, and often out of context. The subjective framing and interpretations that emerge in the digital space prolong the cycle of controversy and increase the intensity of public response. Through mass media, political actors can engage in image-building activities to shape public perception, elevate the reputation of certain figures, or engage in character assassination (Akbar & Hidayah, 2023). Meanwhile, social media plays a significant role in accelerating the dynamics of public opinion formation. The speed at which information is disseminated, combined with a high level of interactivity, allows public opinion to be formed within hours of an event (Suhendra & Selly Pratiwi, 2024).

To date, academic studies on political communication and the speech acts of public officials have focused more on planned discourse, such as formal speeches (Dylgjeri, 2017; Hashim, 2015; Khater et al., 2024; Muharrami et al., 2023; Umbas & Andriyani, 2022), written press releases (Schueler & Marx, 2023; Yustita et al., 2022), or structured public debates (Lidiawati et al., 2018; Missriani et al., 2024; Ummah et al., 2025). These studies typically focus on rhetorical strategies, language choices, and message framing, which have undergone a thorough planning process. In contrast, the phenomenon of spontaneous speech by public officials, particularly in the Indonesian context, has rarely been the focus of comprehensive research, despite its unique linguistic characteristics, such as informal sentence structure, the use of emotional markers, and pragmatic errors that can give rise to different implicatures than planned speech.

In terms of social impact, in general, previous research studies only examine general public reactions without directly linking them to in-depth linguistic analysis of the types of speech acts used. As a result, it remains unclear how certain forms of speech can trigger specific responses, whether in the form of support, criticism, or sarcasm, especially on social media. Furthermore, the integration of linguistic analysis and social media dynamics has also been limited, resulting in an incomplete picture of the relationship between public officials' word choice and public reaction patterns in the digital space.

This situation opens up a research opportunity for an integrated examination of the forms of speech acts in spontaneous speech by public officials, the socio-political context behind them, and the patterns of public reaction mediated by the media and social media. This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of the study of political pragmatics and practical applications for state officials regarding their public communication strategies.

A linguistic approach, particularly speech act analysis, is relevant for understanding the intent, implicature, and perlocutionary effects of spontaneous utterances. Therefore, in the initial stage, speech acts are explained through Austin's theory (1962), which distinguishes three types of speech acts, namely: locutionary acts, focusing on the literal form of the utterance; illocutionary acts, emphasizing the speaker's communicative intent or purpose; and perlocutionary acts, highlighting

the impact or effect of the utterance on the listener. Building on this, Searle's (1969, 1979) classification underscores that utterances not only convey information but also constitute actions, such as assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative, which can shape social and political order. In the context of public officials, spontaneous statements often carry directive, declarative, or expressive functions with broad implications.

The second stage applies public response analysis through stance detection (ALDayel & Magdy, 2021) to systematically categorize audience reactions, namely agreement, rejection, sarcasm/humor, or neutrality, and link them to the types of speech acts identified earlier. Stance detection models the relationship between the public opinion text (*T*), the actor or user expressing the opinion (*U*), and the target or entity under evaluation (*G*), producing classifications of *Favor* (support), *Against* (opposition), or *None* (neutral/informative). In this study, the target (*G*) refers to the Regent of Pati's policies and spontaneous statements. Criticism is coded as *Against*, support for popular action and sarcasm/humor as *Favor*, and neutral or purely informative remarks as *None*.

In the third stage, Hymes' (1974) Speaking model is employed to explore the sociolinguistic dimensions shaping meaning and public response. This model examines eight elements: Setting, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre, allowing for a detailed mapping of location, actors, objectives, interaction forms, communicative tone, media, social rules, and interaction types present at the time of the utterance.

This study integrates Austin and Searle's Speech Act Theory, ALDayel and Magdy's stance-detection framework (2021), and Hymes' Speaking model (1974) to create a layered framework for analyzing political discourse. Speech Act Theory reveals what speakers accomplish through language, its form, intended force, and effects, while stance detection measures public reactions (favor, against, neutral) to those statements (ALDayel & Magdy, 2021). The Speaking model adds the sociocultural backdrop in which messages are produced and interpreted (Hymes, 1974). Together, these perspectives align as a continuum that links production, interpretation, and reception.

Each component offers unique advantages. Speech Act Theory provides sharp linguistic categorization (locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary, assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative), yet it privileges speaker intent and may overlook audience interpretation. Stance detection delivers a reliable, quantifiable method for gauging public sentiment, but it can gloss over nuanced pragmatic or cultural signals (ALDayel & Magdy, 2021). The Speaking model enriches the analysis with sociolinguistic context (setting, participants, norms, genre), though its qualitative depth is hard to systematize without concrete linguistic or behavioral indicators (Hymes, 1974).

When combined, the frameworks offset mutual weaknesses. Speech Act Theory defines what is uttered and meant; stance detection captures how audiences react (ALDayel & Magdy, 2021); and Speaking accounts for the contextual factors driving those reactions (Hymes, 1974). The combined approach yields a balanced examination that is linguistic (form and function), social (context), and emotional (response), producing a fuller, more accurate picture of meaning construction in political communication.

