

Expressive Illocutionary Speech Acts in Arabic Comments on X @ar_khamenei: Pragmatic Study

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ABSTRACT

Social media platform X has become a major space where users express emotional responses to global events. Previous studies on expressive speech acts on X have primarily examined local political figures or general social issues, whereas Arabic-language comments on the official account of a global religious-political figure following the figure's death remain underexplored. This study aims to identify the types and functions of expressive illocutionary speech acts in Arabic-language comments posted on the @ar_khamenei X account following the death of Ali Khamenei. A qualitative descriptive approach employed non-participant observation (*Simak Bebas Libat Cakap*) was used. The analysis was based on Searle's (1979) theory of expressive speech acts and Leech's (1983) classification of illocutionary functions. The data comprised 78 Arabic-language comments collected from a post published on 1 March 2026. The findings revealed that praying was the most dominant speech act (41 instances; 35 imprecatory prayers and 6 beneficent prayers), followed by insulting (19), thanking God, condoling (7), congratulating (2), and blaming (1). The conflictive function predominated (65 instances), while the convivial function occurred in 13 instances; no competitive or collaborative functions were identified. These findings demonstrate that Arabic digital discourse reflects users' sociopolitical, ideological, and religious orientations.

Keywords: *Ali Khamenei; Expressive Speech Act; Illocutionary Function, X/Twitter*

ABSTRAK

Platform media sosial X telah menjadi ruang utama bagi pengguna untuk mengekspresikan respons emosional terhadap peristiwa global. Penelitian-penelitian terdahulu tentang tindak tutur ekspresif di X umumnya mengkaji tokoh politik lokal atau isu sosial umum, sementara komentar berbahasa Arab pada akun resmi tokoh religio-politik dunia pascawafatnya masih belum banyak dieksplorasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi jenis dan fungsi tindak tutur ilokusi ekspresif dalam komentar berbahasa Arab yang diunggah pada akun X @ar_khamenei pascawafatnya Ali Khamenei. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik *Simak Bebas Libat Cakap*. Analisis dilakukan berdasarkan teori tindak tutur ekspresif Searle (1979) dan klasifikasi fungsi ilokusi Leech (1983). Data terdiri atas 78 komentar berbahasa Arab yang dikumpulkan dari unggahan yang dipublikasikan pada 1 Maret 2026. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mendoakan merupakan tindak tutur yang paling dominan (41 data; 35 doa keburukan dan 6 doa kebaikan), diikuti oleh menghina (19), bersyukur (8), belasungkawa (7), mengucapkan selamat (2), dan menyalahkan (1). Fungsi konflikatif mendominasi (65 data), sementara fungsi konvivial ditemukan pada 13 data; fungsi kompetitif dan kolaboratif tidak ditemukan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa wacana digital berbahasa Arab mencerminkan orientasi sosiopolitik, ideologis, dan religius penggunanya.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Ali Khamenei; Fungsi Ilokusi; Tindak Tutur Ekspresif; X/Twitter.*

INTRODUCTION

Language is the most fundamental system of vocal symbols in human life and plays a central role in shaping social interaction, conveying ideas, and representing the cultural identity of its speakers (Ningrum & Tazqiyah, 2024). As a means of communication, language serves not only to transmit information but also to express emotions, establish social relationships, negotiate identities, and reflect the cultural values of its users. Nur (2022), argues that language can be examined by considering factors beyond its linguistic structure, particularly those related to its use within social communities. This broader perspective has led

to the emergence of various branches of linguistics that investigate language as a social practice, one of which is pragmatics.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that investigates utterance meaning in relation to its context of use. Yule G, explains that pragmatics focuses on speaker meaning, which cannot be separated from situational context, communicative intentions, and the relationship between speakers and hearers. Pragmatics is also recognized as a linguistic discipline that examines the relationship between language and its extralinguistic context while interpreting the intentions embedded in an utterance (Pebriyanti et al., 2025). One of the central theories within pragmatics is speech act theory, originally proposed by Austin and subsequently developed by Searle (Taha et al., 2022).

Speech act theory emphasizes illocutionary acts, referring to the actions performed by speakers through their utterances. Searle classifies illocutionary acts into five categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations (Umalila et al., 2022). Among these categories, expressive illocutionary acts are particularly relevant to digital communication. Darmawan et al. (2025), explain that expressive speech acts directly reflect the psychological state of the speaker because they primarily convey emotional responses toward particular situations.

