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FORENSIC LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF DYSPHEMISTIC EXPRESSIONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE TARGETING PRESIDENT JOKO WIDODO

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Abstract: Social media constitutes a public space for expressing ideas and opinions; therefore, it must be used wisely by its users. Many social media users commit legal violations, such as employing dysphemism (abusive language) toward individuals or groups, including President Joko Widodo during his term of office. This study aims to describe the lexical meanings that emerge in dysphemistic expressions, the purposes of dysphemism, and the legal impact of dysphemism on social media targeting President Joko Widodo. The method employed in this study is a descriptive-analytical method focusing on dysphemism directed at President Joko Widodo on social media. The results indicate that: (1) the lexical meanings that emerge can be classified into eight categories; (2) the purposes of dysphemism toward President Joko Widodo on social media include expressions of hatred, insult, defamation, threats, and the degradation of the dignity and honour of the head of state; and (3) the legal impact of dysphemism on social media targeting President Joko Widodo consists of court verdicts imposed on defendants who are proven to have uttered dysphemistic expressions on social media.
Keywords: *legal impact*; *dysphemism*; *social media*; *president.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital communication has intensified the circulation of harmful language practices, particularly dysphemism, hate speech, and verbal hostility directed at political leaders in Indonesia. Social media platforms now function as discursive arenas where citizens negotiate political dissatisfaction, often through derogatory expressions that blur the boundaries between criticism and defamation (Sholihatin et al., 2024; Astuti & Mulyadi, 2025). Building on previous findings, scholars argue that linguistic aggression toward public officials increasingly assumes multimodal forms that escalate rhetorical hostility and invite legal scrutiny (Rahmayantis et al., 2025; Waljinah et al., 2024). This issue is particularly salient in the case of President Joko Widodo, who has become a frequent target of dysphemistic constructions that challenge institutional authority while shaping public sentiment (Khoirunnisa et al., 2024; Statham, 2025). Although dysphemism is often framed as political critique, its legal implications require careful forensic linguistic examination to differentiate constitutionally protected expression from criminally actionable speech (Hadiwijaya & Yahmun, 2025; Helmi et al., 2025). The present study responds to this need by situating dysphemistic attacks within Indonesia's broader sociolegal and communicative landscape.

Forensic linguistics has gained prominence as a methodological approach for interpreting contested utterances in criminal investigations, particularly those involving defamation and allegations of harmful speech (Sholihatin et al., 2024; Askurny et al., 2024; Wright, 2025). Scholars have further demonstrated that linguistic evidence provides insight into intention, deception, and hostility that may otherwise remain obscured in digital interactions (Waljinah et al., 2024; Helmi et al., 2025). Building on previous findings, studies

of judicial communication reveal how courts rely on pragmatic and semantic analysis to evaluate accusations, insults, and implications within legal documents (Shahid et al., 2025; Ejaz et al., 2025). These developments underscore the central role of forensic linguistics in adjudicating sensitive political cases. At the same time, forensic linguistic evaluations highlight the need for a systematic framework capable of addressing the complexity of digital language crimes. This aligns with calls for more nuanced analyses of political discourse involving high-ranking officials.

Research has shown that social media fosters environments conducive to linguistic violations due to anonymity, impunity, and rapid message diffusion (Ntelu et al., 2025; Sidorkina, 2025). Harmful discourse, including hate speech, dysphemism, and defamatory constructions, frequently emerges in political contexts, reflecting public polarization and ideological conflict (Sari et al., 2025; Mardhatillah & Agustina, 2025). This aligns with findings on verbal aggression in WhatsApp discussions, which illustrate how hostility materializes even in semi-private digital spaces (Pattisahisiwa et al., 2025). Building on these insights, studies of political hoaxes and deceptive communication demonstrate that digital misinformation heightens animosity toward public officials (Astuti & Mulyadi, 2025; Pradesi & Marlianingsih, 2025). The escalating intensity of harmful political discourse necessitates more robust analyses of dysphemistic expressions in Indonesia. Social media thus constitutes a crucial site for examining linguistic hostility toward President Joko Widodo.

The literature on hate speech highlights the intertwined nature of political identity, verbal hostility, and ideological resistance (Rahmayantis et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2025). Scholars note that slurs and derogatory terms play a key role in constructing enemy images of political leaders (Sidorkina, 2025), often functioning as symbolic attacks that resonate within polarized communities (Al-Jarf, 2025). Building on previous findings, research on pro-Palestinian discourse and anti-Muslim memes shows how emotive and multimodal elements intensify online hostility (Mualafina & Ulfiyani, 2025; Altahmazi, 2024). This aligns with analyses of trolling behaviors, which are influenced by news exposure and online group dynamics (Goyanes et al., 2025). Such studies illustrate that dysphemism is not merely expressive vulgarity but a strategic linguistic resource in political antagonism. The Indonesian case mirrors these global trends.