Operationally, the study unfolds in interconnected phases. It begins with Speech Act Analysis to classify spontaneous statements by public figures. Stance detection then codes and quantifies online public responses linked to each act (ALDayel & Magdy, 2021). The Speaking model subsequently maps contextual variables, such as setting, participants, norms, and genre that influence both the statements and reactions (Hymes, 1974). Finally, the three strands are woven together to illustrate how speaker intent, situational context, and public stance converge to shape political meaning in public discourse.

Based on this background, the research problems can be formulated as follows: (1) What are the forms and types of speech acts that appear in the unplanned utterances of public officials, as analyzed through Austin's (1962) classification of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, and Searle's (1969, 1979) categorization of assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative? (2) How is the public response to these unplanned utterances when examined using stance detection theory as formulated by ALDayel and Magdy (2021)? (3) What is the socio-linguistic context underlying the occurrence of these unplanned utterances when analyzed through Dell Hymes' (1974) Speaking model?

METHOD

In this study, pragmatic discourse analysis refers to an analytical approach that emphasizes the mechanisms of language in use, cognitive inference, and social dynamics (including speech acts, implicatures, and politeness) with discourse analysis, which studies the outcomes of language use in the form of oral or written texts, their organizational patterns, and contextual layers from micro to macro (Al-Shboul et al., 2024; Blitvich & Sifianou, 2019; Hajer, 2006; Haugh, 2007; Jucker, 2017; Khalifa & Mahama, 2017). In the context of political communication, this approach allows the researcher to investigate how spontaneous statements by public officials function as strategic communicative acts that can influence public perception, trigger emotional reactions, or reshape political narratives. It connects linguistic form (speech acts), contextual dynamics (Speaking model), and public response (stance detection) into a unified interpretive framework, thus revealing both the micro-level (utterance) and macro-level (socio-political) dimensions of meaning.

The focus is on identifying the forms and types of speech acts in unplanned utterances by public officials and analyzing the socio-linguistic context underlying these utterances. The qualitative approach was chosen, because this research focuses on understanding the meaning, intent, and implications of communication, rather than statistical measurement. According to Merriam (2009), qualitative research aims to understand how individuals interpret their experiences, construct their social worlds, and give meaning to the interactions that occur. The main characteristics of qualitative research are a focus on process and meaning; the researcher acts as the primary instrument of data collection; the existence of an inductive analysis process; and the existence of a descriptive and contextual presentation of results in line with the character of pragmatic discourse analysis, which emphasizes a deep understanding of language in social, cultural, and situational contexts. Thus, this approach allows researchers to capture the nuances and implications of utterances in their entirety in the context in which they occur.

The data sources in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from unplanned statements by a public official, taken from a video titled *Bupati Pati Tantang Pendemo: Jangan Cuma 5 Ribu, 50 Ribu Saya Tak Gentar!* (Pati Regent Challenges Protesters: 50,000 protesters do not make me afraid, let alone 5,000!) which was uploaded to the YouTube platform by Liputan6 on August 7, 2025 (URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wlfIgSiRoHE>). The video contains statements delivered spontaneously without a script, recorded in the context of direct interaction with the public. Meanwhile, the secondary data were obtained from online news articles containing excerpts from the same video, as well as public comments on social media discussing and responding to this content. These comments were sourced from the same YouTube video, uploaded by Liputan6 on its official YouTube channel.

This study collected data in three sequential phases. First, researchers documented the material by downloading and archiving the target videos as primary data. The authors then created verbatim transcripts, capturing every word exactly as uttered. The transcription process was done manually to preserve linguistic accuracy and contextual nuance. All elements, such as spoken words, pauses, fillers (e.g., *uh, well*), repetitions, and key non-verbal signals (such as laughter, tone shifts, or audience responses), were meticulously recorded, as these often hold critical pragmatic meaning in unscripted speech. Second, the data sampling process was carried out using the purposive sampling method, focusing on speech segments that were spontaneous, publicly impactful, and politically significant. Only excerpts meeting three strict criteria were included: (1) clear spontaneity (no script or prepared notes); (2) demonstrated public resonance, evidenced by media attention or notable online engagement; and (3) political relevance, where the utterance explicitly or implicitly conveyed the speaker's stance, authority, or policy position. Third, public reactions were gathered by scraping social media comments linked to the two videos. These were then filtered and analyzed to detect recurring patterns of support, criticism, and sarcasm.

Data analysis unfolded in three interconnected phases. First, transcripts were analyzed through the lens of Speech Act Theory, drawing on Austin (1962) and Searle (1969, 1979). For each utterance, the study distinguished: the locutionary act (literal meaning and linguistic structure), the illocutionary act (intended communicative force e.g., commanding, criticizing, declaring, or expressing emotion), and the perlocutionary act (actual effect on the audience). Each utterance was then classified into one of Searle's five speech act categories: assertive (stating facts or beliefs),

directive (prompting action), commissive (pledging future behavior), expressive (conveying emotions or attitudes), or declarative (enacting institutional change through speech). This stage combined categorization with interpretation: the coding established the speech-act type, and the subsequent reasoning clarified its pragmatic function and socio-political implications. The results of this stage provided the basis for the subsequent analyses, namely mapping public responses through stance detection (ALDayel & Magdy, 2021) and interpreting contextual factors using Hymes' Speaking model (Hymes, 1974).