The dynamics of expressive speech acts become increasingly complex in digital environments. Social media provides users with opportunities to interact through comment features and express opinions that influence attitudes, shape public discourse, and potentially contribute to public opinion formation (Sukmawati & Fatmawati, 2023). The social media platform X (formerly Twitter) has evolved into a major arena for global public discourse, where millions of users instantly express opinions, emotions, and reactions to various events (Abdullah et al., 2025). Users from diverse age groups actively utilize X to share written posts, images, and videos while engaging in interactive discussions through comments (Sajida et al., 2024).

Arabic occupies a distinctive position in pragmatic studies because of its strong religious significance and rich cultural characteristics. More than 280 million native speakers use Arabic, and it holds official language status in 25 countries (Pane A, 2018; Ridho et al., 2023). These characteristics make Arabic-language responses to religious and political events pragmatically distinctive, as individual utterances often embody not only personal emotions but also ideological, theological, and communal identities.

Previous studies have extensively examined speech acts on the X platform. (Rodearni & Siagian, 2023), for example, investigated expressive speech acts in posts published by the @Fiersabesari account. Putri et al. (2020), analyzed hate speech expressed in tweet replies, whereas (Husna & Cholsy, 2025) examined expressive speech acts produced by the Palestinian journalist Anas Al-Sharif. Existing studies, however, have not specifically investigated expressive illocutionary acts in Arabic-language comments posted on the official social media account of a prominent religious-political figure following the figure's death in the context of widespread emotional polarization.

This study pursues two interrelated objectives. The first is to identify and describe the types of expressive illocutionary acts employed by users in Arabic-language comments posted on the X account @ar_khamenei following the death of Ali Khamenei based on Searle's classification. The second is to explain the functions of these expressive illocutionary acts using Leech's classification of illocutionary functions. Findings from this study are expected to contribute to the advancement of digital pragmatics by providing a deeper understanding of expressive speech acts in Arabic-language interactions on social media.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method with a pragmatic approach to examine the illocutionary meanings underlying Arabic-language comments posted on the social media platform X. According to Sugiyono (cited in Ardini et al., 2024), qualitative descriptive research seeks to obtain an in-depth understanding of a particular social phenomenon through the systematic analysis of naturally occurring data. The pragmatic approach was adopted to interpret the contextual meanings of the utterances using Searle's classification of expressive illocutionary acts and Leech's classification of illocutionary functions.

The data consisted of 78 Arabic-language comments selected from the top 100 comments posted in response to an upload published by the X account @ar_khamenei on 1 March 2026, one day after the death of Ali Khamenei (Figure 1). The comments were accessed on 27 April 2026, when the post had received more than 10,000 comments, 5.1 million views, and 48,000 likes. Twenty-two comments were excluded after the screening process, resulting in a final dataset of 78 comments.



Figure 1. X Post Published by @ar_khamenei Following the Death of Ali Khamenei.

The inclusion criteria comprised comments that (1) were written in Arabic, including both Modern Standard Arabic (*fuṣḥā*) and Arabic dialects (*‘āmmiyyah*), (2) directly responded to the selected post, and (3) contained identifiable expressive illocutionary acts. The exclusion criteria included comments predominantly written in languages other than Arabic or containing substantial code-mixing, as well as duplicated comments.

The Arabic comments were translated into Indonesian through a two-stage procedure. Initial translations were generated using artificial intelligence-based translation tools to obtain preliminary interpretations. Previous studies have shown that AI-assisted translation systems, such as ChatGPT and Gemini AI, facilitate efficient translation but still require human verification because they may not fully capture contextual and pragmatic meanings (Majid et al., 2024). The researcher subsequently reviewed and refined all translations manually by considering the communicative context, pragmatic meanings, and cultural nuances embedded in each utterance. Special attention was given to the translation of religious expressions, including prayers, *istirjā* expressions, and expressions of gratitude, by emphasizing semantic accuracy, naturalness, and acceptability in accordance with the translation principles proposed by (Zakiyah & Bakar, 2025).

Data were collected using three complementary techniques. The first was the non-participatory observation technique (*Simak Bebas Libat Cakap*), in which the researcher observed online interactions without participating in the conversations (Sudaryanto, 2015). The second was the note-taking technique, whereby each comment was systematically recorded in a classification table containing the original Arabic text, transliteration, Indonesian translation, expressive speech act category, and illocutionary function. The third was screenshot documentation, which preserved each comment in its original digital context.

