

## **Tweeting for Influence: Political Buzzers' Speech Acts in 2024 Presidential Campaign**

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### **Abstract:**

*During the presidential campaign, political posts of the buzzers is massive, particularly on digital platforms. However, research on the speech act of buzzers is limited. The present study focuses on investigating the content of political campaigns produced by the buzzers in the posts on X platform, the intention of the buzzers, and the effect of the posts on the audience. The research employed a qualitative approach and netnography. The study analyzed the content of three buzzer accounts, each of which represents one presidential candidate. In this case, the researchers become complete observers (lurking) in the cross-sectional study design. A total of 528 posts were collected manually during the campaign period. All content, which included text, images, videos, and emojis, was observed and noted. Then, the data were analyzed by speech act theory. The findings highlighted the power of the multimodal elements presented in the posts as the locutionary acts to strengthen the message impact and to increase credibility, specifically in attacking the opponents. The analysis of illocutionary acts revealed that the buzzers' domination in assertive, directive, expressive, and the combination of speech acts. The perlocutionary effect of the posts was reflected in the audience engagement through likes and retweets. It can be concluded that the buzzers reach the possible voters through various means of information and strategy to mobilize them through claims, command, and emotion. The implication of the research provides insights that the audience should be aware that buzzers' multimodal post to reach massive voters.*

*Keywords: multimodality, political buzzers, political discourse, presidential campaign, speech acts*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Advances in digital technology have shifted interaction from the physical world into the virtual realm. Through quick access to information, social media provides instant updates on political news and discussions that traditional media cannot provide interactively (Hidayatullah et al., 2024). In fact, social media platforms have become key tools for politicians to shape public opinion (Thupket, 2022), build a more ‘human’ image, and connect with young voters (AlMamoory & Al-Khazaali, 2024; Anderson, 2018). With the support of an algorithm in digital campaign, voters are exposed to the content which aligned with users’ political preferences, reinforcing their beliefs, and filtering out dissenting opinions (Hidayatullah et al., 2024).

The phenomenon affects the emergence of political buzzers. Originating from buzz marketing strategies (Handini & Dunan, 2019), political buzzers are individuals or groups of people who create or spread stories to support political candidates or to discredit their opponents (Juditha, 2019). In Indonesia, political buzzers gained prominence during the presidential election in 2019 (Sam et al., 2024). Since then, buzzers have transformed into professionals with organized recruitment, content distribution, and a payment system (Handini & Dunan, 2019; Syatta et al., 2023). The rise of the buzzers has transformed electoral engagement resulting in a significant influence.

Buzzers’ role in shaping political discourse is essential. The buzzers use platforms such as Twitter (now become X) to extend the influence beyond local reach through issue framing, information manipulation, and biased messaging in favor of a specific candidate (Hidayah & Sutadi, 2023). The research of Daeni et al. (2023) and Sholihah (2022) proved that buzzers would spread unverified or manipulative content. They use strategies, such as creating trending topics, using hashtags, and ensuring content authority to sway public opinion (Suciati et al., 2019; Maulana & Kuswayati, 2021; Dewantara et al., 2022; Sibaroni & Prasetyowati, 2022; Yulianto, 2023). They even strategically employ linguistic tactics to build credibility in political campaigns with deliberate use of impoliteness, such as name-calling and exclusion to create political polarization and to fuel conflict (Ifechelobi & Okpokiri, 2020).

Through the posts, the buzzers not only convey information but also engage the audience’s senses deeply to create a more immersive experience (Rahmalina et al., 2025). The political tweets are delivered through text, images, or videos to influence voters (Geenen, 2023). The political ideologies are strategically incorporated in colors, images, and verbal anchorages to communicate and construct social identities (Jolayemi et al., 2021). The interaction of the modes could mobilize people (Norris, 2004; Van Leeuwen, 2008). These multiple modes play a critical role in political discourse and communication because the visual, verbal, and audio elements work together to construct meaning for the audience and to create impact on public opinion (Jungheer, 2016). The actual response of the posts can be reflected through the engagement metrics, such as likes, retweets, and replies (Vaccari et al., 2015; Wekesa, 2023). In other words, the political buzzers post meaningful content variety to influence the audience.

Highlighting the way buzzers manipulate meaning to influence the audience response indicated that their communicative strategies were rooted in speech act theory. Buzzer use speech acts to establish social relationships and promote their ideas (Pangemanan et al., 2023). Speech act theory (Searle, 1969) divides the communication into locutionary acts (the utterance itself), illocutionary acts (the intention behind the utterance), and perlocutionary acts (the effect on the audience).

Most research on speech acts in political discourse has focused on the illocutionary acts of political figures, such as Biden & Obama (Rakaj, 2022; Yokossi, 2022). Also, the polarizing use of assertiveness by political figures like Trump (Kubin & von Sikorski, 2021; Rakaj & Kareva, 2023) and the expressive speech acts, like thanking, praising, and blaming, engage voters in Prabowo Subianto's 2024 campaign (Bumi et al., 2024). The previous studies on speech acts have mostly focused on classifying the speech acts of political figures. On the other hand, studies on buzzers focused mainly on detecting the political buzzers' accounts on social media (Handini & Dunan, 2019; Sibaroni & Prasetyowati, 2022; Sholihah, 2022) or the hate speech they produced (Juditha, 2019; Syatta et al., 2023; Yulianto, 2023).

In reality, the buzzers also applied speech acts in the content, just like the candidates they represented. Whatever content is published on social media represents the words they present linguistically. They have intentions behind the content and there are responses from the audience to the content. Thus, it creates a research gap that limits the comprehension of the political buzzers. In fact, during the whole campaign period, the posts from these political buzzers influenced the decision of the voters. Therefore, the current study aims to fill this research gap by analyzing how political buzzers shape public perceptions in the digital presidential campaign. Specifically, the research will address the following questions:

1. How do the political buzzers employ the content to enhance persuasion or credibility in their locutionary acts?
2. How do the political buzzers employ the illocutionary act to shape the political discourse in the presidential campaign?
3. How do likes and retweets reflect the perlocutionary effects of the buzzers' discourse?