Second, the analysis of public response focused on observing and categorizing public responses to speech. These responses can be agreement, rejection, sarcasm, or neutrality, which are then linked to the types of speech acts identified in the first stage to observe the relationship between the form of speech and public reaction. Within this framework, the concept of stance detection becomes relevant, because the emerging categories, namely criticism, support for popular action, sarcasm/humor, and neutral/information, can be mapped directly to the stance categorization, as explained by ALDayel and Magdy (2021). Formally, stance detection models the relationship between the public opinion text (T), the actor or user expressing the opinion (U), and the target or entity that is the object of evaluation (G), resulting in a classification of *Favor* (support), *Against* (opposition), or *None* (neutral/informative without expressing an attitude). The formula can be written as:

$$Stance(T, U|G) = \{Favor, Against, None\}$$

In this study, the target (G) refers to the policies and spontaneous statements of the Regent of Pati. Public responses in the form of criticism are mapped as *Against*, while support for public actions and sarcasm/humor are categorized as *Favor*, because they contain a tendency to support a particular party within the context of the discourse. Meanwhile, *None* is used for neutral responses or simply conveying information without indicating explicit support or rejection. This approach allows for a systematic categorization of public responses, while providing a consistent analytical framework for identifying attitudinal tendencies in online discourse. These responses can be approval, rejection, sarcasm, or neutrality, and are then linked to the types of speech acts identified in the first stage, to observe the pattern of relationships between the utterance form and public reactions.

In addition to categorizing public responses, this stage also presents a discussion of trends in online discourse surrounding this topic within the realm of Indonesian internet. The trend analysis was conducted using Google Trends with the keyword "*Bupati Pati*" (Pati Regent), in a limited period from August 1st to August 31st, 2025. The one-month timeframe was chosen to measure the escalation of the topic during this period, given that the peak of the event occurred in mid-August 2025. The trend analysis can be accessed at <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2025-08-01%202025-08-31&geo=ID&q=bupati%20pati&hl=id>

Third, Hymes' Speaking Model (1974) was used to map the communication context based on eight elements: Setting and Scene (time, place, atmosphere), Participants (parties involved), Ends (goals and results), Act Sequence (sequence of actions or utterances), Key (tone or style of communication), Instrumentalities (media or communication channels), Norms (social rules), and Genre (type of interaction). By combining these three stages, this research attempted to comprehensively reveal the relationship between speaker intent, language structure, situational factors, and the dynamics of interaction with the audience. The following Figure shows the flow of research data analysis.

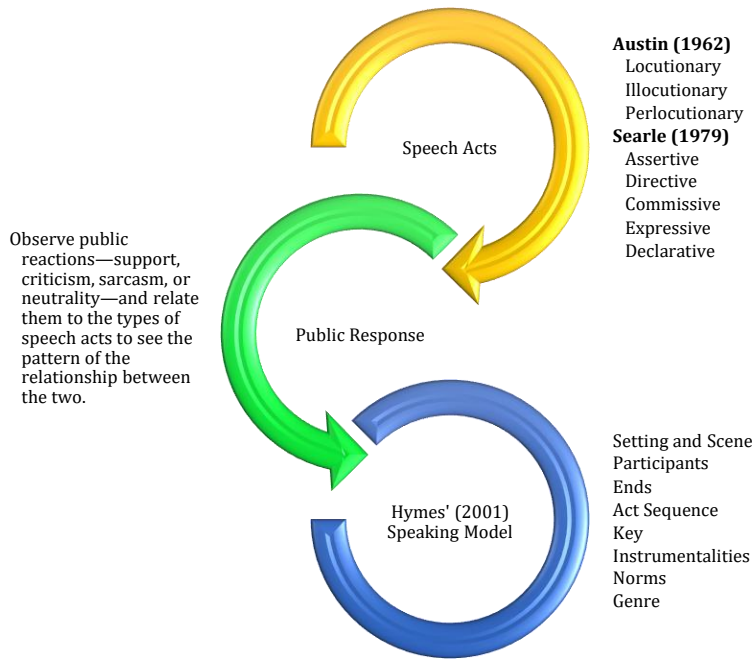


Figure 1. The Flow of Research Data Analysis

The validity of the data in this study was maintained through three main steps. First, source triangulation was conducted by comparing the analysis results from the main video with information obtained from online news and public comments, thus obtaining a more comprehensive picture while reducing bias. Second, theoretical triangulation was applied by simultaneously using Searle's speech act theory and Hymes's Speaking model, so that the analysis encompassed both linguistic aspects and sociolinguistic contexts. Third, member checking was conducted by verifying the compiled transcripts using the original recordings to ensure accuracy of content and conformity with the source of data.

ANALYSIS

The presentation of the results begins with the authors classifying speech acts identified in the unplanned utterances of a public official. This stage yields a quantitative distribution of each type of speech act, which the authors then analyzed qualitatively to understand usage patterns and purposes. Next, the authors conducted an analysis of public responses recorded through social media to identify forms of acceptance, rejection, and reinterpretation of these utterances.