The data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman, consisting of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification (Mukminin et al., 2022). Data reduction involved selecting comments that contained expressive illocutionary acts. The selected data were subsequently organized into a classification table before being analyzed using the pragmatic matching technique (*teknik padan pragmatis*). Each utterance was classified according to Searle's taxonomy of expressive illocutionary acts and subsequently interpreted based on Leech's classification of illocutionary functions.

The findings are presented using the informal presentation method proposed by Sudaryanto (cited in Wijayatri et al., 2025), in which analytical results are explained through descriptive narrative rather than statistical or symbolic representations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study presents the findings on the use of expressive illocutionary speech acts in Arabic-language comments posted by users in response to an X post published by the @ar_khamenei account following the death of Ali Khamenei. The study also interprets the pragmatic functions underlying these utterances. A total of 78 comments were analyzed and classified using Searle's framework of expressive speech acts and Leech's classification of illocutionary functions to reveal the emotional and ideological dynamics reflected in digital public discourse.

Expressive Speech Acts

Expressive speech acts constitute a category of illocutionary acts that functions to express the speaker's psychological attitude toward a particular situation or event. According to Searle (1979, p. 35, as cited in (Saleh et al., 2024), expressive speech acts enable speakers to convey their evaluations of the object or situation being discussed.

The analysis identified six types of expressive illocutionary speech acts in the 78 Arabic-language comments posted in response to the X post published by the @ar_khamenei account following the death of Ali Khamenei (Table 1).

Table 1. Type of Expressive Speech Act

No	Type of Expressive Speech Act	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Imprecatory Prayers	35	44,9%
	Beneficent Prayers	6	7,7%
2	Insulting	19	24,4%
3	Thanking God	8	10,3%
4	Condoling	7	9.0%
5	Congratulating	2	2,6%
6	Blaming	1	1,3%
Total		78	100%

Expressive Speech Act of Praying

Praying is an expressive speech act through which speakers convey petitions or appeals to a supreme being. Within the Arab-Islamic cultural context, such prayers are directed to Allah and express wishes for mercy, protection, well-being, or, conversely, misfortune and punishment for a particular individual who becomes the target of the prayer. In this study, Searle's concept of expressive speech acts is not merely understood as the expression of emotions but is operationalized as speakers' affective responses to the death of a political figure.

The expressive speech act of praying deserves particular attention because, from a syntactic perspective, prayers often take the form of imperative constructions or supplications addressed to God, which could potentially be classified as directives. From a pragmatic perspective, however, the primary function of these utterances in digital communication is not to direct or command God but rather to express the speaker's psychological attitude toward the target of the prayer. Such attitudes include affection, sympathy, hostility, rejection, or condemnation. Accordingly, praying was consistently classified as an expressive speech act throughout this study.

The analysis identified praying as the most dominant type of expressive speech act, accounting for 41 of the 78 comments analyzed. These utterances consisted of 35 prayers expressing condemnation or imprecatory, and six prayers expressing goodwill or beneficent. This substantial disparity indicated that most users participating in the discussion expressed opposition toward Ali Khamenei. One example of a imprecatory prayers is presented below.

الله يحشرك بجهنم

Allāhu yaḥsyuruka bi jahannam
"May Allah gather you in Hell."

This utterance is characterized by the phrase *يحشرك بجهنم* (*yaḥshuruka bi Jahannam*), which literally means "gather you in Hell." The use of the word *الله* (*Allah*) at the beginning of the utterance indicates that the negative wish is expressed through a vertical supplication directed to Allah. Although the utterance takes the form of a prayer, its dominant illocutionary force lies in expressing the speaker's psychological attitude toward the target rather than attempting to direct God's actions. This interpretation is consistent with Searle's concept of expressive speech acts, which holds that expressive utterances primarily reveal the speaker's psychological state. In this case, the prayer functions as an expression of intense anger, rejection, and hostility toward the deceased political figure.

Here is an example of beneficent prayers:

رضوان الله تعالى عليك يا سيد القادة الشهداء

Riḍwānu Allāhi ta'ālā 'alaika yā sayyida al-qādātī asy-syuhadā'

"May the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, be bestowed upon you, O leader of the martyrs."

