



The Realization of Illocutionary Acts Found on TikTok Live Streaming

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Article Info

Article History:
Accepted 30 March
2024

Approved 8 June
2024

Published 15
September 2024

Keywords:
Digital Appllication.
Illocutionary Acts,
Live Streaming,
TikTok

Abstract

TikTok is a social media that is currently becoming a trend center. One of TikTok's best features is live streaming with its mainstay content buying and selling. In line with this, this study aims to analyze the realization of the illocutionary acts based on Searle's theory which divides illocutionary acts into 5 types: representative, commissive, directive, expressive, and declarative. Qualitative content analysis study was applied to analyze the illocutionary acts that appear in online communication via live streaming TikTok by the account @Carina's pen02. The data was collected through some stages including recording, transcribing, and classifying by using the SPEAKING (setting and scene, participants, endings, acts sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, and genre) theory proposed by Dell Hyme (1972). Expert judgment was also involved in this study to guarantee the validity of the data. The four types of illocutionary acts were found in which the commissive is the most frequently used, followed by representative, directive, and expressive. Pragmatically, these findings improve understanding of speech acts in real-time digital interactions. Digital communications, it also provides strategies to increase audience engagement through the effective use of direction and expression. For online sellers, this research offers practical guidance on using persuasive language to build trust, drive sales, and maintain viewer interest during live streaming.

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p-ISSN 2087-0108

e-ISSN 2502-4566

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the rise of TikTok Shop live streaming has revolutionized the e-commerce landscape, creating immersive real-time shopping experiences. Noviansyah (2008) stated that application is the use or implementation of a concept that becomes a subject of discussion. In the digital world, an application can be interpreted as a computer program that functions to facilitate human work. TikTok has become one of the most popular social media platforms, changing daily activities by making them more efficient and accessible. Rachmawati et al. (2017) State that TikTok is a music video and video application the official Chinese social network that enlivens the digital industry in Indonesia. A trendsetter in the digital marketplace, TikTok Shop live streams combine entertainment with retail, offering sellers a unique platform to showcase their products and interact directly with a wide online audience. In contrast to traditional e-commerce, where customers make purchasing decisions based on static product descriptions and images, live streaming relies heavily on the host's ability to communicate effectively and drive engagement.

The dynamic and spontaneous nature of direct selling underscores the importance of effective communication in engaging audiences, building trust, and ultimately driving sales. A key component of effective communication in live streaming is the use of language that not only conveys information but also carries out certain actions. To better understand how language operates in this context, it is important to explore speech act theory, which explains how speech has a variety of functions beyond just the expression of thoughts. Jufrizal and Refnaldi (2008) describe pragmatics as the study of meaning in interaction, highlighting how pragmatics involves not only the words spoken but also the dynamic roles played by the speaker and listener. The process of making meaning in pragmatics also considers the surrounding context and the specific utterance used. Pragmatics is concerned with how meaning is conveyed by the speaker (or writer) and how that meaning is understood or interpreted by the

listener (or reader). According to Yule (1996), pragmatics allows individuals to express the intended meaning, underlying assumptions, goals, and actions they want to carry out through speech. It provides a framework for analyzing language beyond literal meaning, focusing on how people accomplish different tasks through words, which are the essence of speech acts. Orin and Issy (2016) Further, explain that every act of human communication has a certain meaning or purpose. Although some people speak simply to provide information, others may intend to persuade their listeners or even exert influence through their words.

Speech acts refer to the study of how we perform actions using language. Whenever we speak, we engage in three types of action: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Austin (1962) stated that illocutionary acts are expressions that carry a certain force or conventional meaning. This power gives speech the ability to act the act of speaking itself. According to Leech (1983), the power inherent in illocutionary acts comes from the idea that saying something can itself be an action, not just a statement of fact. In line with that, Nadar (2009) stated that an Illocutionary act is what the speaker hopes to achieve by expressing something, and it can be in the form of asserting, promising, apologizing, threatening, ordering, asking, and so on.

Searle (1979) proposed 5 classifications of illocutionary acts, namely directive, declarative, commissive, expressive, and also representative. Searle (1979) proposed five types of illocutionary acts to categorize the various ways we use language to perform actions in communication they are directive as a speech act that aims to get the listener to do something. Examples include commands, requests, and suggestions. Then, declarative actions change the outside world simply by being spoken, such as wishing someone a wedding or declaring a meeting adjourned. Commissive involves the speaker's promise of a future action, such as a promise or offer. Next, expressive statements and actions express the speaker's psychological or emotional state, such as an apology, congratulations, or expression of

thanks. Last, representative is an act that represents a statement of fact or belief, where the speaker conveys information they believe to be true, such as a statement or description.