To deepen understanding, the researchers used Hymes' (1974) Speaking model, which maps the sociolinguistic dimensions that shape meaning and public response. These results are presented in the form of quantitative summaries through tables and qualitative descriptions that provide in-depth interpretations, thus providing a comprehensive picture of the patterns and implications of the public official's speech.

Based on data from unplanned utterances of the public official which was analyzed using Searle's speech act theory, the authors found ten sentences that can be categorized into three types of speech acts: directives, commissives, and representatives. The calculation results show that directives dominate with 5 sentences (50%), followed by commissives with 4 sentences (40%), and representative with 1 sentence (10%), as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Distribution of Types of Speech Acts in an Unplanned Speech by a Public Official

| Types of Speech Acts | Number of Utterances | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Directive | 5 | 50% |
| Commissive | 4 | 40% |
| Representative | 1 | 10% |
| Total | 10 | 100% |

Directive Speech Acts

Directive speech acts aim to influence the listener to take an action. In the spontaneous utterances that the authors analyzed, this type dominates (50%), reflecting a confrontational communication style characterized by challenges and commands. Linguistically, these utterances are marked by imperative constructions, direct address forms, and intonational emphasis that heighten their confrontational tone. Pragmatically, their illocutionary force conveys assertion of authority, while their perlocutionary effect provokes emotional and oppositional reactions from the public. For example:

Datum 1

"Jangan hanya 5.000 orang, 50.000 orang aja suruh ngerahkan (Don't just ask for 5,000 people, even 50,000 people should be mobilized)."

In utterance above, the type of speech act that emerged was a directive with a challenging nuance. In terms of illocutionary force, this utterance conveys the intention of asking or challenging a certain party to gather a much larger crowd. From the perspective of a perlocutionary effect, the public interpreted this statement as a form of provocation, potentially encouraging mass mobilization on a broader scale.

Datum 2

"Saya instruksikan semua aparat pemerintah Kabupaten Pati tidak boleh ada bergining apapun dengan Yayak Gundul (I instructed all Pati Regency government officials to not to have any dealings with Yayak Gundul)."

In utterance 2, the authors identified a directive type of speech act with the form of an order. The intent (illocutionary force) of this utterance was to give a firm instruction to all regional government officials to not negotiate with the party in question. The impacts (perlocutionary effects) that arise include cutting off opportunities for dialogue or limiting the space for dialogue and giving the impression that the speaker has an authoritarian attitude in making decisions. Directive dominance shows that the communication style of this public official is confrontational and emphasizes control or domination over the interlocutor and audience. Contextually, it contributed to the audience's perception of the speech as an abuse of power rather than a legitimate command.

Directive Speech Acts

Commissives function to express the speaker's commitment or promise to do something in the future. In this example, the commissive directive speech act appears as an affirmation of a policy's commitment to continue implementing it despite rejection. For example:

Datum 3

"Saya tidak akan gentar (I will not be afraid)."

In utterance 3, the type of speech act identified is a commissive type. In terms of illocutionary force, this statement aims to emphasize the speaker's commitment to not be afraid or intimidated by rejection. Thus, the utterance failed to generate solidarity. This utterance can also give the impression of stubbornness and strengthen the spirit of resistance among audiences.

Datum 4

"Saya tidak akan merubah keputusan (I won't change my mind)."

Utterance 4 is categorized as a commissive speech act. The intended goal (illocutionary force) is to ensure that the policy that has been decided will continue to be implemented without change. The resulting impact (perlocutionary force) is the perception that the voices or aspirations of those who oppose are being ignored, which can increase dissatisfaction and resistance.

Datum 5

"Tetap maju (Keep moving forward)."

Meanwhile, utterance 5 is a commissive speech act. In terms of illocutionary force, this statement functions to express determination to continue the current policy. In terms of perlocutionary force, this utterance reinforces the impression that the speaker is firm but tends to be rigid, and has the potential to spark public debates regarding the policy in question. This function gives the impression of being firm and consistent, but in a heated socio-political context, it can also be interpreted as being rigid or uncompromising.

Representative Speech Acts

The representative speech act is used to express confidence or truth in information. The only representative utterance in the data is:

Datum 6

"Yang saya lakukan adalah yang terbaik untuk pembangunan Kabupaten Pati, yang terbaik untuk rakyat Kabupaten Pati (What I am doing is the best for the development of Pati Regency, the best for the people of Pati Regency)."

Utterance 6 is categorized as a representative speech act. In terms of illocutionary force, this statement conveys the speaker's belief that the policy or action taken is truly aimed at regional development and community welfare. However, in terms of perlocutionary force, this utterance has the potential to spark debates regarding the veracity of the claim, as some parties may feel that the statement is inconsistent with reality or their experiences in the field. In sum, representative acts demonstrate that even ostensibly positive speech strategies can lose persuasive force when the social context undermines the speaker's ethos. The disparity between intent ("for the people") and interpretation ("self-justification") shows that word choice, context, and public judgment influence each other.