This utterance is characterized by the phrase *رضوان الله تعالى عليك* (*riḍwānu Allāhi ta'ālā 'alayka*), which means "May the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, be bestowed upon you." The expression *يا سيد القادة الشهداء* (*yā sayyida al-qādāt al-shuhadā*), meaning "O leader of the martyrs," further elevates the deceased to the highest theological status by portraying him as the leader of those regarded as martyrs. This utterance therefore functions not only as a prayer but also as an affirmation of religious reverence. Consistent with Searle's theory of expressive speech acts, the utterance reflects the speaker's psychological state, particularly profound respect, admiration, and grief over the loss of a figure regarded as honorable.

Expressive Speech Act of Insulting

Insulting is an expressive speech act through which speakers convey negative evaluations, demean the dignity of a particular individual, or express explicit verbal contempt toward the target of the utterance.

The analysis identified 19 instances of insulting, making it the second most frequent category of expressive speech acts. These utterances consist of direct verbal attacks that explicitly degrade the dignity of Ali Khamenei. One representative example is presented below.

الله لا يرحمك يا خنزير قتلت المسلمين وشردتهم يا كلب

Allāhu lā yarḥamuka yā khinzīr, qatalta al-muslimīna wa sharradtahum yā kalb

"May Allah show you no mercy, you pig. You killed and displaced Muslims, you dog."

This utterance is explicitly marked by the use of the insulting expressions *يا خنزير* (*yā khinzīr*; "you pig") and *يا كلب* (*yā kalb*; "you dog"). Within Arab-Islamic culture, comparing a person to these animals constitutes one of the strongest forms of verbal degradation and personal insult. From a pragmatic perspective, the dominant illocutionary force of utterance is to express intense hatred, anger, and psychological hostility toward the target. The accompanying statement, "You killed and displaced Muslims," further reinforces the speaker's moral condemnation by attributing responsibility for violence and suffering to the individual being addressed.

Expressive Speech Act of Thanking God

Thanking God is an expressive speech act through which speakers express gratitude, praise, and devotion to Allah for an event or circumstance that they perceive as beneficial, desirable, or consistent with their expectations.

The analysis identified eight instances of thanking God. In these comments, speakers expressed gratitude to Allah for the death of Ali Khamenei, which they perceived as a divine blessing. A distinctive linguistic marker of this category is the formula *الحمد لله* (*alḥamdulillāh*; "Praise be to Allah"), which appears at the beginning or within the utterance as an expression of religious gratitude. One representative example is presented below.

الحمد لله الذي أراح أمة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم منك

Alḥamdulillāhi alladhī arāḥa ummata Muḥammadin ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam minka

"Praise be to Allah, who has relieved the nation of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) from you."

This utterance is characterized using the *taḥmīd* formula *الحمد لله* (*alḥamdulillāh*; "Praise be to Allah"), which conventionally serves as a linguistic expression of gratitude directed toward Allah. From Searle's pragmatic perspective, the dominant illocutionary force of this utterance is to express profound relief and gratitude in response to the death of Ali Khamenei. The phrase *أراح أمة محمد* (*arāḥa ummata Muḥammadin*; "relieved the nation of Muhammad") further indicates that the speaker frames this sense of relief not as a purely personal reaction but as one shared collectively by the wider Muslim community. Through this formulation, the speaker attempts to universalize an individual evaluation by presenting it as the collective sentiment of the *ummah*.

Expressive Speech Act of Condoling

Condoling is an expressive speech act through which speakers convey grief, sympathy, and emotional solidarity to individuals or groups experiencing loss, misfortune, or profound sorrow, particularly following the death of someone they value.

The analysis identified seven instances of condoling. In these comments, speakers expressed sympathy and solidarity with those affected by the loss through the use of the Islamic formula *إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون* (*innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji 'ūn*), which served as the primary linguistic marker of this expressive speech act.

One representative example is presented below.

إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون

Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji 'ūn

"Indeed, we belong to Allah, and to Him we shall return."

This utterance is characterized using the *istirjā'* formula *إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون* (*innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji 'ūn*). Within Islamic linguistic and religious tradition, this expression functions as a conventional formula used to respond to misfortune, particularly the death of an individual. From a pragmatic perspective, the utterance primarily expresses the speaker's grief, sympathy, and acceptance of divine decree rather than conveying new propositional information. Consistent with Searle's theory, its dominant illocutionary force lies in revealing the speaker's psychological state in response to the reported death.