Research on dysphemism across genres demonstrates that derogatory expressions are shaped by cultural norms, ideological tensions, and power contestations (Baxronova, 2024; Campos-Delgado, 2024). Building on previous investigations, studies show that dysphemism in literature, poetry, and media functions to challenge dominant narratives or reinforce sociopolitical identities (Mu'iz & Laili, 2024; Maftunabonu, 2025). This aligns with findings on dysphemism in specific speech communities, where such expressions serve pragmatic functions related to group cohesion or social exclusion (Vindra et al., 2025). Translation research further highlights the complexity of rendering dysphemistic expressions across linguistic and cultural boundaries (Gracía, 2025). These insights demonstrate that dysphemism is both a linguistic and ideological instrument in political discourse. Its deployment against President Joko Widodo must therefore be understood within this multidimensional framework.

Scholars emphasize that defamation cases hinge on nuanced distinctions between insult, evaluative commentary, and accusations with legal consequences (Gracía, 2025; Khoirunnisa et al., 2024; Hadiwijaya & Yahmun, 2025). Building on earlier work, forensic linguists highlight that digital discourse complicates defamation adjudication due to its speed, scale, and multimodality (Askurny et al., 2024; Sholihatin et al., 2024). This aligns with research showing that courts increasingly evaluate implicature, presupposition, and pragmatic force when interpreting contested utterances (Ejaz et al., 2025; Giménez García & Queralt, 2024). Scholars have further demonstrated that legal responsibility is affected by perceived intent and communicative context, especially in politically charged situations. These discussions underscore the importance of applying a rigorous forensic linguistic approach when assessing dysphemistic attacks on national leaders. The Indonesian context is no exception.

Global studies reveal that linguistic aggression in multilingual societies often mirrors broader sociopolitical tensions, making cross-cultural analysis essential (Shakirovich, 2025; Kanyama et al., 2025). This aligns with bibliometric findings showing that forensic linguistics has expanded across Chinese, African, and Asian contexts, each contributing distinct methodological insights (Liu, 2024; Ralarala et al., 2025). Building on these observations, research on international conflict reporting reveals that euphemism and dysphemism shape political narratives globally (Abidin et al.,

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2024; Basiouny, 2025). Studies of political discourse in Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern media similarly demonstrate how lexical framing constructs public perceptions of leaders (Rohmatullah & Degaf, 2025; Aliu, 2025). These perspectives enrich our understanding of dysphemistic expressions targeting President Joko Widodo. They show that the phenomenon is part of a transnational pattern of linguistic contestation.

Research on digital news platforms demonstrates how lexical choices influence political narratives, often through euphemistic or dysphemistic strategies (Fahim & Islam, 2024; Abidin et al., 2024). Building on previous work, analysts argue that media framing can either legitimize or delegitimize political actors depending on the ideological stance of the outlet (Campos-Delgado, 2024; Basiouny, 2025). This aligns with findings that conflict reporting in various global regions frequently embeds linguistic cues reflecting geopolitical alignments (Rohmatullah & Degaf, 2025; Altahmazi, 2024; Alshraah et al., 2024). Such insights demonstrate that dysphemism functions not only as individual attack but also as part of orchestrated public narratives. In Indonesia, similar rhetorical strategies appear in online political discussions and can directly influence perceptions of presidential authority. These factors necessitate a deeper forensic examination of dysphemistic content.

Technological developments have introduced computational methods for analyzing large-scale digital discourse, including stylometry, authorship verification, and linguistic pattern recognition (Mashru & Nautiyal, 2024; Sinaga, 2025). Scholars have further demonstrated that machine learning facilitates the detection of deceptive or hostile linguistic markers across platforms (Mani et al., 2025; Liu, 2024). This aligns with bibliometric findings showing a global rise in computational forensic linguistic studies (Wasi et al., 2024). Building on this framework, research has expanded into automated monitoring of political hostility and hate speech online (Ntelu et al., 2025). These developments provide methodological foundations for examining dysphemistic attacks directed at President Joko Widodo. Computational approaches complement qualitative analysis and enhance evidentiary rigor.

Although considerable research addresses dysphemism, hate speech, and digital political hostility, no study has ever examined dysphemism toward Indonesia's sitting president using a combined multimodal–pragmatic–computational–legal forensic framework (Rahmayantis et al., 2025; Hadiwijaya & Yahmun, 2025). Building on existing findings, prior works tend to focus on hoaxes, general digital hostility, or interpersonal aggression rather than targeted dysphemism with legal implications (Khoirunnisa et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2025). This aligns with calls for studies that systematically assess political attacks through both linguistic and legal lenses (Askurny et al., 2024; Astuti & Mulyadi, 2025). To address this gap, the present study asks: (1) What dysphemistic forms targeting President Joko Widodo appear on social media? (2) How do these expressions function pragmatically and discursively? (3) To what extent can these expressions carry legal consequences under Indonesian law?

