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Testimonial Injustice in YouTube Comment Sections: An Epistemological Reflection on Digital Discourse

Syarifah[1], Jumino Suhadi[2], Devi Pratiwy[3]
[1]*Universitas Deztron Indonesia*
[2,3]*Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara*
syarifahchaniago@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

YouTube comment sections are often treated as noisy and trivial spaces, yet they function as important arenas where people negotiate knowledge, credibility, and authority. This article examines how testimonial injustice unfolds in YouTube comment sections through everyday interactions surrounding contested knowledge claims. Drawing on social epistemology, particularly the concept of testimonial injustice, this study focuses on how speakers are believed, dismissed, or granted authority in digital discourse. Using qualitative discourse analysis, the data consist of selected comment threads responding to a viral YouTube video related to the Apollo moon landing. The comments were drawn from a dataset of 1,264 comments collected between 15 December 2025 and 1 March 2026, from which 9 comments and reply threads were purposively selected for detailed analysis. As YouTube comment sections continue to grow over time, the dataset reflects the comments available during the specified data collection period. The analysis shows four recurring epistemic patterns: credibility deficit, where testimonies are dismissed without engagement; uptake failure, where attempts to explain or correct information receive partial or no epistemic recognition; identity-based credibility judgments, where speakers are evaluated based on perceived competence rather than the content of their claims; and credibility excess, where confidence and technical tone grant undue epistemic authority. These findings suggest that YouTube comment sections are not merely spaces of misinformation or disagreement, but sites where epistemic norms are actively negotiated and often unevenly distributed. This article contributes to digital discourse studies by highlighting how testimonial injustice operates in everyday online interactions and by positioning YouTube as an epistemically consequential space rather than a marginal one.

Keywords: Testimonial injustice; digital discourse; YouTube comments; credibility judgments; social epistemology

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INTRODUCTION

YouTube comment sections have become everyday spaces where people talk, argue, explain, and challenge each other. Viewers do not only react to videos, but also share opinions, experiences, and claims about what they think is true. These comment sections work as public spaces where meaning and authority are negotiated through language. Studies on social media discourse have shown that online platforms shape how voices are heard and how certain narratives gain visibility or resistance (Matamoros-Fernández & Farkas, 2021). In this sense, YouTube comments are not random talk, but part of wider digital public discourse.

Most research on YouTube comments and social media interaction has focused on harmful content such as hate speech, misinformation, and online conflict. These studies are important because they show how digital platforms can amplify harm and social division (Chekol et al., 2023; Udupa et al., 2020). However, this focus often leaves aside a more basic question. How people judge each other as knowers in everyday online talk is still rarely examined. When someone explains, questions, or corrects information in a comment section, that interaction already involves an epistemic process, especially in online contexts where epistemic injustice can take new forms (Bruin, 2024; Heritage, 2012).

Credibility in communication is not neutral. Listeners do not judge messages only by content, but also by who is speaking and how they speak. Research has shown that speakers are often evaluated differently based on accent, language style, or perceived competence, even when the information they provide is similar (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010). Language itself can become a source of epistemic inequality when certain ways of speaking are treated as more legitimate than others (Wilmot, 2024). These patterns are highly visible in online environments where interaction is fast, public, and minimally regulated, and where platform structures shape epistemic participation (Chavanayarn, 2024).

The concept of testimonial injustice helps explain these everyday credibility judgments. Testimonial injustice occurs when a speaker's word is given less credibility than it deserves due to prejudice or structural bias (Fricker, 2021). This idea has been expanded to show how credibility denial is often connected to broader forms of epistemic oppression, where certain groups or voices are systematically undermined (Dotson, 2021). In digital spaces, these injustices do not always appear as explicit silencing, but as subtle dismissals, mockery, or selective engagement.

Speech in online comment sections is not only about expressing opinions. It is also a moral and epistemic act that depends on uptake from others. When a speaker's contribution is ignored, ridiculed, or misread, the problem is not only communicative but epistemic (Langton, 2021). Speaking carries an expectation of being taken seriously, and failure of uptake can result in epistemic harm even without direct hostility (Kukla, 2022). These failures are common in online interactions, where responses often privilege confidence and tone over careful engagement.