Expressive Speech Act of Congratulating

Congratulating is an expressive speech act through which speakers express joy, approval, or appreciation in response to another person's achievement, success, or other favorable event.

The analysis identified only two instances of congratulating. In these comments, speakers expressed joy over the death of Ali Khamenei by framing it as an event worthy of celebration. Although this category occurred infrequently, it represents the most explicit form of emotional celebration directed at the death of a figure perceived by the speakers as an enemy.

One representative example is presented below.

مبروووك للكرة الأرضية 🥳

Mabrūūk lil-kurati al-arḍiyyah 🥳

"Congratulations to the whole world!"

This utterance is marked by the expression *مبروووك* (*mabrūūūk*; "congratulations"), a conventional formula used to convey congratulations in Arabic. The elongated spelling of the letter *و* (*wāw*) in *مبروووك* and the accompanying 🥳 emoji intensify the speaker's emotional enthusiasm and excitement. The phrase *للكرة الأرضية* (*lil-kurati al-arḍiyyah*; "to the whole world") functions as a hyperbolic expression, suggesting that the speaker portrays the event as a source of relief or celebration for humanity as a whole rather than as a matter of personal satisfaction. From a pragmatic perspective, the utterance expresses extreme joy while simultaneously universalizing the speaker's evaluation by presenting it as a sentiment shared by the global community.

Expressive Speech Act of Blaming

Blaming is an expressive speech act through which speakers express dissatisfaction, condemnation, or anger toward actions or behaviors that they perceive as wrongful, harmful, or unacceptable.

The analysis identified only one instance of blaming. In this comment, the speaker employed rhetorical language to attribute moral responsibility for the suffering experienced in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen to Ali Khamenei. Although represented by only a single example, this utterance exhibited a high degree of illocutionary density because it contained four mutually reinforcing clauses of blame.

One representative example is presented below.

إن العين لتدمع فرحاً والقلب يرقص طرباً 🥰

من أوجع الشام لن يكون بلسماً للقدس، ومن دنس أرض الرافدين لن يحمل راية الحق، ومن كبّل أرزلبنان لن يفدي الأقصى، ومن أرهاق صنعاء لن يكون سنداً لغزة

Inna al-‘ayna la tadma‘u farāḥan wa al-qalbu yarquṣu ṭaraban ❤️, *man awja‘a al-Shāma lan yakūna balsaman lil-Qudsi, wa man dannasa arḍa al-Rāfidayni lan yaḥmila rāyata al-ḥaqqi, wa man kabbala arza Lubnāna lan yaftadiya al-Aqṣā, wa man arhaqa Ṣan‘ā’a lan yakūna sanadan li-Ghazzah.*

"Indeed, my eyes shed tears of joy and my heart dances with delight ❤️. Whoever has wounded Syria will never become a balm for Jerusalem; whoever has defiled the land of Mesopotamia will never carry the banner of truth; whoever has shackled the cedars of Lebanon will never redeem Al-Aqsa; and whoever has exhausted Sana'a will never become a supporter of Gaza."

The utterance begins with a hyperbolic expression of emotional satisfaction ("my eyes shed tears of joy and my heart dances with delight"), which ironically celebrates an occasion of mourning. Its principal linguistic marker lies in the four parallel relative clauses introduced by *من* (*man*; "whoever"): *من أوجع... ومن دنس... ومن كبّل... ومن أرهاق*. This parallel rhetorical structure systematically attributes responsibility for a series of sociopolitical crises across the Muslim world—including Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen—to the deceased Ali Khamenei. From a pragmatic perspective, the cumulative effect of these parallel clauses strengthens the illocutionary force of blaming by constructing a coherent moral indictment rather than expressing a single isolated accusation.