The novelty of this research lies in its integration of multimodal analysis, pragmatic interpretation, computational linguistic techniques, and legal-forensic evaluation, an approach not previously applied to dysphemism targeting Indonesia's sitting president (Sholihatin et al., 2024; Mashru & Nautiyal, 2024). Building on previous scholarship, this framework enhances the precision of identifying hostile linguistic patterns while situating them within defamation law and constitutional protections (Hadiwijaya & Yahmun, 2025; Helmi et al., 2025). This aligns with global developments in forensic linguistics that call for interdisciplinary methodologies capable of addressing digital political hostility (Liu, 2024; Mani et al., 2025). The study's significance extends to legal practitioners, policymakers, and scholars by providing conceptual clarity and evidentiary grounding for distinguishing protected political speech from criminally actionable dysphemism (Ntelu et al., 2025; Goyanes et al., 2025). Ultimately, this research contributes to safeguarding democratic discourse while ensuring legal accountability in Indonesia's rapidly evolving digital landscape.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive-analytical design within the framework of forensic linguistics. The research adopted an integrated interdisciplinary approach to examine the phenomenon of dysphemistic expressions directed at President Joko Widodo on social media and their corresponding legal impacts. The design systematically combined multimodal discourse analysis, pragmatic analysis (speech act and appraisal theory), computational linguistic pattern recognition, and legal-forensic analysis. This multifaceted approach is necessary to unravel the complexity of digital political discourse, where

language operates simultaneously across lexical, intentional, and legal dimensions (Askurny et al., 2024). The descriptive component provides a detailed account of the forms and functions of the expressions, while the analytical component interprets these findings within the context of Indonesian law and digital communication ethics. This integrated model aligns with contemporary forensic linguistic research that advocates for combined methodologies to address digitally-mediated language crimes effectively (Sari et al., 2025).

Data for this study were drawn from two primary, complementary sources to ensure triangulation and robust analysis: legal document corpus and digital discourse corpus. The primary legal data consisted of publicly available court verdicts (*putusan pengadilan*) from district courts across Indonesia. These documents were sourced from the online database of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia (www.mahkamahagung.go.id). Verdicts were identified using keyword searches related to defamation, insult, and hate speech (e.g., "Penghinaan," "Ujaran Kebencian," "Presiden Joko Widodo," "Pasal 207 KUHP," "Pasal 28 UU ITE") for cases adjudicated between 2018 and 2024. The relevant utterances and contextual details were extracted directly from the judges' considerations (*pertimbangan hukum*) and the description of the defendant's actions (*surat dakwaan*). This method of using court verdicts as a definitive data source for forensic linguistic analysis is well-established in studies of hate speech in Indonesia (Syahid et al., 2021).

To contextualize the language found in court cases and analyze broader patterns, a corpus of social media posts was collected. Data were gathered from major platforms where political discourse is prevalent in Indonesia: Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, YouTube comments, and TikTok (Mubarok et al., 2024). Collection focused on publicly accessible posts, comments, and captions from January 2020 to December 2024. A combination of manual collection and targeted use of web-scraping tools (e.g., using Python libraries for publicly available data, adhering to platform terms of service) was employed. Search terms included the President's name ("Jokowi," "Joko Widodo") combined with common dysphemistic lexicons identified in preliminary research. This multi-platform approach mirrors methodologies used in prior forensic linguistic studies that source data from various social media to capture a wide spectrum of hostile political discourse (Mubarok et al., 2024).

A purposive sampling strategy was used for both data sources to ensure the selection of information-rich cases relevant to the research objectives. For the Legal Document Corpus, inclusion criteria were: (a) cases where the defendant was formally charged and found guilty of insulting or defaming President Joko Widodo; (b) cases where the verdict explicitly cited and analyzed the defendant's specific dysphemistic utterances; and (c) cases prosecuted under either the Criminal Code (KUHP, notably Article 207) or the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE). A total of six (6) complete verdicts, representing a geographic spread across Indonesia, formed the core legal sample for in-depth analysis.

For the Digital Discourse Corpus, sampling aimed for maximum variation in dysphemistic expression types. Posts were included if they contained direct, unambiguous derogatory language targeting the President. Sampling continued until thematic saturation was reached, whereby new data no longer yielded new categories of dysphemism. The final digital corpus comprised approximately 1,200 distinct dysphemistic units (words, phrases, short sentences). This approach to data collection and sampling is supported by similar research that uses documentation methods to gather and analyze viral social media content until saturation is achieved (Sari et al., 2025).

The data analysis was conducted through four interconnected and sequential stages, reflecting the integrated, multi-layered design of the research. The process commenced with Multimodal and Lexical-Semantic Coding. In this initial stage, each dysphemistic utterance from both the legal and digital corpora was subjected to close textual analysis. Guided by principles of multimodal discourse analysis, each unit was systematically annotated for its linguistic features (specific lexical choices), paralinguistic features (the use of capital letters, repeated characters, excessive punctuation, and emojis), and, where applicable, visual-verbal alignment in memes or image-based posts. This stage employed inductive coding to generate a foundational taxonomy of dysphemistic categories, such as taboo body parts, animal epithets, and ideological slurs.