By integrating speech act theory within online political discourse, this study offers a distinct perspective on digital political communication.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the digital era, social media plays a significant role in political campaigns. Social media enables candidates and parties to reach a large number of voters directly. Even though the engagement is online, social media can stimulate offline activism among followers (Vaccari et al., 2015). People can express their political participation in various ways, such as liking, sharing content, attending rallies, or even voting for a particular candidate. In short, social media constructs the public sphere in a campaign (Corchia, 2019).

During the election period, the candidates coordinated political buzzers or cyber troops to shape public opinion. Political buzzers are individuals or groups of social media accounts that act as anonymous opinion makers to disseminate certain political messages (Syatta et al., 2023); (Yulianto, 2023; Sholihah, 2022). They are organized and professional (Yulianto, 2023). Personal social media (buzzers) and influencer accounts can be distinguished based on the following characteristics (Sibaroni & Prasetyowati, 2022).

1. An anonymous (Felicia & Loisa, 2018; Sholihah, 2022) or cloned account (Handini & Dunan, 2019; Dewantara et al., 2022).
2. High number of followers (Maulana & Kuswayati, 2021)
3. High post frequency (Handini & Dunan, 2019) and response speed (Nandito et al., 2025)

4. Narrow or diverse content (Suciati et al., 2019) or the use of a propaganda technique (Sam et al., 2024; Daeni et al., 2023).

From the way the buzzers work, they often performed dual functions. They acts as image polishing agent through positive campaign but simultaneously they can act as producers of black campaign and hate speech for the opponents (Natsheh, 2019; Sholihah, 2022). Such activity challenges the quality of democracy because it disregards the objectivity of information for narrow political interests. They disseminate inaccurate information (Hidayatullah et al., 2024) issues of ethnicity, religion race, and inter-group relations, including spreading hoaxes (Sholihah, 2022) to damage a person's reputation (Aljanabi & Jabir, 2024). Research on the accounts of Joe Biden (Arfiawati & Guntari, 2022) and Anies Baswedan (Siregar et al., 2024) revealed high levels of insults and defamation. In this context, language is not a tool for information anymore but a performative instrument of power.

The political actors often use indirect language to conceal the manipulative intention. It helps them maintain legal deniability if the content triggers controversy (Brown & Molete, 2024). Modern online campaigns rely on subtle linguistic manipulation techniques. Buzzers often use language whose true intention is hidden in casual comments or opinions (Brown & Molete, 2024). Furthermore, they use emotionally charged language such as anger, fear, or hatred to trigger engagement and the viral spread of the content (Brown & Molete, 2024); (Simanjuntak et al., 2025).

A unique characteristic of digital campaigns is the use of nonverbal elements. Research of AlMamoory & Al-Khazaali (2024) found that emojis, emoticons, and abbreviations became a pragmatic strategy to build rapport and convey a tone of voice that is difficult to express through plain text. Thus, the use of images, text, and colors are integrated to convey ideological messages, build social identity, and influence voter behavior. Political billboards are a real example of multimodal text that serves as an impersonal yet very striking communication tool (Jolayemi et al., 2021). The meaning of interaction is highly dependent on social and situational context (Kwasau, 2025; Jones, 2020). Furthermore, the retweet feature is used to create an impression that they have broad and authentic support (Natsheh & Atawneh, 2021).

These characteristics of the online campaign make the pragmatic approach, particularly speech act theory, is highly relevant to investigate how political utterances in digital space are designed to execute strategic actions to influence the public. Pragmatic analysis helps us understand how buzzers recontextualize information to create new narratives that may be misleading or trigger polarization in digital public spaces such as the "X" platform (Vergeer, 2015; Jones, 2020; Hidayatullah et al., 2024). Pragmatic analysis, particularly speech act theory, allows researchers to identify illocutionary speech acts—that is, the actual function or intent behind the words—such as subtle attempts to promote a specific ideology or discredit opponents without appearing forceful (Brown & Molete, 2024).

The concept of Speech act is part of pragmatic theory, which stated that language is not merely a tool for conveying information but a mechanism for performing actions. It means when people say something, they are doing something. The concept was pioneered by Austin (1962) and systematically developed by Searle (1969). Austin (1962) distinguished three acts that occur simultaneously when someone speaks.

- a. Locutionary act refers to the actual words spoken along the linguistic form.

- b. Illocutionary act is the intention or the function behind the utterance or what the speaker aims to achieve (requesting, asserting, promising, or advising).
- c. Perlocutionary act is the effect of the utterance on the hearer. It relates to the impact of the statement on the audience.

Furthermore, Searle (1969) classifies illocutionary acts into five categories based on the purpose.

- a. Assertive acts bind the speaker to the truth of something, for instance, stating facts, claiming, reporting, or concluding.
- b. Directive acts refer to the speaker's effort to get the listener to do something, such as commanding, requesting, or asking to do something.
- c. Expressive acts show the speaker's psychological state of feelings toward a situation, for example, thanking, apologizing, praising, or complaining.
- d. Commissive acts bind the speakers to perform an action in the future, such as promising, swearing, offering, or threatening.
- e. Declaration acts refer to utterances that directly change the status or condition of an object or situation in the real world, for example, declaring war, dismissing someone, or officiating a marriage).

The research on speech acts has mostly focused on the speech act strategy of political figures. During the campaign, the presidential candidate applied directive speech acts to direct public support (Simanjuntak et al., 2025), and expressive speech acts as a strategy to praise and criticize political narration (Bumi et al., 2024). Speech acts could be used as persuasive instruments to explore the image polishing technique (Natsheh & Atawneh, 2021). The locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts would reflect the linguistic performance of candidates (Rakaj, 2022; Putri, 2024). Political figures applied assertive speech acts to convince people of the policy (Ashfira & Hardjanto, 2021). Furthermore, political figures applied speech acts as instruments of power (Kwasau, 2025.).