Patterns of Public Response in Digital Media

In line with the results of the analysis of speech acts which show the dominance of directive and commissive functions with confrontational nuances, the public response recorded through social media shows a tendency towards criticism, support for people's actions, and sarcasm/humor.

Before proceeding further with the discussion of public responses, Figure 2 below illustrates the trend and escalation of this topic in the Indonesian online sphere during August 2025.

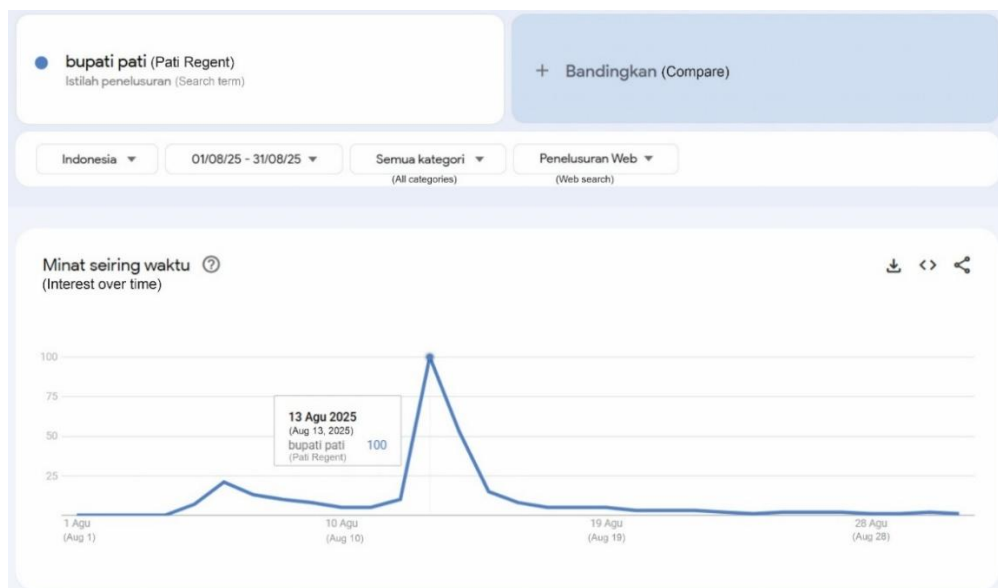


Figure 2. Trend of discussions on the topic of the Pati Regent (*Bupati Pati*) in the Indonesian online sphere

Figure 2 above shows that discussions on this topic experienced an upward trend throughout August, with a significant increase occurring in mid-August 2025. A Google Trends search using the keyword “*bupati pati*” indicates that the topic indeed attracted considerable public attention, particularly in the online sphere. This attention is reflected in the frequency of related online discussions. A more detailed explanation of the specific issues discussed by the public will be presented in the following section.

Based on 65 public comments collected from social media, responses fell into three main categories: criticism, support for the people's action, and sarcasm/humor. No neutral or purely informative comments were found. The distribution of responses can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Distribution of Public Responses to Unplanned Speech

| Response Category | Number of Comments | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Criticism | 44 | 67.7% |
| Support for people's action | 17 | 26.2% |
| Sarcasm/Humor | 4 | 6.1% |
| Neutral/Information | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 65 | 100% |

In the context of this study, stance detection focuses on the target (*G*) in the form of policies and spontaneous statements made by the Regent of Pati. The analysis of public responses on social media reveals that the majority, amounting to 67.7% of comments, fall into the *Against* category. These responses contain direct criticism toward the Regent's policies or actions, ranging from explicit rejection and accusations to calls for mass mobilization. A further 26.2% of comments are categorized as *Favor*, as they express support for the people's action in opposing the policy. Although such support is technically directed toward the mass action rather than the Regent, it implicitly signals opposition to the target, thereby aligning with a favorable stance toward the opposition side. In addition, 6.1% of comments employ sarcasm or humor in a way that subtly reinforces the opposing stance against the Regent. Notably, the study finds no examples of comments that are neutral or purely informative, meaning the *None* category remains unrepresented. This distribution highlights a strong polarization in public sentiment, with the overwhelming majority of responses reflecting clear evaluative positions toward the target.

Criticism

The dominant category was criticism, accounting for 67.7% of all comments. These responses generally involved rejection of the regent's remarks and policies, delivered in tones ranging from assertive to aggressive. The most frequently raised issues included accusations of arrogance, objections to tax increases, allegations of corruption, and demands for dismissal from office, as shown in the following example:

Datum 7

“Buat rakyat pati, orang ini jd pejabat niat awalnya untuk korupsi. Mknya dia berbuat seperti itu. Harus diturunkan apapun yg terjadi (For the people of Pati, this person became an official with the initial intention of [committing] corruption. That's why he acted like that. He must be removed [from office] no matter what).”

This statement contains a direct accusation against a public official regarding his initial intention in office, namely to commit corruption. It also includes a firm demand for the official's unconditional removal. This statement also represents a harsh, personal form of criticism and has the potential to create an extremely negative image of the public figure.

Datum 8

“Hayo kompak smua warga pati kumpulkan 50ribu injk2 itu bupati sombong... (Come on, all Pati residents, unite, gather 50 thousand people, trample on that arrogant regent...).”