Following this, the Pragmatic and Discursive Analysis stage examined the coded utterances for their deeper communicative functions and ideological framing, drawing on established linguistic frameworks. First, Speech Act Analysis

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was applied, classifying utterances according to Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary force to determine whether they functioned primarily as expressives (venting hatred), assertives (making defamatory claims), directives (inciting action), or commissives (issuing threats), a method central to determining intent in forensic linguistic studies (Askurny et al., 2024). Concurrently, Appraisal Theory Analysis was used to unpack the attitudes embedded in the language by examining instances of negative Judgment (assessing character), Affect (expressing emotion), and Appreciation (valuing things). Finally, Discursive Framing analysis identified the broader narratives, such as religious conflict, nationalist betrayal, or anti-communist conspiracy, into which dysphemistic terms were embedded, revealing how language is used to construct and reinforce ideological positions (Sari et al., 2025).

To enhance the reliability and objectivity of the qualitative lexical analysis, the digital discourse corpus was subjected to supplementary computational analysis. Using the R package *'Stylo'* and Python for text mining, basic frequency analyses and keyword-in-context (KWIC) analyses were run. This process helped to validate the manually identified recurrent dysphemistic lexicons, cluster similar expressions, and map common co-occurrences of terms (e.g., collocations of *"Jokowi"* with *"anjing"* and *"PKI"*). This step served as a triangulation tool to support, not replace, the qualitative analysis.

The core legal analysis involved a detailed forensic examination of the court verdicts, a key practice in forensic linguistics where language is examined as legal evidence (Syahid et al., 2021). This examination progressed through three integrated stages. First, the legal construction of the utterance was analyzed by scrutinizing how prosecutors and judges formally categorized the defendant's speech within specific legal frameworks, whether as "insult" under the Criminal Code (KUHP), "defamation," "hate speech," or "incitement" under the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE). Following this, the analysis of judicial reasoning entailed a close reading of the *pertimbangan hukum* (legal considerations) to discern how judges interpreted the speaker's intention and assessed the potential social impact of the dysphemistic expressions (Askurny et al., 2024). Finally, the process concluded with mapping linguistic features to legal outcomes, which systematically correlated the semantic-pragmatic characteristics of an utterance, such as the presence of a direct death threat or the use of SARA (ethnicity, religion, race, inter-group)-based ideological labels, with the specific articles of law invoked and the resulting severity of the sentence imposed by the court.

Triangulation was achieved by constantly comparing findings across these four analytical stages. For instance, a lexical pattern identified computationally would be examined for its pragmatic function and then traced to its treatment in court verdicts.

This study was conducted in strict adherence to established ethical guidelines for research involving publicly available digital data and legal documents. All data analyzed, including social media posts and court verdicts, were sourced exclusively from publicly accessible domains, such as the official database of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia and open social media platforms. To protect individual privacy, rigorous anonymization protocols were implemented. In reporting findings from court cases, defendants are referenced only by the initials or abbreviated identifiers used within the official verdicts (e.g., "EP," "B bin AJ"). Furthermore, all directly identifying information from social media data, including usernames, profile pictures, and any other personal identifiers, was systematically removed during the data coding and analysis phases.

The research maintained a principle of non-intervention throughout. The methodology was purely observational and analytical; there was no interaction with the creators of the sourced content, the defendants involved in the cases, or any other related individuals. Finally, the data collection processes were designed to ensure full compliance with the terms of service of the relevant social media platforms and the intended public-use provisions of the Supreme Court's database, thereby respecting the legal and operational frameworks governing the source materials. This comprehensive ethical approach ensures the study's integrity while minimizing any potential harm to the individuals referenced in the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study’s integrated forensic linguistic analysis reveals a systematic pattern of dysphemistic attacks against President Joko Widodo on social media. By examining the data through lexical-semantic, pragmatic-discursive, and legal-forensic lenses, the findings demonstrate that these expressions are not random insults but structured communicative acts with distinct strategies, intended functions, and measurable legal

consequences. The following sections present and discuss these findings in detail, supported by data from the collected corpus and relevant judicial rulings.

Lexical-semantic analysis of dysphemistic expressions

The analysis identified eight primary categories of dysphemistic lexicon used to target President Joko Widodo. These categories, ranging from direct vulgarisms to complex ideological slurs, form the building blocks of the hostile discourse.

Table 1. *Categories of dysphemistic lexicon targeting President Joko Widodo*

No.	Category	Description	Example from Corpus	Lexical Function
1	Taboo Body Parts & Excrement	Use of sexually explicit or scatological terms.	*"Jokowi kontol", "Jokowi tai"*	Direct dehumanization; maximum vulgar offense.
2	Animal Epithets	Equating the target with despised animals.	*"Jokowi anjing", "muka babi"*	Denial of human dignity; cultural insult.
3	Intellectual/ Mental Capacity Attacks	Labeling target as stupid or insane.	*"presiden tergoblok", "idiot", "gila"*	Delegitimization of leadership capacity.
4	Socio-Political Degradation	Demeaning target's social or presidential status.	*"presiden kampung", "babu"*	Undermining authority and elite status.
5	Ideological & Identity Labeling	Accusing target of belonging to a banned or reviled group.	*"PKI", "antek asing", "babu China"*	Framing target as a national/ideological traitor.
6	Moral & Ethical Condemnation	Portraying target as evil, cruel, or corrupt.	*"jahanam", "dzolimin", "tak tahu malu"*	Constructing a morally reprehensible character.
7	Violent Imperatives & Threats	Direct calls for or threats of physical harm.	*"tembak kepala", "bakar fasilitas", "disniper"*	Incitement to action; intimidation.
8	Religious & Ethnic Instrumentalization	Framing critique within religious or ethnic solidarity.	*References to "umat Islam", "bangsa Aceh"*	Amplifying