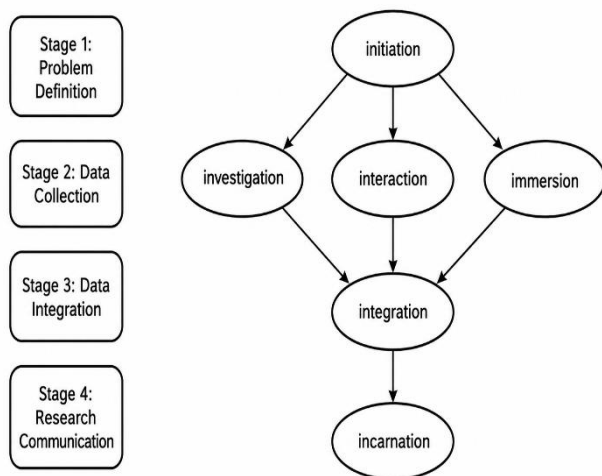
Furthermore, hate speech dominated social media during the campaign. Most hate speech, which functions as an insult found on Instagram was assertive and expressive speech acts (Arfiawati & Guntari, 2022; Siregar et al., 2024). Also, manipulative statements in political Facebook groups highlighted the use of indirect speech acts to influence the followers (Brown & Molete, 2024). In digital communication, the use of emojis strengthens the illocutionary force of messages in social media (AlMamoory & Al-Khazaali, 2024). Also, digital actions such as clicks or likes are considered as new speech act units interpreted by the algorithms to form users' political identities (Jones, 2020).

The previous research investigated the shift in the role of the buzzer from business interest toward political instruments that work anonymously and systematically on social media. The phenomenon of cyber warfare by the buzzers showed a conceptual change from traditional opinion leaders to anonymous opinion makers (Yulianto, 2023). The research of buzzers emphasized the urgency of controlling buzzers during the election because they often create and spread negative campaigns which disrupt social stability (Syatta, 2023; Juditha, 2019; Handini & Dunan, 2021).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employs a qualitative approach, using netnography combined with pragmatic analysis to understand the communication patterns and the meaning of the content in the political buzzers' posts on the X platform. Netnography was a form of digital ethnography for analyzing online behaviors and discourse within virtual communities (Kozinets, 2015) and it was chosen because it can capture the social and cultural practice of communication within online communities in a naturalistic manner. The pragmatic analysis will uncover the implicit meaning, linguistic strategies, and responses employed in digital interactions.

Figure 1. The stages of netnography



There are six stages which consist of initiation, investigation, as shown in figure 1 (Eriyanto, 2021). The initiation process focuses on formulating research questions and the research design. The research subject was selected using purposive sampling from three political buzzer accounts, each representing one of the three candidate pairs. Akmaliah (2018) distinguished buzzers by the persuasive influence, expansive follower base, and strategic ability to disseminate information or the underlying motive. Specifically, Maulana & Kuswayati (2021) stated that the typology of buzzers are it has more than 500 followers and the daily tweet frequency in less than 1200 minutes.

The next stage is investigation, which involves the data collection process. The data was obtained through non-participatory observation (lurking) on platform X by documenting the content of the tweets and engagement metrics, such as the number of retweets and likes, to get the raw data corpus. A total of 528 data was collected publicly through available posts manually during the presidential campaign period, from 28 November 2023 to February 10, 2024. However, ethical consideration was applied to respect the privacy.

In the interaction stage, the researchers analyzed the content and the interaction to categorize the speech acts (Searle, 1969). The analysis of locutionary acts examined the content of the posts to construct the political messages. Then, the analysis of illocutionary acts was conducted to investigate the intention behind the posts. The analysis of perlocutionary acts focused on engagement metrics, such as likes and retweets, as the audience response. The unit of analysis was the content of the tweets during the political campaign. The immersion process deepened the contextual understanding of the actual political issues through repeated reading of the data.

In the integration stage, the researchers integrated the analysis of netnography and pragmatics to identify the communication patterns and analyze the linguistic meaning of the speech acts (locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts). It provided a comprehensive understanding of the social digital context and the linguistic meaning produced by the buzzers. Lastly, the

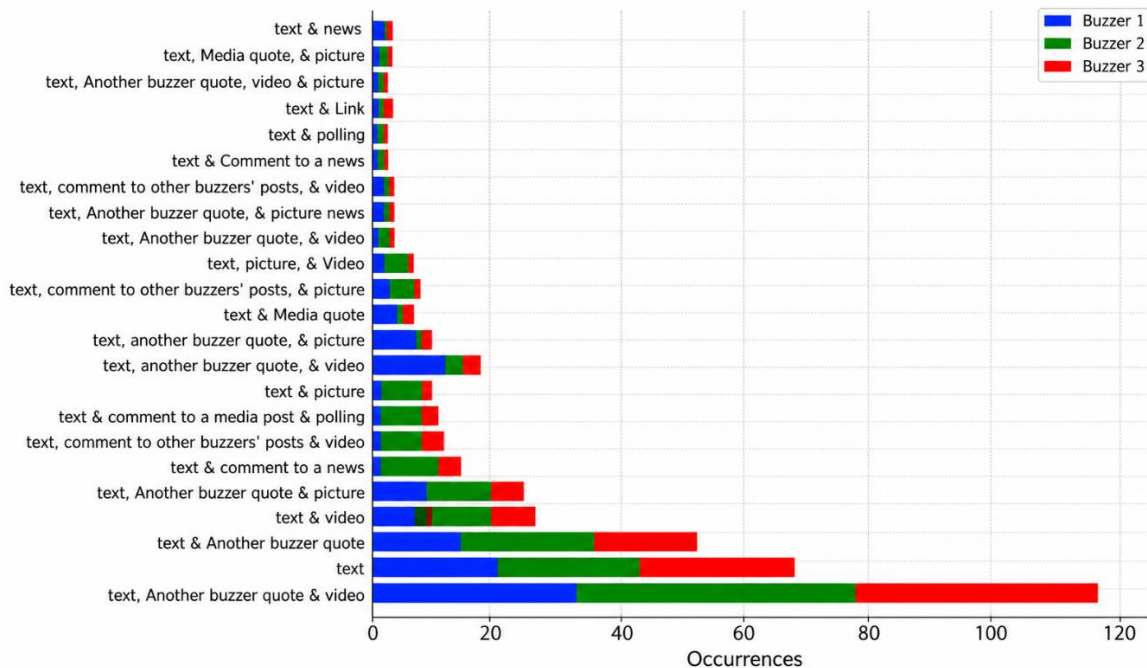
incarnation stage focused on the triangulation and the composition of interpretative narration to explain the buzzer communication pattern, discourse strategy, or pragmatic meaning.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. The Content to Enhance the Locutionary Act

The features provided in X allow users to post texts, emoticons, photos, videos, and links, a combination of all of them or to reply to comments. These features enabled the buzzers to incorporate external sources. Thus, the posts could be rich and credible since the text was supported by various content. In the locutionary act, the buzzers' utterances were realized as words, images, videos, links, and intertextual resources in the posts. The following graph shows the modes applied by the buzzers. The findings of the content posted by the buzzers were illustrated in the figure 2.