The above statement combines elements of criticism and a call for mass mobilization. This statement not only highlights the regent's alleged arrogance but also includes an explicit call to gather large crowds to demonstrate direct rejection. Pragmatically, this statement is considered provocative and has the potential to incite collective action.

Datum 9

"Aku bukan orang Pati..tapi kenaikan pajak ini memang gak ngotak ini bupati.... (I'm not from Pati... but this tax increase is shows that the regent is irrational...)."

The speech criticized the tax increase policy, which it deemed irrational. Although the speaker was not part of the directly affected administrative area, his involvement demonstrated that this issue had a broader reach of public opinion, transcending local boundaries and generating external solidarity with the affected groups.

Datum 10

"Makin Ngawur Para Pejabat,,Bukanya Memimpin Untuk Mensejahterakan Rakyat.....Ini Malah Main Buat Rakyat sengsara (Officials are getting more and more careless, instead of leading for the welfare of the people.... this [public official] ironically takes the role to make the people suffer)."

The statement, "Officials are getting more and more careless, instead of leading for the welfare of the people.... this [public official] ironically takes the role to make the people suffer," contains a sharp criticism of the performance of the public official. This statement highlights the inconsistency between a leader's ideal duty, which is to improve the people's welfare, and actions that are perceived to actually cause misery. This statement reinforces negative perceptions of the officials involved and triggers emotional public disappointment, while also highlighting the gap between public expectations and the reality of the policies implemented.

Support for people's action

The second category was support for the people's action, accounting for 26.2%. Comments in this category mobilized the masses, motivating Pati residents to take collective action, and affirming solidarity across administrative boundaries, as seen in the following example:

Datum 11

"Pati luar biasa. Ayo wujudkan demo damai 100rb orang. Saya dari Jayapura turut mendoakan (Pati is extraordinary. Let's make a peaceful demonstration of 100,000 people a reality. I'm from Jayapura, praying for you)."

The speech convey positive support for the people's actions. Besides praising the spirit of the Pati residents, the speaker also called for large-scale peaceful demonstrations, along with expressions of solidarity across regions. The presence of prayers from other regions (Jayapura, Papua) demonstrated that local issues can garner public sympathy at the national level.

Datum 12

"Saya mendukung rakyat pati... semangat rakyat pati kebenaran keadilan harus di tegak kan (I support the people of Pati... Keep your spirit, Pati people, truth and justice must be upheld)."

The statements in the data above represent a form of moral and normative support. These statements emphasize that the Pati people's struggle is seen as an effort to uphold the values of truth and justice. This message can strengthen the masses' motivation and build moral legitimacy for their actions.

Datum 13

"GAS !!! kasih paham !!! (Let's go! Make them understand!)."

This utterance is a short but powerful rallying cry. It carries a high emotional charge and tends to be imperative, encouraging the audience to take decisive action against the targeted party. It also demonstrates how concise and powerful language can fuel solidarity and intensify action.

Sarcasm/Humor

The third category is sarcasm/humor, which, although only accounting for 6.1%, played a significant role in reinforcing the negative framing of the regent. The humor used tended to be satirical or ironic, aimed at embarrassing or demeaning the public figure's image in the eyes of the audience, as seen in the following example:

Datum 14

"Pajak untuk nyawer penyanyi (The tax is to [used to] tip singers or lady companions)."

This statement falls into the category of sarcasm/humor, containing sharp sarcasm. This statement uses irony to criticize tax policy, associating it with practices deemed low-priority or inappropriate, thereby weakening the policy's legitimacy in the public eye. This statement has the potential to create a negative image of the relevant official through derogatory humor.

Datum 15

"Saya belajar banyak dari kata² mutiara bapak bupati, jangan kan 5000 pendemo, sama 50 pendemo saja saya takut.. (I have learned a lot from the wise words of the regent: not even with 5,000 protesters, even just 50 protesters would make me afraid)."

This statement is a form of sarcasm that parodies the statements of public officials. By ironically quoting the regent's "pearls of wisdom," the speaker delivers veiled criticism while simultaneously belittling the official's courage or leadership. This reinforces the perception of incompetence and diminishes the public figure's credibility with the audience.

These findings indicate that the spontaneous speech of public officials not only triggered critical verbal responses but also gave rise to diverse forms of social expression, ranging from mobilizing support to using humor as a symbolic resistance strategy.

Interplay Between Linguistic Form and Public Reaction

The results of a comparison between speech act analysis and public responses indicate a clear relationship between the form of public officials' speech and public reactions on social media. First, directive speech acts that are challenging and commanding, especially when delivered in a provocative tone, have proven to be the dominant trigger for critical and sarcastic responses. The confrontational tone in these types of speech encourages the audience to respond with the same or even harsher tone, reinforcing opinion polarization. Second, commissive speech acts that emphasize a firm, uncompromising stance reinforce the public perception that the regent is unwilling to open a space for dialogue or listen to the people's aspirations. This has implications for increased resistance and mobilization of support for resistance actions at the local and cross-regional levels. Third, representative speech acts containing claims "for the people" have proven ineffective in quelling the wave of criticism. Instead, these statements have fueled debate about the validity of claims and the appropriateness of rhetoric and policy reality. These findings indicate that the form and tone of public officials' speech acts have a direct influence on the form, intensity, and direction of public responses, whether in the realm of criticism, support, or sarcastic humor.