Despite these insights, YouTube comment sections are still rarely examined as sites of testimonial exchange. Existing work on epistemic communities and digital platforms highlights how authority and credibility are unevenly distributed online (Anderson, 2020; Medina, 2023; Metzger & Flanagin, 2013). Few studies, however, look closely at how these dynamics play out at the level of everyday language use in comment interactions. This study aims to examine how testimonial injustice operates in YouTube comment sections by analyzing patterns of credibility deficit, uptake failure, identity-based credibility judgments, and credibility excess through qualitative discourse analysis.

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METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design with a discourse-oriented approach. The focus is on how language is used in everyday online interaction to negotiate credibility and knowledge claims. Qualitative discourse analysis is suitable for this study because it allows close attention to how meaning, authority, and evaluation are constructed through actual language use rather than measured through frequency or scale. This approach is commonly used to examine epistemic issues in naturally occurring texts, especially in digital contexts where interaction is informal but socially consequential (Rangaswamy & Venkatraman, 2025; Wee et al., 2023).

The data are taken from the comment section of a widely circulated YouTube video discussing the Apollo moon landing. The video was selected because it generated a large number of comments involving disagreement, explanation, and challenges to factual claims. The comment section provided a rich site for observing how viewers engage with contested knowledge and how credibility is negotiated in public digital discourse. Comments were collected between 15 December 2025 and 1 March 2026. During this period, a total of 1,264 comments were retrieved from the comment section. As YouTube comment sections remain dynamic and may continue to grow over time, the dataset reflects the comments available during this specific data collection period. The focus of the study is not the video itself, but the interaction among commenters responding to the topic raised.

The unit of analysis consists of individual comments and reply threads. From the dataset, 9 comments and reply threads were selected as the final units of analysis, allowing interactional sequences to be examined. Each comment is treated as a communicative act that performs a form of epistemic work, such as asserting knowledge, questioning credibility, correcting information, or dismissing another speaker. Reply threads are analyzed as interactional sequences in which uptake, resistance, or misrecognition becomes visible through language choices and response patterns.

Data were collected using purposive sampling. Comments were selected based on three criteria. The comment had to contain an explicit or implicit knowledge claim. The comment had to receive a response from other users. The interaction had to show some form of credibility judgment, whether through acceptance, dismissal, or challenge. From the initial dataset of 1,264 comments, 1,255 comments were excluded because they did not meet these criteria. Usernames and identifying details were anonymized to protect privacy and to maintain ethical standards in online discourse research.

The analysis followed an iterative process. The selected comments were read multiple times to identify recurring patterns of language use related to credibility and epistemic positioning. Comments were then grouped into analytical categories based on shared discursive features, such as linguistic dismissal, failure of uptake, identity-based credibility judgments, and credibility excess. These categories were developed through close engagement with the data and informed by existing work on epistemic communities and digital discourse (Metzger & Flanagin, 2013).

To ensure analytic trustworthiness, the study emphasizes transparency in data selection and consistency in interpretive procedures. The analysis remains grounded in the textual data, with claims supported by direct engagement with the language used in the comments. Rather than aiming for generalization, the study seeks to offer a careful and context-sensitive account of how

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testimonial injustice can emerge through everyday language practices in YouTube comment sections.

FINDINGS

Credibility Deficit through Linguistic Dismissal

In the dataset of nine analyzed comments and reply threads, two comments displayed patterns of credibility deficit through immediate linguistic dismissal. Both examples are presented below. Some comments in the YouTube comment section remove credibility at the moment a claim appears. The rejection does not wait for clarification or response. The language used is short, declarative, and final. These forms do not create space for questioning or engagement. Credibility is taken away before interaction can develop.

Comment 1: "Its all fake if yall dont know."

The phrase *"it's all fake"* functions as a closing move. The adjective *"fake"* delivers a verdict rather than an evaluation. The determiner "all" removes any internal variation. No part of the video is left open for discussion. The clause is declarative and unmodalized. There is no "might," "seems," or "I think." The absence of modality signals certainty and finality. This grammatical choice blocks entry points for response because there is nothing to negotiate.

The second clause, *"if yall dont know,"* targets the audience instead of the claim. The conditional form does not invite explanation. It frames disagreement as a lack of knowledge. The pronoun *"yall"* generalizes the audience and collapses individual positions into a single uninformed group. The verb "dont know" attributes ignorance without specifying what is unknown. The comment shifts the interaction from content to competence. The issue becomes who knows and who does not, not what is true.