**Figure 2** The Multimodal as The Locutionary Act



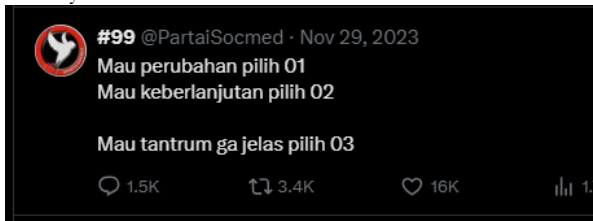
The graph revealed that the posts of the buzzers' locutionary act were dominated by the text. It can be in the form of text only or combinations of text with other modes, either video, picture, news, link, survey, or quotation of other accounts. It indicated that text-based narration is the main instrument to build the opinion and interaction in the platform. The dominant pattern across the three buzzers was the integration of the text, quotation of other accounts, and video. In contrast, the least frequent combination is text, quotation, video, and picture. The various combinations of the text indicated a preference for embedding intertextual voices with reinforcement.

The various combinations of modes in the buzzers' post as the locutionary acts can be categorized into four groups, either text only, the visually enhanced, the media cited, and the more complex multimodal. Here are the illustrations of each group.

Figure 3 The Illustration of multimodal groups in the Locutionary act

1. Text only

02-01



<https://x.com/PartaiSocmed/status/1729729236951355573>

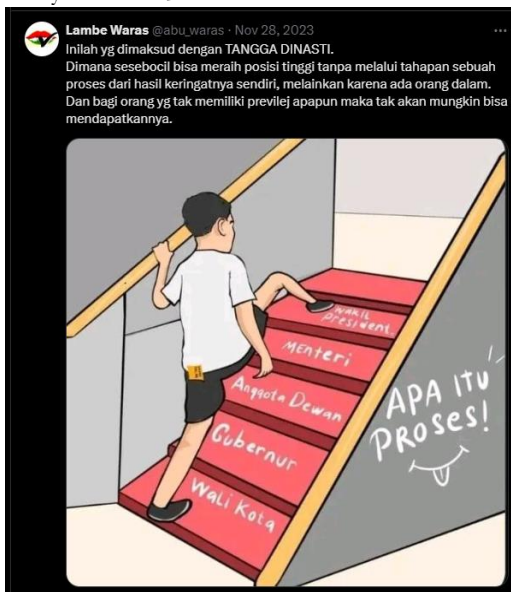
03-14



<https://x.com/Dennysiregar7/status/1730771388385177784>

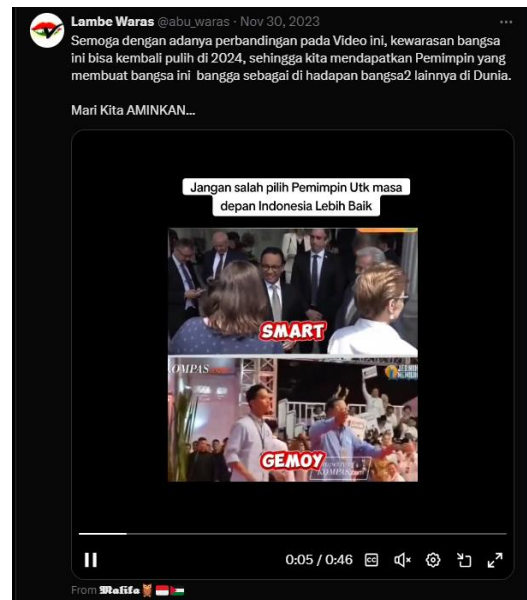
2. Visually-enhanced

01-07



[https://x.com/abu\\_waras/status/1729375752116965863](https://x.com/abu_waras/status/1729375752116965863)

01-16



[https://x.com/abu\\_waras/status/1730069468053975300](https://x.com/abu_waras/status/1730069468053975300)

3. Media-cited

03-24



<https://x.com/Dennysiregar7/status/1733172088377344256>

4. Complex Multimodal Post

02-46



<https://x.com/PartaiSocmed/status/1734966562019484032>

The first group represents the most basic form of communication in which buzzers convey narratives, opinions, or claims without including external links or visual media. The illustration showed that text-only posts (illustrated by data 02-01 and 03-14) that consist of short sentences delivering the statement of the buzzer. Text-only posts were often in the form of declarative sentences expressing the opinion or perspective of the buzzers toward the candidates.

The second group of locutionary acts showed that the posts consist of text enhanced visually by using picture (data 01-07) or videos (data 01-16) to illustrate the statement in the post. Data 01-07 consisted of text stating “*Inilah yang dimaksud dengan Tangga Dinasti. Dimana sesebocil inibisa meraih posisi tinggi tanpa melalui tahapan sebuah proses dari hasil keringatnya sendiri, melainkan karena ada orang dalam. Dan bagi orang yang tak memiliki privilej apapun tak akan mungkin bisa mendapatkannya.*” The statement was illustrated by a picture of a casually dressed young man moving upward beside a labelled staircase of political offices from *Walikota, Gubernur, Anggota Dewan, Menteri, to President*. The stepped sequence represented expected procedural advancement. However, he bypassed the steps marked “Tangga Dinasti” to the top step, while the caption framed dynastic advancement versus merit-based progression, which was represented with the rhetorical “*apa itu proses!*” with an illustration of a grin sticking out a tongue.