The relevance of illocutionary acts in TikTok Shop live streaming lies in the fact that the host constantly performs various speech acts to engage viewers, promote products, and influence purchasing decisions. For example, they issue invitations to participate in limited-time offers, make persuasive claims about product quality, and encourage viewers to act quickly before stocks run out. Understanding how these illocutionary acts function can provide valuable insight into communication strategies that drive direct sales success on TikTok Shop.

Several studies analyzed the emergence of illocutionary acts in various media. For example, Chairani et al. (2020) Found that illocutionary acts applied in conversations between students is easier to interpret when using their local language. As stated by Licea-Haquet et al. (2019), Jones (2013), Labinaz (2018) and Aziz et al. (2017), the community more easily understands local languages. If previously through direct conversation, there is also a study similar to the object of game research which found the results that the proposed model assumes an externalist explanation of illocutionary (Witek, 2015). Different opinion, Norrick (2015), Edel (2017), and Rachmawati et al. (2017) who analyzed illocutionary acts in text form but classified these actions based on direct or indirect. In addition to that, Rani et al. (2019) stand with a different theory, which is the Vanderveken theory. Previously there had been previous research on illocutionary acts in direct conversations, reading texts, and games. The following is research that uses speech as the object as mentioned by Rosyidi et al. (2019), Hariati et al. (2020), Khodijah (2020), and Putri et al. (2018) who proved that speech is dominated by directives and expressive because usually, the speaker will give directions or notifications regarding the event being implemented. In contrast to the three previous studies, Saputri et al. (2021) found a speech that contained advertising so that the commissive was superior compared to others. Next is the research

that was very close to this research, in which illocutionary acts can also be found in visual content such as the works of Prakarsa (2017), Rahayu et al. (2018), Hutajulu and Herman (2019), Lisnani et al. (2017), Nadeak et al. (2017), Paelongan et al. (2019) and Andriani et al. (2017) who agree that in the world of films and short videos, there are not many illocutionary acts because of their setting.

Addressing the use of illocutionary acts in TikTok live, this research aims to examine the role of communication in TikTok Shop live streaming by focusing on the use of illocutionary acts and audience responses. Specifically, the research objectives are: analyzing the realization of illocutionary acts during live broadcast TikTok Shop sessions, identifying how presenters use various types of speech acts to interact with their viewers, and exploring how audiences respond to these illocutionary acts in real-time, focusing on their interactions and participation during live broadcasts. The significance of this research lies in its potential to improve understanding of communication strategies in digital commerce. By applying speech act theory to live e-commerce, this research offers insight into how sellers use language to engage and influence audiences. Additionally, identifying how audiences respond can help sellers and marketers refine their communications approaches, ultimately increasing the effectiveness of live-streaming sales. Academically, this research expands existing knowledge on digital discourse and provides a basis for future research on speech acts on online platforms.

METHOD

The researchers applied a qualitative research design, which is suitable for analyzing illocutionary acts because it allows a detailed examination of language use in a natural and interactive context. Qualitative methods allow researchers to capture the complexity of communication, focusing on how speech acts are performed and interpreted by hosts and viewers during live broadcast sessions. By analyzing the content of live interactions, this approach

provides rich insights into how illocutionary acts contribute to audience engagement and influence in real-time digital commerce.

The research data was obtained from TikTok Shop live-streaming recordings organized by @Carina's Pen02 account, mainly selling stationery and accessories. The session lasted 15 minutes, with viewership numbers between 215 and 250. This live stream was chosen because it provides an ideal context for analyzing illocutionary acts in e-commerce live streams, given the interactive nature of the platform and the level of audience engagement. The product category focuses on daily use goods such as stationery and accessories, offering a variety of promotional speech acts typical of real-time sales. In addition, a consistent audience size allows for an in-depth examination of audience responses to various types of illocutionary acts. The extended session duration ensures sufficient engagement, making it suitable for qualitative analysis aimed at understanding communication strategies in live-streaming sales environments.

This research applied content analysis to examine the use of illocutionary acts in TikTok Shop live broadcasts. The recorded sessions were transcribed, and the presenter's utterances were analyzed to identify the illocutionary acts applied by the speakers. These are categorized using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model (setting, participants, action, key, etc.) and classified according to Searle's categories: directive, commissive, representative, and expressive.

The categorized speech acts were then interpreted by analyzing their impact on audience engagement, such as comments and interactions.

This approach provides a structured way to understand how the host language influences audience responses in real time and offers insight into communication strategies in live e-commerce. Furthermore, data validation was carried out through expert judgment, where a linguist reviewed the transcription and categorization of illocutionary acts to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this study, the researchers investigated how illocutionary acts are realized in interactions that occur naturally and spontaneously in digital communication settings. This research specifically focuses on the realization of illocutionary acts in TikTok, with an emphasis on the live broadcast feature which is often used as a medium for buying and selling interactions.