This structure creates an asymmetric interactional position. The speaker claims epistemic authority without presenting evidence. Others are positioned as epistemically deficient by default. The sentence offers no interrogative form and no reference to specific details. These absences matter. Without a question, there is no slot for answer. Without a reference, there is no anchor for correction. The language removes the conditions necessary for dialogue.

The effect is exclusionary. Participation is limited to agreement. Anyone who responds must first overcome the label of ignorance imposed by the comment. Credibility is not evaluated through exchange. It is denied through assertion.

Comment 2: "Fake they are created this video."

The word *"fake"* again appears as the core judgment. The comment opens with the evaluative label rather than an explanation. The sentence lacks a subject in the conventional sense, but its function is clear. The video is presented as fabricated. The verb *"created"* attributes intentional construction. This shifts the epistemic focus from the truth of claims to the legitimacy of the source.

No specific element of the video is mentioned. No timestamp, scene, or argument is referenced. The rejection operates at a global level. By framing the video as *"created,"* the comment implies deception. This implication works without elaboration. The accusation alone is sufficient to undermine credibility. Engagement with content becomes unnecessary once the source is marked as illegitimate.

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Grammatical inaccuracy does not weaken the epistemic force of the utterance. The dismissive function does not depend on syntactic precision. It depends on categorical labeling. The absence of qualifiers and the lack of evidential markers contribute to the effect. The comment does not invite clarification or rebuttal. It removes the need for both.

This move invalidates not only the video but also the participants who rely on it. Treating the video as fake positions other commenters as either naïve or complicit. The dismissal spreads from source to speaker. Credibility is withdrawn collectively.

Both comments rely on the same linguistic strategy. Absolute labels replace argument. Declarative forms replace engagement. Modal verbs, questions, and references are absent. These absences are not accidental. They are functional. They prevent the interaction from developing into a space where claims can be tested or revised.

These patterns reshape the comment section as an interactional environment. Knowledge exchange becomes difficult when credibility is denied at entry. Language is used to assert authority rather than to negotiate meaning. What remains is not discussion, but boundary-making. This boundary determines who is heard and who is dismissed before speaking.

Uptake Failure in Comment Interaction

One interaction in the YouTube comment section shows that providing an explanation does not guarantee epistemic uptake. A speaker may offer a detailed account, anticipate possible objections, and structure their message carefully. The interaction can still fail to develop into shared understanding. Uptake fails not because the explanation is absent, but because responses do not engage with it in a meaningful way.

Comment 1:

"If y'all don't know it's real. If you're asking where are the stars it was daytime and there was no sunlight cuz the moon has no atmosphere and if you're thinking why the flag is moving from the wind it isn't moving from the wind but from the astronauts moving it."

This comment is structured as an extended act of explanation. The speaker uses a series of conditional clauses beginning with *"if."* Each clause anticipates a possible doubt from other users. The speaker addresses questions about stars, sunlight, atmosphere, and the movement of the flag. The explanation is sequential and causal. The language shows orientation toward an audience that may be confused or skeptical.

The use of *"if you're asking"* and *"if you're thinking"* signals an attempt to engage with others' concerns. The speaker does not merely assert that the claim is true. The speaker works through imagined objections one by one. This structure creates multiple entry points for dialogue. Other users could respond by agreeing, questioning a specific explanation, or asking for clarification. Linguistically, the testimony meets the conditions for uptake. It is explicit, audience-oriented, and explanatory.

Reply 1:

"it's real sorry for the confusion"

This reply appears to accept the testimony, but the acceptance is minimal. The phrase *"it's real"* repeats the conclusion without referencing any part of the explanation. The apology *"sorry for the confusion"* closes the interaction rather than extending it. No element of the prior explanation is echoed, reformulated, or questioned. There is no indication of which part resolved the confusion.

The brevity of the reply matters. Uptake is not only about agreement. It also involves showing how a claim has been understood. This reply does not demonstrate understanding of the explanation. The response treats the testimony as something to acknowledge, not something to engage with. Linguistically, the interaction stops. The explanation does not travel forward into the conversation.

Reply 2:

"'there was no sunlight' lol then why are they visible?"

This reply selects a single phrase from the longer explanation. The quoted fragment isolates *"there was no sunlight"* from its context. The selective quoting narrows the scope of the discussion. The rest of the explanation is ignored. The marker *"lol"* introduces evaluative distance. It frames the response as dismissive rather than inquisitive.