In data 01-16, Buzzer 1 posted a text written “*Semoga dengan adanya perbandingan pada video ini, kewarasan bangsa ini bisa kembali pulih di 2024 sehingga kita mendapatkan Pemimpin yang membuat bangsa ini bangga sebagai di hadapan bangsa2 lainnya di Dunia. Mari Kita AMINKAN....*” The text is enhanced by two videos labelled ‘SMART’ (top) and ‘GEMOY’ (bottom). The top panel showed a man (candidate supported by Buzzer 1) wearing a suit shaking hands in a formal indoor setting with officials and media, while the bottom panel showed a casually dressed man onstage with a megaphone engaging a cheering crowd. The contrast illustrated in the video urged the voters to see the candidate supported by Buzzer 1 as the leader who can make Indonesia proud in the global world. Buzzer 1 ended the post with the word *AMINKan* written in capital letters which is the abbreviation of candidate number 1.

In the third group, the text was enhanced by the media as the source quoted. As illustrated by data 03-24, the buzzer just tweeted the sentence “*Keraasssss... Ini oara koruptor pasti bersatu melawan.*” The text was supported by two yellow fist emojis above a shared Kompas.com article titled “Ganjar Ingin Para Koruptor Dipenjara di Nusakambangan.” The article image depicted a presidential candidate speaking to reporters and cameras. The text produced by Buzzer 3 drew authority from the media to reinforce legitimacy.

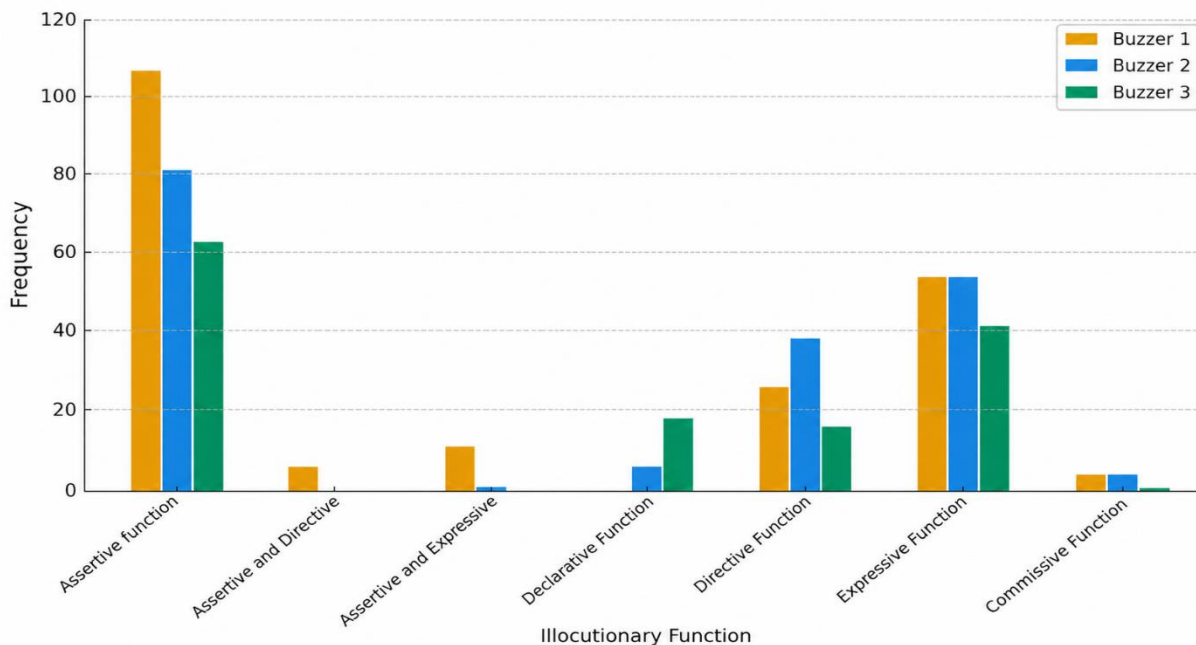
The political narrative in the last group of posts was composed of text, images, and quotes. In data 02-46, Buzzer 2 posted a text written “*Munafik? Ini contoh orang munafik. Komitmennya tidak bisa dipegang!*” alongside a video of the opponent candidate and a tweet replying to @scarypenny, another X account. The other X account post was a mock to Buzzer 2 as hypocritical by showing the post of Buzzer 2 from the presidential election in 2009, when Buzzer 2 created a negative post about the candidate he supported in the present election. The post in the previous election consisted of a media quotation. Thus, the post illustrated a complexity because the locutionary acts consisted (1) the tweet quoted from another X account, (2) the post of Buzzer 2 from the previous election, which consisted of a text and media quotation, and (3) the post of Buzzer 2 in the present election responding to the other buzzer account by turning the accusation to Candidate 1.

The data showed that the communication strategy of the buzzers was not only focused on text, but also tactically used visual elements and media authority to strengthen the political messages.

#### 4.2. Illocutionary Acts to Shape Political Discourse

The content posted by the buzzers was arranged in accordance with their intention. The various modes of locutionary acts served as instruments to convey the illocutionary acts. All buzzers applied illocutionary acts with domination of assertive, directive, and expressive speech acts as illustrated in the graph.

Figure 4 Illocutionary Act by The Buzzers





The buzzers employed the illocutionary acts as part of a communication strategy during the presidential campaign. The graph revealed that the illocutionary acts of the buzzers were dominated by assertive, directive, and expressive acts. All buzzers mostly applied assertive speech acts. It indicated that in their posts, their primary goals are to present information or make statements of their claims, beliefs, or opinions as facts. It could be part of the strategy to influence or convince the audience about the political facts presented in the posts, either in plain text or in different modes, to achieve the goal. The assertive strategy was supported by quotes from the mass media or by links to other sources. The sources become assertive tools to provide indisputable physical evidence of illocutionary force so that the quotations presented a literal message that it is not the words of the buzzers, but the words of the news media or other sources.