After describing the forms of speech acts and the public responses that emerge, the next step is to analyze the context of the speech using Hymes' Speaking model to map the situational dimensions, participant roles, communication objectives, and the accompanying socio-political impacts.

Based on Hymes's Speaking model, the Pati Regent's unplanned utterance can be analyzed using eight components that map the communication situation, the roles of the participants, the objectives, and the implications. From the perspective of the Setting and Scene, the statement was

delivered in the courtyard of the Regent's Office during an open, door-to-door interview attended by journalists, government officials, and the public. The context was a response to an action plan to reject the tax increase policy, thus providing a significant opportunity for the message to be disseminated through media coverage and social media. From the Participants perspective, the speaker was the Pati Regent, the policy authority, with direct audiences consisting of journalists and government officials, and indirect audiences including Pati residents, the national public, and online media audiences. The mention of the individual name "Yayak Gundul" refers to a personal target, reinforcing the impression of an open challenge.

From the Ends perspective, the speaker explicitly intended to assert his stance in defense of the tax policy and demonstrate his courage against rejection. However, the actual outcome created a provocative perception that sparked public outrage, mass mobilization, and virality on social media. In the Act Sequence, the sequence of utterances begins with a rhetorical question to elicit a response, followed by a challenge to individuals and the public, an affirmation of policy commitment, an instruction to officials prohibiting negotiations, a sarcastic granting of permission, and a closing statement defending the policy. In terms of Key, the dominant tone is assertive, confrontational, and provocative, with elements of sarcasm in the demonstration permit. The language used is direct and without mitigation, reinforcing the sense of challenge and provoking an emotional reaction.

In the Instrumentalities component, the statement was delivered verbally, recorded, and disseminated via video on YouTube and social media. The nature of digital media makes it easy for excerpts to spread without full context, thus increasing the viral effect and the risk of distortion of meaning. In terms of Norms, political communication norms demand language diplomacy and persuasion, but in this case, the delivery violated these expectations and gave the impression of arrogance, even though formally, it remained within the bounds of freedom of expression. Finally, the Genre aspect indicates that this interaction was a spontaneous, doorstep interview that combined political rhetoric with emotional expression. The lack of a formal script made the message more reflective of the speaker's personal style than a planned communication strategy.

The findings of this study indicate a strong and direct relationship between the form and tone of public officials' spontaneous speech acts and public response patterns, particularly in the context of fast-paced, interactive, and wide-reaching social media. By integrating Austin (1962) and Searle's speech act theory (1969, 1979) and Hymes' Speaking model (1974), this analysis is able to capture the linguistic function of speech as well as its socio-political implications.

The main findings indicate that directive speech acts dominate, accounting for 50%. This form is often used to give commands, challenges, or invitations that tend to be provocative. The confrontational tone that emerges positions communication not as a space for dialogue, but rather as an open challenge to the audience. Meanwhile, commissive speech acts (40%) are used to emphasize unwavering commitments, such as refusing to change policies. This attitude demonstrates assertiveness, but in the public eye is often interpreted as rigidity and closedness to aspirations. This is in line with Ekawati's (2017) research regarding expressive speech acts of anger, which are often carried out directly or indirectly and can contain pseudo-politeness. In the context of public officials, pseudo-politeness serves to maintain social image while still conveying displeasure or assertiveness. However, in this case, instead of maintaining harmony, the form and tone of the official's speech actually triggered polarization, demonstrating that pseudo-politeness strategies are ineffective when the message is packaged provocatively.

In contrast, Widyawati and Utomo's (2020) research found the dominance of assertive speech on social media, because online interactions tend to be controlled, asynchronous, and emotionally distant, thus focusing on conveying neutral information. Conversely, this study shows the dominance of directives and commissives, reflecting the tendency of public officials in spontaneous, direct, and stressful political interactions on the ground to use commanding language and assert commitments to demonstrate authority, assertiveness, and strengthen political positions before audiences (Widyawati & Utomo, 2020).

Lastly, representative speech acts occur only 10% of the time and function to express beliefs or claims of truth. However, the claim "for the people" actually sparked debates, as the public questioned its relevance to reality.

Public response to the Regent of Pati's policies and spontaneous statements was dominated by the *Against* stance, accounting for 67.7% of all comments. The tone of rejection ranged from harsh criticism to direct accusations such as arrogance, corruption, and implementing policies perceived as harmful to the public and even calls for mass mobilization. Meanwhile, 26.2% of comments aligned with the *Favor* stance by expressing support for popular action opposing the policy. Although such support was directed at mass movements rather than the Regent personally, it implicitly reflected an oppositional position toward the target. A smaller portion, i.e., 6.1% of comments, took the form of sarcasm or humor, functioning as symbolic resistance that subtly undermined the official's public image. Notably, there were no neutral or purely informative comments, indicating that this issue evoked strong emotional involvement and polarized public opinion.