The most frequent and direct forms of attack were Taboo Body Parts & Excrement (Category 1) and Animal Epithets (Category 2). Terms like *"kontol"* (penis) and *"tai"* (feces) function as ultimate vulgar signifiers, reducing the target to a base, biological object and aiming to provoke shock and maximum offense. Similarly, calling someone *"anjing"* (dog) or *"babi"* (pig) leverages cultural perceptions of these animals as dirty, lowly, or despised to strip away human dignity. This finding aligns with broader patterns of political insult where corporeal and animalistic imagery is used for intense degradation (Baxronova, 2024; Al-Jarf, 2025).

A more pernicious and complex strategy involves Ideological & Identity Labeling (Category 5). Accusations like *"PKI"* (linking the President to the banned Indonesian Communist Party) or *"babu China"* (Chinese servant) are not merely insults but discursive weapons laden with historical trauma and geopolitical tension. They frame Joko Widodo not just as a bad leader, but as an existential traitor to the nation, evoking deep-seated societal fears. This aligns with research on how dysphemism in conflict reporting often embeds ideological positions to delegitimize actors (Rohmatullah & Degaf, 2025; Basiouny, 2025). Similarly, Socio-Political Degradation via terms like *"presiden kampung"* (village president) attacks his perceived legitimacy and sophistication, a tactic observed in other contexts where a leader's origins are used to undermine their authority (Aliu, 2025).

Furthermore, expressions often stack multiple categories to amplify hostility. For instance, the utterance *"Jokowi kontol, anak anjing"* combines Category 1 and 2. More complex examples like *"GOBLOK BABU CHINA, JOKOWI BABU CHINA, PRESIDEN TERGOBLOK SEDUNIA"* weave together attacks on intellect (Category 3), ideological betrayal (Category 5), and socio-political degradation (Category 4). This stacking creates a dense, multilayered attack that is difficult to counter and is designed to resonate across

different grievance narratives within polarized communities.

Pragmatic-discursive functions and communicative intent

Beyond lexical semantics, the analysis of speech acts and discursive context reveals the strategic *functions* of these dysphemistic expressions. They perform specific communicative work within the digital public sphere.

Expressive acts of hatred and contempt

The primary pragmatic function identified within the data is expressive, specifically aimed at conveying the speaker's intense negative emotions and constructing a public stance of hostility. Utterances like "HEI JOKOWI RAKYAT SUDAH MUAK JIJIK SAMA LU..!!" are archetypal of this function. The lexical choices "muak" (disgusted) and "jijik" (revulsed) explicitly signal a profound affective state, moving far beyond mere political disagreement. This constitutes a performative, public display of visceral hatred intended to achieve two key social ends: to shame and demean the target by attaching extreme social stigma, and to signal in-group allegiance and solidarity within an opposed political community. Such performances are a cornerstone of polarized online ecosystems, where the expression of raw emotion often supersedes reasoned argument as the primary currency of engagement (Goyanes et al., 2025).

This expressive hostility is frequently intensified through specific linguistic and paralinguistic amplification strategies endemic to digital platforms. The use of full capitalization ("HEI JOKOWI"), exaggerated punctuation ("!!"), and the informal, confrontational pronoun "LU" are deliberate stylistic choices that heighten the sense of shouted, unrestrained anger. These features simulate a mode of communication that is both public and visceral, breaking norms of civil discourse to maximize emotional impact. The function, therefore, is not merely to describe a feeling of disgust but to *perform* it audaciously for a networked audience, leveraging the affordances of social media for maximum rhetorical effect.

Furthermore, these acts serve a crucial intra-group function beyond inter-group attack. By publicly articulating such intense contempt, a speaker reinforces the shared grievances and moral boundaries of their own political community. The expression becomes a badge of loyalty, differentiating "true" critics from the merely dissatisfied and strengthening group cohesion against a perceived common enemy. Thus, what appears as a simple outburst of hatred is also a sophisticated social signal within the complex ecology of online political identity, where demonstrating the strength of one's antipathy can be as important as the content of one's critique.

Assertive acts of defamation and delegitimization

Beyond simple expressive hatred, a substantial portion of the analyzed utterances function as assertive speech acts designed to construct and disseminate damaging claims about President Joko Widodo's character and legitimacy. Accusations such as labeling him a "babu China" (servant of China) or alleging his affiliation with a "tim Jokowi PKI" (Jokowi PKI team) constitute grave defamatory imputations. These are not mere insults but specific, falsifiable assertions that fabricate a narrative of subservience to foreign powers or allegiance to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), a historically taboo and legally dissolved ideology. The pragmatic intent is twofold: to directly damage the President's personal and professional reputation, and more strategically, to delegitimize his constitutional authority in the public eye. By framing the elected head of state as an illegitimate actor, a traitor, or a foreign puppet, these speech acts aim to erode the social trust and political capital that underpin effective governance, seeking to destabilize his leadership not through policy debate but through character annihilation.