The second dominant illocutionary act was expressive speech acts. The expressive speech acts indicated the psychological conditions or feelings of the buzzers towards a situation to influence the emotions of the followers to build affective alignment with the audience. The posts function as expressive speech acts to show support or pride for a particular party or candidate. The aim is to trigger similar sentiments from their followers, to show solidarity, or to build the impression of a collective consensus in digital space.

The directive acts aim to direct the audience to do something or to adopt a particular point of view. Sometimes, the acts were supported by polling or surveys. The use of the polling feature is the way to force the audience to engage in the narrative being constructed. The buzzers also directed the attention or anger of the audience toward a particular or viral issue and provided the news link to mobilize the digital presence of the audience and to increase the reach of the issue.

The combination of various modes in a post indicated that the illocutionary force lied in layers of validation. The intention of the buzzers was confirmed by many other digital sources. The external link embedded in the posts served as external reference which verified the claim. Thereby, it increased the overall credibility of the message.

However, there are infrequent posts that combine assertive and directive, as well as assertive and expressive speech acts. It indicated that the buzzers use the information or facts posted as a means to mobilize the audience or to influence the audience through persuasion and stance-taking. Collectively, the assertive, expressive, and directive speech acts of the buzzers during the presidential campaign constructed a persuasive triad of cognition, emotion, and action that sustained the political message.

Figure 5 Illustration of illocutionary Act (Assertive & Expressive)	Figure 6 Illustration of illocutionary Act (Assertive & Directive)
	
<p>02-20  <a href="https://x.com/PartaiSocmed/status/1731891410574471246">https://x.com/PartaiSocmed/status/1731891410574471246</a></p>	<p>01-89  <a href="https://x.com/abu_waras/status/1734478381981552865">https://x.com/abu_waras/status/1734478381981552865</a></p>

The illustration of data 02-20 primarily performed an assertive and expressive illocutionary act by stating “*Mengenai asam sulfat @gibran\_tweet sudah mengaku salah sebut dan minta maaf, yang disebut adalah Asam Folat. Kami jauh lebih tertarik pada cawapres yg bisa salah dan salah secara gentleman dari pada malaikat yg tidak bisa salah.*” The assertive function was shown in the first part of the tweet, where the speaker provided factual information of Gibran’s previous mistake

and apology. By stating that Gibran “sudah mengaku salah sebut dan minta maaf” (has admitted his mistake and apologized), the buzzer was asserting a truth claim by reporting what had happened and presenting it as factual information to the audience. The statement is validated with a video of Gibran apologizing for the mistake.

The expressive function appeared more strongly on the second part of the post which was written “*Kami jauh lebih tertarik pada cawapres yg bisa salah dan salah secara gentlemen dari pada malaikat yg tidak bisa salah.*” Through his tweet, Buzzer 2 expressed an attitude of approval and admiration toward his candidate as an individual who can admit his mistakes sincerely. It referred to the candidate supported by Buzzer 2. Simultaneously, he expressed his criticism of the other candidate for vice president, who acted as if he were infallible (*malaikat yang tak bisa salah*). The statement referred to the candidate for vice president number 3. It was validated with a media quotation. Thus, Buzzer 2 praised his candidate and mocked the other contestant in the post. In other words, the post conveyed the feelings of the buzzer and all supporters of the candidate and value judgment about the humility and accountability of the supported candidate.

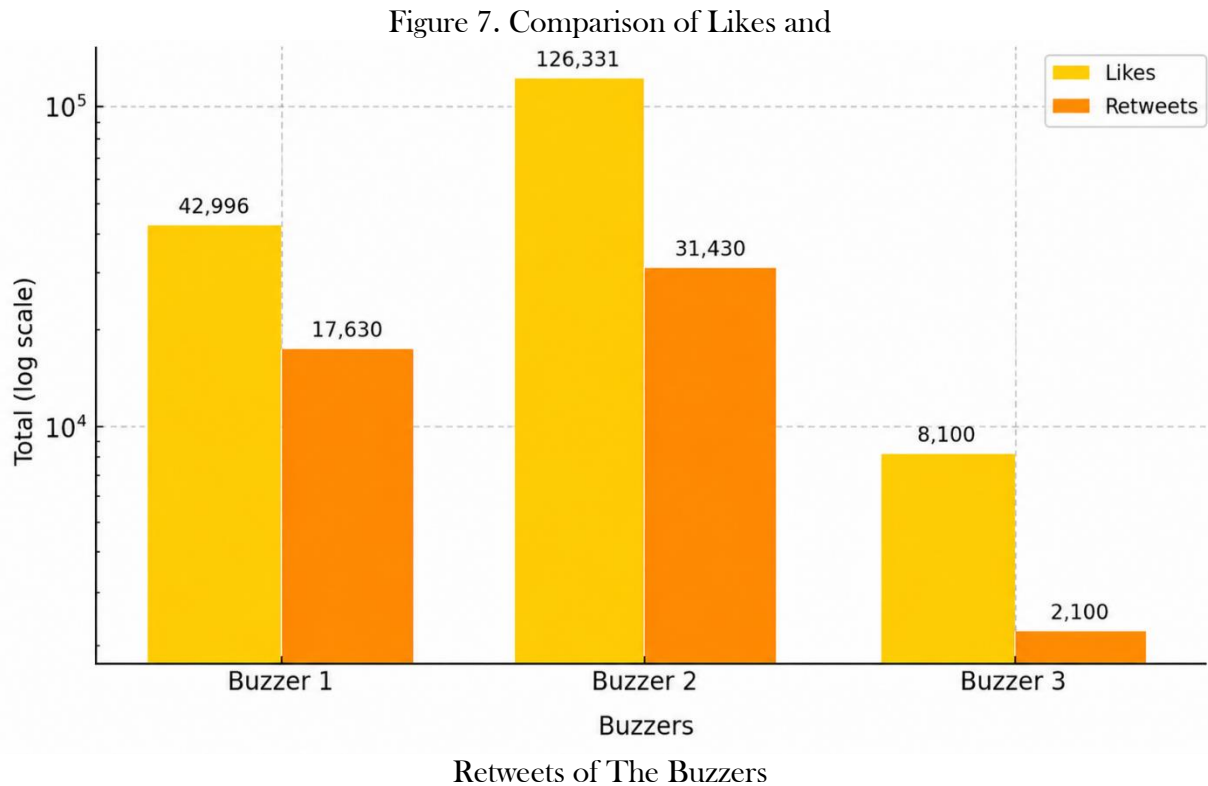
The combination of assertive and directive acts was illustrated by data 01-89. The buzzer posted a text which was written *Pernyataan ini sudah Offside. Seharusnya jaminan Rasa Aman itu tidak dikhususkan untuk WNI yang berasal dari kelompok tertentu, tapi rasa aman itu harus dijamin untuk seluruh WNI tanpa terkecuali. Dear @bawashu\_RI yang Offside2 seperti ini mohon diwaspadai.* 🙏. Buzzer 1 started his claim or opinion with an assertive act, *Seharusnya jaminan Rasa Aman itu tidak dikhususkan untuk WNI yang berasal dari kelompok tertentu, tapi rasa aman itu harus dijamin untuk seluruh WNI tanpa terkecuali.* He claimed that candidate for vice president number 2. He stated that *Pernyataan ini sudah Offside.* The term *offside* implied that the statement exceeded ethical boundaries. Thus, the speaker did not only convey information or an evaluation of the buzzer toward the statement in the news. It also framed reality from a particular perspective to influence the audience. The following statement *Seharusnya jaminan Rasa Aman itu tidak dikhususkan untuk WNI yang berasal dari kelompok tertentu, tapi rasa aman itu harus dijamin untuk seluruh WNI tanpa terkecuali.* The use of ‘seharusnya’ indicated a prescriptive function and criticized the candidate which did something unethical. In the end, he delivered a message to Bawaslu (authority to supervise the election) to be aware of unethical actions carried out by one of the vice presidential candidates through the statement of *Dear @bawashu\_RI yang Offside2 seperti ini mohon diwaspadai.* 🙏. The statement ended with an emoji of two palms together as if in supplication. In the post, the buzzer inserted a media link reporting a headline about a vice-presidential candidate that reads Gibran ensures Chinese Indonesian citizens are safe if he were the vice president.