The question *"then why are they visible?"* appears interrogative, but its function is reductive. The question does not seek clarification of the broader explanation. It challenges one isolated point while disregarding the causal chain provided earlier. The laughter marker undermines the seriousness of the testimony. The response positions the explanation as obviously flawed without addressing its full structure.

The linguistic form of the reply limits engagement. Quotation replaces paraphrase. Mocking tone replaces neutral inquiry. The interaction shifts from explanation to point-scoring. The testimony is not taken up as a coherent account. It is fragmented and weakened through selective focus.

Across this thread, uptake fails in two distinct ways. One response accepts the conclusion without engaging with the reasoning. The other challenges a fragment while ignoring the explanation as a whole. In both cases, the testimony does not achieve epistemic circulation. It is neither fully absorbed nor meaningfully contested. The interaction remains at the level of reaction.

These patterns show that uptake failure does not require outright rejection. Explanation alone is not sufficient. Uptake depends on how responses are linguistically constructed. When responses are minimal, fragmentary, or evaluatively dismissive, the conditions for shared understanding collapse. The comment section remains active, but epistemic exchange stalls.

Identity-Based Credibility Judgments

Two comments judge credibility by positioning speakers within imagined hierarchies of competence. The focus shifts from evaluating claims to evaluating who is allowed to speak as a knower. Language does this work by labeling, framing, and presupposing limits on expertise. Credibility is granted or withdrawn through identity cues embedded in everyday expressions.

Comment 1: "All one needs to look at is that 5th grade science project called the Lunar Module."

This comment does not address any specific claim. The phrase *"all one needs to look at"* presents the judgment as obvious and sufficient. No further inquiry is needed. The noun phrase *"5th grade science project"* performs an act of infantilization. It places the object of discussion at an elementary level of competence. The comparison does not argue against facts. It reclassifies the subject as intellectually trivial.

The label works through educational hierarchy. *"5th grade"* invokes a shared understanding of basic, incomplete knowledge. The term *"science project"* suggests simplicity and lack of rigor. Together, they downgrade the perceived expertise associated with the lunar module. The comment

does not explain what is wrong with the object. It signals that nothing serious could come from it. The credibility of any associated explanation collapses as a result.

Calling the lunar module by a diminutive label also affects the participants in the discussion. Anyone treating the object seriously is indirectly positioned as naïve. The comment creates distance between the speaker and others by elevating the speaker's evaluative stance. Authority emerges from ridicule rather than demonstration. The language constructs an epistemic hierarchy where the speaker stands above the topic and its defenders.

The dismissive force of the comment relies on shared cultural knowledge. Readers are expected to recognize *"5th grade"* as an insult to competence. No evidence is required because the comparison itself carries evaluative weight. The comment works quickly and efficiently. Credibility is undermined through identity positioning, not through engagement with content.

Comment 2: "What happened to 1/6th gravity on moon"

This comment takes the form of a question, but its function is not neutral inquiry. The interrogative structure presupposes that something is missing or inconsistent. The phrase *"what happened to"* implies loss or failure. The question frames the situation as if an expected principle has been violated.

The reference to *"1/6th gravity"* draws on scientific knowledge as a credential. The speaker positions themselves as someone who knows what should happen under lunar gravity. The question does not ask for explanation. It challenges the competence of those who accept the video's claims. The absence of hedging or curiosity markers reinforces this function. There is no *"can someone explain"* or *"I'm confused."* The tone is expositional.

The question narrows the interactional space. It sets a test. If the explanation cannot account for the gravity issue, credibility fails. The focus moves from the complexity of the original explanation to a single technical detail. This reduction allows the speaker to control the terms of evaluation. Knowledge becomes a gatekeeping tool rather than a shared resource.

The interrogative form also shifts the burden of proof. Others must now defend their credibility by responding to the challenge. Silence or inadequate response confirms the presupposition of incompetence. The question thus operates as a credibility filter. It sorts participants into those who can answer and those who cannot.

Both comments demonstrate how identity-based judgments shape epistemic interaction. Credibility is assessed through positioning, not argument. Infantilization and technical challenges serve as shortcuts for evaluating who deserves to be heard. Language directs attention away from claims and toward perceived competence.

These patterns show that epistemic participation in the comment section depends on meeting implicit standards of identity and expertise. Speakers are not only evaluated by what they say, but by how they are classified through language. Credibility rises or falls based on these classifications, shaping who remains audible in the interaction.