The legal gravity of these assertions lies in their nature as statements presented as fact. Forensic linguistic analysis emphasizes that the distinction between protected opinion and actionable defamation often hinges on the imputation of dishonorable conduct or a verifiably false fact (Khoirunnisa et al., 2024; Hadiwijaya & Yahmun, 2025). Unlike subjective expressions of disgust ("I find him revolting"), claims like "he is a Chinese servant" or "he is collaborating with the PKI" are presented as objective realities. They carry a pretense of truth intended to be believed and acted upon by the audience, thereby crossing a critical legal threshold. Furthermore, the choice of labels like "PKI" is particularly potent, as it weaponizes Indonesia's deep historical trauma and socio-political sensitivities. This transforms a political attack into a form of social and symbolic violence, invoking a powerful specter of national betrayal that is designed to trigger visceral fear and outrage, thereby amplifying the delegitimization far beyond the reach of ordinary criticism.

Directive and commissive acts of threat and incitement

The most legally consequential dysphemistic expressions are those that function as directive or commissive speech acts, moving beyond insult to incite or promise violence. Direct threats, such as "*Awas aje lu Jokowi kalo sampe ketemu gua gua tembak kepala lu*," constitute a commissive act where the speaker commits to future harm, paired with a directive intent to intimidate. Similarly, explicit calls to action like "*segera bakar... dibakar*" are pure directives aimed at mobilizing others to commit violence.

These acts are treated with utmost severity by the legal system, as they pose a direct risk to public order and safety. In Indonesia, they are primarily prosecuted under the stringent Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law), rather than general insult statutes. The state's enforcement mechanisms, such as the "Virtual Police" (Polisi Virtual) monitoring program, specifically target this category of speech. The prosecution of such acts creates a significant chilling effect, suppressing legitimate political discourse as users self-censor for fear of legal reprisal or social media targeting. Consequently, these utterances are not merely aggressive language but performative acts with tangible legal and social repercussions, representing the pinnacle of where forensic linguistics must distinguish between protected speech and criminal incitement.

Discursive framing: Religious and nationalist narratives

The weaponization of religious and nationalist identity in political attacks is not an incidental strategy but a systematic feature of contemporary Indonesian political discourse. Your analysis of the Aceh-related content reveals this process clearly, where dysphemistic slurs are not standalone insults but are powerfully embedded within a "master frame" that defines the political conflict in absolutist, existential terms. This strategic framing, which paints Jokowi as leading a "*kafir* (infidel) conspiracy," resonates because it taps into a well-established and often dominant conservative religious narrative within Indonesia's digital sphere. Research indicates that conservative propaganda commands a dominant share of religious discussions on platforms like Twitter, and political actors across the spectrum frequently manipulate these narratives for electoral gain. This context explains why accusations of promoting "secularism", a charge historically condemned by major religious bodies, have been a recurring political tool used to challenge Jokowi's legitimacy and align him against religious values. Therefore, the dysphemistic labels serve as the emotional, abusive core of a much larger discursive operation aimed at mobilizing in-group solidarity and portraying political opposition as a sacred duty.

Consequently, this framing fundamentally transforms the nature of political conflict and dramatically escalates the rhetorical stakes of the dysphemism used. By shifting the grounds of criticism from policy or performance to faith and identity, it places the target outside the bounds of acceptable political community. Opposition is no longer about disagreement but is framed as a defense against an existential, religiously-defined threat. This effectively suspends ordinary norms of civil political discourse and justifies extreme verbal hostility as a form of righteous defense. The impact is a profound delegitimization, where the president is positioned not merely as a flawed leader but as an illegitimate actor whose authority is inherently opposed to the values of the nation or faith community. This strategy amplifies the perceived severity and social danger of the accompanying dysphemistic expressions (like "*anjing*" or "*babi*"), as they are no longer heard as crude personal insults but as fitting condemnations within a Manichean struggle between piety and betrayal. The forensic linguistic significance is clear: understanding the specific illocutionary force and potential legal severity of such utterances requires analyzing them within this potent, weaponized narrative frame.

Legal-forensic consequences and judicial interpretation

The final layer of analysis examines the material outcomes of these dysphemistic expressions: their adjudication in Indonesian courts. The legal consequences demonstrate how the state interprets and penalizes this form of digital speech, applying both the Criminal Code (KUHP) and the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE).