In short, the result of the illocutionary analysis revealed that each buzzer represented a distinct illocutionary function within a coordinated campaign structure. Mainly, the posts are mostly assertive, expressive, and directive speech acts. It indicated the buzzers’ main role in influencing voters with the information, claims, or opinions. However, they provided credibility construction together with the information to lessen the negative impact of their post. The illocutionary act showed that the buzzers mostly do not ask the audience to vote for the supported candidate. They created negative statements about the opponent, but they created positive claims for the supported candidate. At the same time, they created emotional involvement through expressive speech act to choose the better candidate pair who is the candidate they supported. The assertive and expressive speech act strengthened the directive speech act to mobilize the audience to vote. The

information or claim also served to trigger the emotional side of the audience or to mobilize them to do something. Furthermore, Buzzer 2 dominantly implemented directive speech acts which showed that Buzzer 2 provided the information or fact as an instrument to mobilize people. On the other hand, Buzzer 1 & 3 mostly emphasized the assertive and expressive speech act to shape the emotional solidarity.

### 4.3. The Perlocutionary Effects on Buzzer Discourse

The analysis of perlocutionary acts revealed varying levels of audience engagement with the political buzzers' posts on platform X. Audience engagement was reflected in the likes and retweets as a response of emotion and action. The graph in Figure 7 indicated the total engagement of each buzzer which reflected the influence of the post on the audience, in terms of generating emotional responses (likes) and encouraging action (retweets).



Among the buzzers, Buzzer 2 achieved the strongest of perlocutionary effects. The graph showed that he received 126,331 and 31,430 retweets. Buzzer 2 dominated the responses significantly. It means that the messages had the most significant influence on the audience's attitudes and actions. The result indicated that Buzzer 2's posts were effectively translated to widespread audience reaction. However, Buzzer 1 generated a moderate result with 42,996 likes and 17,630 retweets. The low perlocutionary effect showed by Buzzer 3 with only 8,100 likes and 2,100 retweets.

However, Buzzer 1 has a more effective perlocutionary effect because he got the highest ratio of retweets to likes. It means that Buzzer 1 was able to influence the audience and distribute the messages posted effectively. The message could be more actionable or more resonant to the audience. Even though Buzzer 2 has the highest number of likes and retweets, but the ratio of likes and retweets is lower than that of Buzzer 1. It indicated that the perlocutionary effect of Buzzer 2

was only able to make most of the audience consume the post rather than distribute the post. Buzzer 3 showed the lowest perlocutionary effect since the number of likes and retweets are the least among the buzzers.

Therefore, the pattern showed that the higher audience engagement correlates with the stronger campaign performance and likely contributed to the successful candidate dominance. However, the lower engagement corresponded with weaker performance of the buzzer. In short, the engagement ranking of the buzzers reflected and correlated with the electoral outcome (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, 2024). The buzzer with the strongest engagement aligned with the winning side, whereas those with weak engagement aligned with the losing side.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

The findings revealed that buzzers' locutionary acts were not merely linguistic but also multimodal with textual, visual, and intertextual cues that converge to construct meaning. It reflects that speech is always embedded within broader meaningful behavior to function simultaneously as action (Geenen, 2023) because modes such as language, image, and video are mobilized in complementary ways (Van Leeuwen, 2008). The combination of modes as the locutionary act is not merely for meaning construction. The buzzers produce the meaning, not only by relying on language but through the interaction of the modes since interaction of the modes could mobilize people (Norris, 2004). These practices corresponded to the research of Jolayemi et al. (2021) who found that the campaign messages constructed ideological meaning through colors, images, and verbal anchors, as buzzers' posts employ multimodal layering to frame political discourse. Even though, the buzzers did not use hashtags, they still ensure content authority to sway public opinion (Suciati et al., 2019; Maulana & Kuswayati, 2021; Dewantara et al., 2022; Sibaroni & Prasetyowati, 2022; Yulianto, 2023).

The use of text with quotation, picture, and video reflected a deliberate combination of multimodal resources to strengthen credibility and affective engagement and affective power (Rahmalina et al., 2025) and impact on public opinion (Jungherr, 2016). The buzzers need credibility since they deliberately use impoliteness (Ifechelobi & Okpokiri, 2020). The multiple resources behind their post enable them to open their identity as buzzers.