Illocutionary Function

Within pragmatics, speech acts are understood not only in terms of their forms and categories but also in relation to the social functions they perform. Leech (1983, pp. 104–105, as cited in Putra et al., 2022) classifies illocutionary functions into four categories according to their relationship with social goals and the maintenance of politeness: competitive, convivial, collaborative, and conflictive. The analysis of the 78 Arabic-language comments posted in response to the X post published by the @ar_khamenei account revealed that the expressive illocutionary acts identified in this study were not distributed across all four categories. Only two of Leech's four illocutionary functions were identified in the corpus. The frequency and percentage distribution of these functions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Recapitulation of Illocutionary Speech Act Functions

No	Illocutionary Function	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	Conflictive	65	83,3%
2.	Convivial	13	16,7%
3.	Competitive	0	0,0%
4.	Collaborative	0	0,0%
Total		78	100%

Competitive Function

The competitive function refers to an illocutionary function whose communicative goal conflicts with the social goal. According to Leech (as cited in Puja, 2024), this function encompasses utterances that attempt to influence the hearer to perform a particular action, even when such action may conflict with the hearer's interests. Competitive illocutions therefore involve the exercise of authority and typically take the form of direct imperatives or persuasive acts.

No competitive function was identified in the present study. The absence of this function can be explained by the communicative context of the corpus. The comments posted in response to the death of a prominent religious-political figure were predominantly reactive and affective rather than directive. Instead of attempting to persuade other users to perform specific actions, commenters primarily expressed their psychological and ideological attitudes toward the event. Consequently, this digital interaction provided little opportunity for imperative or action-oriented illocutions to emerge.

Convivial Function

The convivial function refers to an illocutionary function whose communicative goal is consistent with the social goal. According to Leech (as cited in Ashabi et al., 2024), convivial illocutions promote social harmony through acts such as offering, inviting, welcoming, greeting, congratulating, thanking, and other expressions intended to generate positive interpersonal relationships.

The analysis identified 13 instances (16.7%) of the convivial function. All condolence expressions (7 instances) and prayers expressing goodwill (6 instances) belonged to this category. These comments were generally characterized by Islamic formulaic expressions, including the *istirjā'* formula and prayers for divine mercy, both of which functioned to reinforce communal solidarity among supporters of Ali Khamenei.

One representative example is presented below.

رحمة الله تغشاه في جنات الفردوس مع الشهداء والأنبياء والصديقين وحسن أولئك رفيقاً وعظم الله الأجر للشعب
الإيراني ولكل الأمة الإسلامية

Raḥmatu Allāhi taghshāhu fī jannāti al-firdawsi ma'a al-shuhadā'i wa al-anbiyā'i wa al-ṣiddīqīn, wa ḥasuna ulā'ika rafīqā, wa 'azzama Allāhu al-ajra lil-sha'bi al-irānī wa likulli al-ummati al-islāmiyyah.
"May the mercy of Allah envelop him in the Gardens of Paradise together with the martyrs, the prophets, and the righteous. Excellent are they as companions. May Allah greatly reward the people of Iran and the entire Muslim community."

This utterance is characterized by the phrase *رحمة الله تغشاه* (*raḥmatu Allāhi taghshāhu*), a conventional supplication invoking Allah's mercy upon a deceased person. The subsequent theological expression *في جنات الفردوس مع الشهداء والأنبياء والصديقين* (*fī jannāti al-firdawsi ma'a al-shuhadā'i wa al-anbiyā'i wa al-ṣiddīqīn*), meaning "May Allah's mercy envelop him in the Gardens of Paradise together with the martyrs, the prophets, and the righteous," further emphasizes spiritual reverence by symbolically placing Ali Khamenei alongside the most revered figures in Islamic tradition. The phrase *ولكل الأمة الإسلامية* (*wa likulli al-ummati al-islāmiyyah*; "and the entire Muslim community") broadens the scope of empathy by portraying the loss as one collectively shared by Muslims worldwide rather than by a limited group of individuals.

From Leech's perspective, this utterance is classified as performing a convivial function because its communicative orientation is explicitly aligned with the social goal of maintaining interpersonal harmony through the implementation of the sympathy maxim. Beyond expressing personal grief, the utterance pragmatically constructs communal solidarity and offers psychological support within the digital public sphere.

Collaborative Function

The collaborative function refers to an illocutionary function that is neutral with respect to social goals. Unlike competitive or convivial functions, collaborative illocutions neither conflict with nor actively support interpersonal harmony. According to Leech (as cited in Munawaroh et al., 2022), collaborative utterances are primarily intended to state, report, announce, or explain information without being motivated by social politeness or interpersonal alignment.