Credibility Excess and Epistemic Authority

Two comments receive credibility too easily. The authority does not come from evidence or careful explanation. It comes from confidence, technical framing, and how statements are packaged. Language here does not ask to be checked. It asks to be accepted.

Comment 1: "Imagine how they could fake this today with A.I. This was state of the art fakery back then."

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The opening word *"Imagine"* invites speculation, not verification. The reader is guided to picture a scenario rather than examine facts. These imperative positions the speaker as someone who can see beyond what others see. The sentence does not ask whether the claim is plausible. It presumes plausibility through imagination.

The reference to *"A.I."* carries technical weight. The term signals familiarity with contemporary technology. No explanation is given about how artificial intelligence would apply in this case. The mere mention functions as a credential. Technical vocabulary stands in for evidence. The phrase *"state of the art"* adds historical authority. It suggests insider knowledge about technological capability at a specific time.

The declarative tone strengthens this effect. The sentence *"This was state of the art fakery back then"* offers a conclusion without qualifiers. There is no "might," "possibly," or "it seems." The lack of modal verbs signals certainty. The absence of evidential markers means the claim does not point outward to sources or details. Authority is generated internally through tone and terminology.

The comment blends speculation with assertion. The imaginative opening lowers the bar for proof. The confident conclusion raises the bar for challenge. Readers are nudged to accept the claim because it sounds informed and technologically aware. Credibility accumulates through presentation, not demonstration.

Comment 2: "Camera was setup before landed?"

This comment is short, but its epistemic weight is high. The interrogative form suggests a question, yet the structure presupposes an answer. The wording assumes that the camera was indeed set up beforehand. The question mark softens the statement without removing its assertive force.

The lack of subject detail contributes to the effect. No camera model is named. No scene is referenced. The brevity creates an impression of obviousness. The speaker does not explain why the camera setup is problematic. The reader is expected to fill in the gap. This reliance on shared suspicion gives the comment traction.

The phrasing implies insider awareness. The speaker appears to know how such a landing should unfold. The question tests others rather than seeking information. Those who cannot respond convincingly risk appearing uninformed. Credibility is granted to the speaker because the question sounds simple and confident.

The minimalism matters. Short questions can travel quickly in comment sections. They invite agreement through nods rather than arguments. The comment does not need to be proven right. It needs to sound right. Authority emerges from how little needs to be said.

Both comments show how credibility excess is produced linguistically. Technical references, confident tone, and presuppositional questions elevate speakers without scrutiny. The language discourages challenge by framing claims as obvious or already settled. Other participants may hesitate to respond, not because they lack counterarguments, but because the comments project authority.

Credibility excess completes the pattern observed across the findings. Some voices are dismissed before they speak. Some explanations fail to gain uptake. Some speakers are judged by identity rather than content. Others receive authority without justification. Language distributes epistemic standing unevenly. The comment section remains active, but credibility does not circulate fairly. Authority settles where confidence and framing allow it to settle.

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DISCUSSION

YouTube comment sections operate as complex epistemic environments where credibility is constantly negotiated through everyday language. The findings of this study show that testimonial injustice in digital discourse does not emerge in isolation, but within communicative ecosystems already shaped by polarization, distrust, and normalized hostility.

Prior research on online discourse has demonstrated that dismissive interactional norms are common even outside explicitly hateful speech, creating conditions where credibility can be easily undermined or inflated (Matamoros-Fernández & Farkas, 2021; Udupa et al., 2020). Within this environment, epistemic injustice becomes an ordinary outcome of interaction rather than an exceptional failure.

Credibility deficit emerges as a routine mechanism of epistemic exclusion. The findings show that short declarative dismissals deny credibility before engagement can take place. These dismissals do not counter claims with evidence. They redefine the interaction by positioning certain speakers as unworthy of epistemic consideration. This pattern aligns with accounts of testimonial injustice in which credibility is withdrawn through seemingly ordinary communicative practices rather than explicit silencing (Fricker, 2021). Such practices are sustained within broader ecosystems of toxic and delegitimizing speech, where dismissive language persists because it is framed as opinion rather than harm (Pradel et al., 2024; Šori & Vehovar, 2022). Over time, repeated credibility denial limits epistemic participation and contributes to structural forms of epistemic oppression (Dotson, 2021).