The buzzer locution action is massively multimodal. Different from (Rasenberg et al., 2022), who stated that efficient communication minimizes multimodal effort, these political buzzers appeared to maximize the various modes as locutionary acts to ensure that messages are processed cognitively and registered to gain force in digital political discourse. The impact of the strategy of the post as the locutionary act would appeal to logic, emotion, and credibility, so that the audience would leverage the trust to support their arguments from the buzzers. Another strategy to communicate the message, the buzzers use nonverbal elements such as emojis and images are pragmatic strategies for building relationships and conveying social identity (AlMamoory & Al-Khazaali, 2024); (Jolayemi et al., 2021).

The more complex combination was applied to reinforce legitimacy and align narratives across networks. The dynamic modes in the posts added dynamic and affective dimensions that increased audience engagement and message retention. Incorporating text with other modes positions the buzzers within authoritative discourse to persuade the audience to support their favoured candidate because multimodality in online communities is a sociolinguistic resource for negotiating identity and authority (Collister, 2013). In political discourse, a locutionary act is not merely words

as defined by Austin (1962). It is the integration of various modes that functions as an instrument to mobilize the audience to vote.

The intertextuality of the modes in the locutionary acts significantly enhanced the illocutionary force. Research of Da Silva (2021) and Yokossi (2022) demonstrated that the multimodal elements, such as memes or images created an effect on the intention. The analysis of illocutionary acts and the real purposes behind the buzzers' posts revealed that their communicative strategies are deeply intertwined with their strategic objectives during the presidential campaign on platform X. Each buzzer employed assertives, directives, expressives, and the combination of the acts to shape the political narratives and influence public opinion. It indicated that the classification of illocutionary acts by Searle (1969) was not applied only singularly. The buzzer could combine the intention to serve specific strategic purposes, as the buzzers aim to achieve their broader political goals—informing, mobilizing, and emotionally engaging the audience (Collister, 2013). The emotional content, such as anger, fear, and hate were triggered by the distribution of viral content (Brown & Molete, 2024); (Simanjuntak et al., 2025) to spread a negative campaign that disrupts social stability (Syatta et al., 2023; Handini & Dunan, 2019).

The domination of assertive acts by all buzzers indicated that they prioritized delivering certain political information or messages (Sholihah, 2022; Syatta et al., 2023; Yulianto, 2023). The function of assertive (Searle, 1969) was applied differently by the Buzzers. The assertive speech acts were also combined with directive and expressive acts in the posts. It means that in the assertive-directive combination, the buzzers state their belief or claim as the basis to mobilize the audience. It aligns with the research by Bumi et al. (2024), which highlighted that expressive speech acts (such as praise or blame) can engage voters emotionally in the political process. On the other hand, the assertive-expressive combination revealed that the buzzers use the assertive acts to build emotional resonance and empathy with the audience. Overall. The illocutionary acts of the buzzers have evolved from merely “saying” to “proving” and “mobilizing”.

The buzzers are like agents with double functions: to polish the image of the presidential candidate they support, but at the same time, they spread negative posts about the image of the opponents (Natsheh, 2019; Sholihah, 2022; Aljanabi & Jabir, 2024; Arfiawati & Guntari, 2022; Siregar et al., 2024). However, different from the study of (Sholihah, 2022), the buzzers tried to avoid hoaxes by inserting the source in the posts. The illocutionary acts enabled them to manipulate the negative motive through comments or casual opinion (Brown & Molete, 2024).

The actual response of the buzzers' online posts during the presidential campaign was reflected through the perlocutionary acts. The likes represent emotional resonance of the content, while the retweets could indicate action-driven responses. The engagement metric indicates the perlocutionary success of political communication (Wekesa, 2023; Vaccari et al., 2015). This study portrayed the transformation of buzzers, from the business function to promote sales into a political instrument that is able to influence public opinion (Syatta et al., 2023) and from being anonymous (Yulianto, 2023) into publicly known buzzers. Even though it is online-based, the interaction of buzzers with the audience is able to stimulate offline activism, such as sharing content or even voting (Vaccari et al., 2015). It makes social media function as a public space in a political campaign because the activity is interpreted by the algorithm to shape the political identity (Jones, 2020).

The engagement generated by the buzzers' posts is crucial in determining the effectiveness of political messaging. The practical implication of the study shows the importance of the

development of digital media literacy to help the public understand the language used with emotional and mobilization messages behind the information provided. The operation of buzzers in constructing the political narration within the package of legitimation and authority through multimodality emphasizes the urgency to understand the illocutionary function behind the posts, which can be observed through the speech acts (Rakaj, 2022; Putri, 2024). Understanding how speech acts operate in digital campaigns is essential for assessing the power and potential consequences in democratic discourse.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The speech act of the political buzzers underscored the significance of strategically employing locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts in shaping public opinion and influencing voter behavior in political communication. The concept of speech acts was applied uniquely by the buzzer in a digital presidential campaign. Locution is not only words. Instead, it is multimodal layers that served as instruments to move the audience. The role of multimodal content as the locutionary acts in enhancing message effectiveness and fostering engagement, particularly in the context of an online campaign, is the key to political success. Regarding the illocutionary acts, the buzzers mainly intended to inform the voters of their claim and belief to make them emotionally involved and mobilized. The perlocutionary effect of the speech acts was evident in the audience engagement. The post with high engagement suggested that the buzzers effectively shaped the political discourse.

The future research should explore the ethical implications of the buzzers' strategies, particularly regarding the potential manipulation of language and actions. As social media continues to play a central role in political campaigns, understanding the interplay between speech acts and audience engagement is critical for effective campaigns in the digital age. Other possible research could focus on the digital communicators integrating the text, the visuals, and emotional cues to craft persuasive messages that resonate with voters.

## Acknowledgement

This work was supported by the LPIPM Universitas Al-Azhar Indonesia through the Competitive Research Grant 2025. The authors sincerely appreciate this support, which enabled the completion of the study.

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