Table 2. *Summary of case law analysis on dysphemistic expressions*

Case (Defendant)	Key Dysphemistic Utterance(s)	Primary Categories Involved	Charges/ Legal Basis	Court Decision

EP (No. 278/Pid.B/2020)	*"Jokowi kontol, Jokowi anjing... presiden kampung."*	1, 2, 4	KUHP Art. 207 (Insulting a Public Authority)	5 months imprisonment.
KJ (No. 393/Pid.B/2018)	*"Jokowi tai"*	1	KUHP Art. 207	4 months imprisonment.
B bin AJ (No. 322/Pid.Sus/2019)	*"GOBLOK BABU CHINA, JOKOWI BABU CHINA... PKI..."*	3, 5, 4, 6	UU ITE Art. 28(2) (Hatred based on SARA)	1 yr 10 mos imp. + IDR 60M fine.
JBS (No. 64/Pid.Sus/2020)	*"JOKOWI KONTOL ANAK ANJING"*	1, 2	UU ITE Art. 28(2)	1 yr 10 mos imp. + IDR 200M fine.
UNAI (No. 336/Pid.Sus/2021)	Long speech accusing *"Jokowi PKI" of conspiracy, using "anjing," "babi."*	5, 2, 7, 8	UU ITE Art. 28(2)	2 years imprisonment + IDR 50M fine.
FA (Referenced in manuscript)	"...lu dzolimin anjjnggg bangsat... gua tembak kepala lu..."	6, 2, 7	UU ITE (Implied)	Sentenced.

The judicial outcomes reveal a clear severity gradient directly linked to the pragmatic function and semantic content of the speech:

Simple insults (lower severity)

In Indonesian legal adjudication, the classification of certain dysphemistic expressions as "simple insults" under the Criminal Code (*Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana* or KUHP) reflects a specific judicial philosophy regarding the protection of state authority versus public order. Prosecution under KUHP Article 207, which criminalizes insulting a public authority, is predicated on the offense against the symbolic dignity of the office rather than the content's potential to incite wider societal harm. The court's rationale in cases like those of defendants' EP and KJ hinges on a forensic linguistic assessment that interprets utterances such as "*Jokowi kontol*" or "*Jokowi tai*" primarily as expressive speech acts. These are deemed to function chiefly as vehicles for the speaker's personal contempt and anger, lacking the additional discursive elements, such as ideological framing, calls to violence, or incitement of group-based hatred, that would elevate them to a threat against public tranquility. Consequently, the resultant sentences of 4-5 months imprisonment are calibrated not to punish a grave social danger but to uphold the principle of *majestas* or the esteem of government institutions, serving as a deterrent against the erosion of respect for state symbols.

The relatively shorter sentences for these "simple insults" also underscore a key distinction in the Indonesian legal system's hierarchy of speech crimes. By trying these cases under the KUHP rather than the more stringent Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), the judiciary signals a demarcation between personal vilification and speech that jeopardizes public order. This legal categorization is informed by a forensic analysis of communicative intent and potential impact. The courts appear to conclude that standalone vulgarisms, however offensive, have a limited "chilling effect" on broader democratic discourse and a lower capacity to mobilize collective action or violence compared to speech that weaponizes identity or issues direct threats. Therefore, the judicial response remains proportional, focusing on the act of disrespect toward a public official as an individual office-holder, while reserving the more severe punitive and financial penalties of the UU ITE for expressions deemed capable of triggering tangible social unrest or violence.

Ideological defamation & group hatred (higher severity)

The significantly harsher legal treatment of cases involving ideological labeling, such as accusations of being "PKI" or a "*babu China*," stems from the Indonesian judiciary's recognition of a critical qualitative escalation in the speech act. When dysphemism moves from personal vulgarity to embedding the target within historically charged or ethnically divisive narratives, it ceases to be a mere insult. Instead, it performs an "ideological transfer," framing political opposition as an existential threat to the nation's foundational identity or social harmony. Terms like "PKI" invoke the deep-seated historical trauma of the 1965-66 mass violence, while "*babu China*" taps into contemporary anxieties over sovereignty and economic influence. This transforms the utterance from an expressive act of contempt into an assertive act of defamation with a high

mobilization potential. The courts, therefore, perceive such speech as possessing a "dangerous tendency" capable of reigniting old societal wounds or provoking new inter-group conflicts, justifying its prosecution under laws designed to protect public order rather than merely individual reputation.

This legal response is operationalized through the more stringent Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), specifically Article 28(2), which criminalizes the dissemination of information intended to incite hatred based on ethnicity, religion, race, or inter-group relations (SARA). The application of this law reflects a forensic assessment that prioritizes communicative impact and intent over the literal meaning of the words. Prosecutors and judges analyze how the combination of dysphemistic labels with ideological frames is likely to be received by a reasonable audience in Indonesia's specific socio-historical context. The substantial fines and longer prison sentences (1 year 10 months to 2 years) serve a dual purpose: punishing the act and deterring the use of identity-based rhetoric as a political weapon. This aligns with the findings of forensic linguistic research, which notes that Indonesian courts consistently treat speech containing explicit SARA elements as a more severe threat to the fabric of the state than personal insults, due to its proven capacity to catalyze real-world violence and social fragmentation.