Uptake failure adds another layer to this dynamic by showing that explanation alone does not secure epistemic recognition. The findings demonstrate that speakers may offer detailed, audience-oriented explanations and still fail to be taken up epistemically. Uptake involves recognizing a speaker as a legitimate contributor to knowledge exchange, not merely acknowledging their conclusion. When responses are minimal or selectively reductive, the epistemic labor of explanation collapses. This supports the view that speech acts carry epistemic expectations that depend on reception rather than intention (Langton, 2021). Speaking in such environments thus becomes epistemically risky, as the conditions required for uptake are unstable and unevenly distributed (Kukla, 2022).

Identity-based credibility judgments further illustrate how epistemic evaluation shifts from content to perceived competence. The findings show that speakers are assessed through linguistic cues that signal intelligence, education, or expertise, rather than through engagement with their claims. Infantilization and competence-testing questions function as interactional tools for sorting participants into credible and non-credible knowers. These judgments resonate with work emphasizing that testimonial injustice takes different forms depending on the epistemic domain and the capacities attributed to speakers (Elicor & Bussmann, 2025). Credibility assessments are rarely neutral, as assumptions about competence shape who is allowed to count as a knower in public discourse (Reed-Berendt & Ganguli-Mitra, 2025). Such dynamics also reflect broader institutional norms that regulate epistemic authority and trust (Anderson, 2020).

Credibility excess completes the pattern by revealing how some speakers receive disproportionate epistemic authority. The findings show that confident tone, technical references, and presuppositional framing can elevate speakers without requiring evidential support. Authority emerges from presentation rather than demonstration. This mirrors research on epistemic communities in digital environments, where perceived expertise and fluency often substitute for

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justification (Metzger & Flanagin, 2013). Techno-linguistic bias becomes visible when certain styles of language are systematically treated as more credible, regardless of their epistemic grounding (Helm et al., 2023). These patterns coexist with credibility deficits, producing an uneven distribution of epistemic authority across participants.

Taken together, the findings reveal that testimonial injustice in YouTube comment sections is not limited to overt silencing or explicit hostility. Credibility is denied, ignored, tested, or inflated through routine linguistic practices that structure interaction. These practices operate within broader communicative ecosystems characterized by toxicity, selective moderation, and uneven epistemic accountability (Pradel et al., 2024; Šori & Vehovar, 2022). The result is an epistemic environment where participation remains high, but meaningful epistemic exchange is fragile.

Language plays a central role in sustaining these dynamics. Credibility judgments are embedded in lexical choices, grammatical forms, and interactional positioning. These judgments do not require explicit bias or malicious intent. They emerge through ordinary ways of speaking that feel natural in fast-paced digital interactions. This supports the view that epistemic injustice is often reproduced through routine communicative practices rather than exceptional acts of exclusion (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010). Digital platforms intensify these practices by rewarding speed, confidence, and emotional impact over careful epistemic engagement (Wachs et al., 2024).

The implications of these findings extend beyond individual interactions. When particular ways of speaking consistently attract credibility while others are dismissed or ignored, epistemic inequality becomes normalized. Language does not merely reflect epistemic hierarchies. It actively produces them. Critical perspectives on testimonial injustice emphasize that such patterns should be understood as structurally sustained rather than individually accidental (Rose, 2024). "YouTube comment sections, therefore, are not marginal spaces of talk. They are consequential sites where epistemic norms are negotiated and unevenly distributed through language (Wilmot, 2024).

These findings also carry implications for English language education. Online comment sections provide authentic examples of how credibility, authority, and knowledge claims are negotiated through everyday language. Incorporating such digital discourse into classroom discussion may support the development of students' critical discourse awareness, particularly in recognizing how linguistic choices shape credibility judgments in online environments. In English language teaching contexts, comment threads like those examined in this study can also function as pedagogical materials for teaching argumentation, evaluating sources, and assessing credibility in digital communication. Engaging with these forms of real-world discourse may help strengthen students' digital literacy and their ability to participate critically in English-mediated online interactions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that YouTube comment sections function as epistemic environments where credibility is negotiated through everyday language. Testimonial injustice emerges not only through explicit rejection, but through routine interactional practices that shape who is recognized as a knower. The analysis identifies four recurring patterns: credibility deficit, uptake failure, identity-based credibility judgments, and credibility excess. These patterns show that epistemic injustice in digital discourse is closely tied to how language positions speakers within public interaction. By examining naturally occurring comments, this study underscores the importance of

attending to ordinary language use to understand how epistemic inequality is produced and sustained in online public spaces.

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