This pattern resonates with the findings of AJ et al. (2021) in their study of Ahok's politeness strategies in political interviews, where direct and confrontational tones were often perceived as impolite, reinforcing a public image of rigidity and triggering criticism. In the present study, similar dynamics appear, where perceived confrontational attitudes intensified opposition and shaped the public's evaluative stance. Furthermore, as Biber and Finegan (1988) explain, such interpretations are usually inferred from a combination of cues beyond linguistic markers, including emotions, personality traits, and cultural background. In line with this, Jurafsky and Martin (2008) and Pang and Pang (2008) note that such tasks can generally be defined as the effort to estimate a person's emotional polarity, namely positive, negative, or neutral, based on both linguistic and non-linguistic indicators. This perspective underscores that stance detection not only classifies attitudes toward a target but also inherently overlaps with sentiment analysis, especially when public responses are strongly effective.

Context analysis using the Speaking model revealed that the spontaneous delivery situation, a doorstep interview in the Regent's Office yard with the media present, was a crucial factor in amplifying the impact of the speech. Delivered directly, without a script, and amidst a heated political situation, each word had the potential to trigger a broad response. The audiences involved included not only journalists and regional officials, but also the people of Pati, the national public, and even social media users who circulated video clips. Distribution via YouTube and other digital platforms allowed certain quotes to go viral, even without their full context. These findings align with research by Subekti et al. (2025) on the role of social media in amplifying political messages and disinformation. They noted that platforms like YouTube and Facebook accelerate the spread of context-deprived speech fragments, which can fuel polarization and eliminate space for constructive dialogue.

This research shows that in political communication, a confrontational and rigid style of language tends to increase opinion polarization. Challenging directives and commissive language that closes off room for compromise can trigger broader resistance, while representative claims without strong evidence are insufficient to quell criticism. Therefore, public officials need to consider more persuasive and inclusive communication strategies, while being aware of the risks of amplification on social media. In the digital age, every utterance is not just a statement but also the potential trigger for a wave of opinion that is difficult to control. In line with these findings, Mujiyanto's (2013) research highlights that political language that is too aggressive or defensive in a frontal manner often contradicts the goal of building a positive image. Communication strategies that are persuasive, inclusive, and considerate of the interlocutor are more effective in building legitimacy.

In brief, a three-stage analysis combining Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1979), public attitude detection (ALDayel & Magdy, 2021), and Hymes' (1974) Speaking model demonstrates the close relationship between public officials' utterances, public responses, and the surrounding socio-political context. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding that officials' spontaneous speech is not simply ordinary communication, but rather a social and political act that influences public opinion. In the first stage, the analysis based on Speech Act Theory shows that officials' spontaneous speech is dominated by orders and firm promises. Orders indicate a forceful and controlling communication style, while promises demonstrate a rigid stance in defending policy. Claims of "for the people" are distrusted because they lack evidence. Commanding

and challenging tones trigger negative emotions and public rejection, thus significantly influencing public perceptions of power.

The second stage was an analysis of the public's attitude over the regent's speech. It was confirmed that most public responses opposed the official, some supported the people's opposition, and a few used jokes or sarcasm as resistance. There were no neutral responses, showing a sharp divide in public opinion. Commanding remarks that failed to open dialogue sparked harsh criticism, ridicule, and even calls for demonstrations. The rigid attitude of the official reinforced the impression of arrogance and indifference to the people's aspirations.

The third stage, through context analysis using the Speaking model, revealed that the remarks were delivered spontaneously in open interviews with the media and the public. The venue, participants, and distribution via YouTube and social media accelerated the virality of the remarks. The confrontational tone and violation of political diplomacy ethics created significant psychological and social impacts. The digital context broadened the reach of reactions and deepened public divisions. Overall, the results of this study confirm that officials' political language is not neutral. It is a powerful social act that shapes public attitudes and is amplified by digital media. Confrontational styles and rigid commitments without empathy actually damage officials' image and legitimacy. This study shows that political leaders need to communicate in a convincing, open, and context-aware manner. In the digital era, one statement can quickly spark a flood of public opinions that are hard to manage.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the spontaneous speech acts of a public official, exemplified by the Regent of Pati, are predominantly composed of directives (50%) and commissives (40%), and with representative acts constituting only 10%. Directives, often framed as challenges or commands in a provocative tone, emerged as the primary catalysts for public criticism (67.7%) and sarcasm (6.1%) on social media. Commissives, marked by an uncompromising stance, reinforced perceptions of resistance to dialogue, while representative speech acts claiming to serve "the people" proved ineffective in mitigating criticism.

Contextual analysis via the Speaking model revealed that doorstep interview settings, confrontational delivery, rapid digital dissemination, and departures from diplomatic political language norms significantly amplified message virality and polarization. These findings establish a clear causal link between the linguistic form and tonal quality of political speech and the intensity, direction, and polarization of public responses in interactive digital spheres. The results highlight the strategic importance of adopting measured, audience sensitive communication to maintain credibility and foster constructive discourse. Future research should broaden the scope to include various levels of public office and political contexts, integrate pragmatic discourse analysis with big data driven sentiment analytics, compare planned versus spontaneous political speeches, and undertake cross-cultural examinations to explore how differing political communication norms shape public interpretation and reaction.

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