No collaborative function was identified in the present study. The absence of this function further demonstrates that digital interactions following the death of Ali Khamenei were overwhelmingly affective rather than informational. None of the comments analyzed was intended to communicate neutral information or report factual events without emotional involvement. Instead, every comment conveyed a clear affective stance, ranging from hatred and rejection to grief and support, leaving little room for emotionally neutral or purely informative discourse. This finding is consistent with Darmawan et al., (2025), who argue that social media comments on sociopolitical events are predominantly characterized by emotional expression reflecting the speakers' ideological affiliations.

Conflictive Function

The conflictive function refers to an illocutionary function whose communicative purpose fundamentally conflicts with social goals. According to Leech (as cited in Puja, 2024), this function is employed to oppose, criticize, reject, or condemn the actions, ideas, or opinions of others. Such utterances frequently generate interpersonal conflict because they deliberately violate expectations of politeness and social harmony.

The analysis identified the conflictive function as the most dominant category, accounting for 65 instances (83.3%) of the corpus. This predominance indicates that most commenters employed explicit curses, insults, and condemnatory expressions to articulate their ideological and theological positions toward Ali Khamenei. The conflictive function encompassed all instances of prayers expressing harm (35

instances), insults (19 instances), expressions of gratitude for the death (8 instances), blaming (1 instance), and two congratulatory utterances.

One representative example is presented below.

الله لا رحمتك ولا وسع لك قبر إلى جهنم

Allāhu lā raḥmaka wa lā was 'a laka qabran, ilā Jahannam.

"May Allah show you no mercy and grant you no spacious grave. To Hell."

The utterance begins with expressions of profound spiritual rejection and hostility toward the deceased. Its principal linguistic markers are the repeated negation particle لا (*lā*) in the clauses لا رحمتك (*lā raḥmaka*; "May Allah show you no mercy") and ولا وسع لك قبر (*wa lā was 'a laka qabran*; "May He grant you no spacious grave"). These layered negative supplications rhetorically deny divine mercy while invoking continued suffering for the target. The final phrase إلى جهنم (*ilā Jahannam*; "To Hell") reinforces this condemnation by explicitly assigning an eschatological destination, thereby intensifying the speaker's theological hostility.

From Leech's perspective, this utterance performs a conflictive function because its communicative purpose directly opposes social harmony and conventional norms of politeness. Rather than expressing sympathy in response to death, the speaker produces an overtly hostile utterance that threatens the target's positive face while publicly expressing ideological and theological condemnation within a digital environment.

The researcher argues that the conflictive function exhibited in this utterance is not merely an impulsive emotional reaction but a linguistically structured act of condemnation. This is evidenced by the layered construction of the negative prayer: the denial of divine mercy (لا رحمتك; *lā raḥmaka*), the denial of comfort in the grave (ولا وسع لك قبر; *wa lā was 'a laka qabran*), and the explicit assignment of Hell as the final destination (إلى جهنم; *ilā Jahannam*). This three-tiered rhetorical structure demonstrates that the speaker systematically constructs a theological judgment rather than expressing spontaneous anger alone. Within the context of Arabic digital discourse, this finding illustrates how social media comment sections have evolved into spaces for the public performance of ideological and religious identity. Conflictive speech acts therefore function not only as expressions of personal emotion but also as publicly displayed declarations of theological positioning before a broader online community.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Arabic-language comments posted in response to the X post published by @ar_khamenei following the death of Ali Khamenei exhibit diverse types of expressive illocutionary speech acts that predominantly convey negative psychological attitudes toward the deceased. Among the 78 comments analyzed, praying emerged as the most frequent expressive speech act, accounting for 52.6% of the comments, followed by insulting (24.4%), thanking God (10.3%), condoling (9.0%), congratulating (2.6%), and blaming (1.3%). The predominance of prayers expressing harm, insults, and other negative evaluations demonstrates that expressive speech acts in this corpus primarily functioned to communicate ideological opposition, religious judgment, and emotional hostility rather than interpersonal solidarity.

Analysis of illocutionary functions further revealed that the corpus was overwhelmingly dominated by the conflictive function, representing 83.3% of the comments, whereas the convivial function accounted for only 16.7%. Neither competitive nor collaborative functions were identified. These findings indicate that users primarily employed language to express conflict, condemnation, and ideological positioning instead of maintaining social harmony or conveying neutral information.

Future studies are recommended to examine larger and more diverse corpora, compare expressive speech acts across different social media platforms, and integrate the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis to further investigate the power relations and ideological processes underlying expressive language in digital communication.

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