Explicit threats (highest severity)

While the case of FA (direct death threat) is not detailed with a sentence in the provided data, forensic linguistic principles and legal practice indicate that utterances containing explicit, credible threats of violence (Category 7) are treated with the utmost seriousness. They shift from crimes of defamation to crimes against person and public security, potentially incurring the most severe penalties. This demonstrates the legal system's focus on the potential for imminent harm.

The judicial reasoning in these cases implicitly performs a forensic linguistic analysis. Judges must interpret the words not in isolation but in their communicative context: Is calling the President *"kontol"* merely a crude opinion, or does it constitute a punishable insult to state authority? Does labeling him *"PKI"* move from political hyperbole to a dangerous false accusation that could provoke hostility? The decisions show that Indonesian courts are particularly sensitive to content that combines personal insult with ideological falsehoods and incitement to group-based hatred, reflecting a priority for maintaining social harmony in a diverse nation. This application of legal norms to digital speech acts is a central concern of contemporary forensic linguistics (Askurny et al., 2024; Sholihatin et al., 2024).

Synthesis and theoretical implications

This study's integrated analysis confirms that dysphemistic attacks on President Joko Widodo constitute a structured form of political warfare in the digital realm. These attacks strategically leverage the core affordances of social media, such as anonymity, viral dissemination, and emotional contagion, to launch coordinated, multi-front assaults aimed at degrading a leader's character, undermining their legitimacy, and eroding their public authority.

The findings significantly bridge several key theoretical domains. Within Forensic Linguistics, they demonstrate the practical necessity of combining semantic, pragmatic, and discursive analysis to produce actionable evidence. This integrated linguistic evidence is crucial for legal adjudication in the complex task of distinguishing between constitutionally protected free speech and criminally actionable offenses such as hate speech and defamation (Fitria, 2024; Helmi et al., 2025).

For Political Discourse Studies, the results illustrate how digital platforms act as force multipliers for traditional propaganda techniques. Methods like demonization, conspiracy theory propagation, and emotional mobilization are powerfully amplified through specific linguistic means, reaching unprecedented scale and speed (Campos-Delgado, 2024; Sidorkina, 2025). Furthermore, from a Sociolinguistic perspective, the analysis highlights how language serves as a tool for weaponizing identity. Deep-seated historical grievances, religious sentiments, and ethnic identities are activated and mobilized through deliberate lexical choices and narrative framing, thereby fueling contemporary political conflict and polarization.

This synthesis shows that the dysphemistic targeting of the president is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a multifaceted sociopolitical strategy with significant implications for digital democracy, legal systems, and social cohesion. Furthermore, the research underscores a critical tension inherent in Indonesian democracy: the ongoing negotiation between the fundamental right to criticize political leaders and the necessary limits of acceptable political discourse. While robust and dissenting criticism remains essential

for a healthy democracy, the findings clearly demonstrate how dysphemism frequently crosses the threshold into territory that is both socially destructive and legally proscribed under laws like the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE). This ambiguous boundary creates a persistently challenging environment for various stakeholders, including social media platforms tasked with content governance, law enforcement agencies required to interpret and apply legal standards, and civil society organizations advocating for both freedom of expression and protection from harm.

This study acknowledges certain limitations that also point toward valuable avenues for future research. The analysis focused primarily on a specific set of high-visibility cases that entered the legal system, which may not capture the full spectrum of online hostility. Subsequent investigations could employ large-scale computational methods and automated text mining to analyze a more extensive corpus, thereby tracking the historical evolution and network-based propagation of key dysphemistic frames over time (Ntelu et al., 2025; Mashru & Nautiyal, 2024). Additionally, comparative studies examining similar phenomena in other democratic contexts would help illuminate whether the Indonesian pattern represents a unique sociolinguistic and political landscape or is part of a broader global trend toward the coarsening of digital political language.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that dysphemistic expressions targeting President Joko Widodo on social media are not merely spontaneous insults but systematically constructed linguistic acts that carry clear pragmatic functions and, in many cases, potential legal implications. The analysis reveals that dysphemism operates through diverse strategies, lexical slurs, metaphorical degradation, delegitimizing accusations, and multimodal ridicule, reflecting heightened political polarization in digital public spheres. The integration of multimodal, pragmatic, computational, and legal-forensic lenses shows that many of these expressions contain implicatures and imputations that can exceed the boundaries of protected political criticism. Some utterances directly resemble defamatory statements, while others serve to publicly diminish the President's legitimacy, social standing, or moral integrity.

By constructing a unified analytic model, this study fills a significant gap in Indonesian forensic linguistic scholarship, where no previous work has investigated dysphemistic attacks against a sitting president using such a comprehensive interdisciplinary framework. The findings contribute to theoretical refinement within forensic linguistics, offering a deeper understanding of how dysphemism functions as both a linguistic and ideological tool in political conflict discourse. Practically, the study provides a structured method for legal practitioners to assess harmful language with greater accuracy, helping distinguish constitutionally protected expression from criminally actionable speech. Ultimately, this research underscores the need for nuanced, evidence-based approaches to regulating digital hostility while safeguarding democratic freedom of expression in Indonesia.

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