The researchers determine a sample of the various expressions that appear in this study. These expressions were then sorted and classified based on the form of the illocutionary act using the SPEAKING method, which was developed by Dell Hymes. This method helps in understanding the social, cultural, and communication context in each speech act that occurs, thus providing a more in-depth and comprehensive analysis regarding the use of illocutionary acts in buying and selling communication on TikTok.

In this research, 259 expression data were found containing illocutionary acts. Below the researchers present a sample of the expressions spoken by the host also known as the speaker.

Table 1. The Sample of Illocutionary Acts Found on Live Broadcast “TikTok”

No	Time	Utterances
1.	00:01:19 – 00:05:13	You’ll be so really, really open call the reset nice and here no paper
2.	00:15:28 – 00:17:21	purple pink purple purple pink purple purple
3.	00:24:10 – 00:27:14	and also let me get you little surprise bag
4.	00:33:00 – 00:36:01	and your wings hair clips for the Omina package
5.	00:42:11 – 00:44:25	my favorite part is the little metal decoration
6.	01:09:18 – 01:12:25	I get a mini bag I love to offer you the little Winnie
7.	02:13:20 – 02:16:12	round 2 for Naomi now yeah yeah
8.	03:05:16 – 03:07:22	oh my God oh my God go go go go go
9.	03:26:14 – 03:28:13	but you will you will receive them in pieces
10.	09:57:17 - 09:59:08	this is so pretty oh my God

Table 1 shows a sample with 10 numbers taken at random. Live streaming was held for 1 hour with 3 sessions in it. In 15 minutes of video recording, the host creates 259 expressions which indicate the presence of an illocutionary act in each meaning of the expression. After listing these expressions, an analysis was carried out to classify the type of each sentence. To simplify the classification process, the SPEAKING analysis method is used, namely (setting and scene, participants, endings, acts sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, and genre) from Dell Hyme. The table presented in the appendix (Appendix 1) provides a comprehensive overview of the classification process of illocutionary acts identified in the analyzed live-stream session. Each utterance was meticulously examined and categorized based on its communicative function, utilizing the following codes: D denotes Directive, R represents Representative, C signifies Commissive, and E indicates

Expressive. This classification framework, grounded in speech act theory, serves as a detailed reference for understanding the distribution and realization of various illocutionary acts within the context of live e-commerce interactions.

Before deciding which category the sentence means, the researchers first identified the look, purpose, and even the meaning of each expression and looked at the tendency towards which type. The accuracy of this data is guaranteed through a validation process carried out by a professional expert judgment in the field of linguistics. This validation ensures that the data used truly represents the linguistic phenomenon being studied so that the results of the analysis can be justified.

So it can be concluded that the 259 expressions recorded in this data have the following number of each type:

Table 2. Frequency of Illocutionary Acts

No	Type	Frequency	Percent	Total Data
1.	Representative	92	36	259
2.	Directive	17	6	
3.	Expressive	132	51	
4.	Commissive	18	7	
5.	Declarative	0	0	

Because the focus of this research is to prove or show how illocutionary acts occur in selling-buying live streams on TikTok, the next step is a breakdown of the hidden meanings contained in each expression found in the data.

The findings themselves are divided into 6 topics, including the realization of illocutionary acts representative, directive, expressive, and commissive. It's a shame that in the data from this study, there was no occurrence of the declarative

type of illocutionary acts, but there will be an explanation regarding the non-appearance of this type.

In the next stage, the researchers provide several examples along with explanations of the realization of illocutionary acts found in live broadcast selling-buying via the digital application "TikTok".

Representative

Based on Searle (1979), representative illocutionary acts have the distinctive characteristic of containing facts, so this type of illocutionary act aims to provide confirmation and explanation. Of course, as a seller, you must have a firm foundation for the products you own, both in terms of quality, quantity, and suitability for the price offered. For example, the utterance "You'll be so really, really open call the reset nice and here no paper" in this case the host acts as a speaker to reconfirm that the shop does not provide paper but asks the audience to remain calm because there are still many other stationery products. Apart from that, behind this statement, the host hopes to get an understanding from the audience and that the audience is also willing to check other products. Apart from statements like the previous example, there are also acts of reporting, claiming, and bragging which are generally used by sellers to convince customers of the product. Examples of bullshit found in the video recording is: "that's going to be perfect and also super smooth" which the speaker uses to maximize the possibility of the audience being interested in the product. Even though it is not certain that the item has specifications that are as soft and perfect as that, there is certainly great hope that through this expression the audience will be interested in checking out the item. This finding is in line with the results of previous research conducted by researchers such as Michael (2013), Paolo (2017), Neal et al. (2018), and Jessica et al. (2017), who also identified the prevalence of representative, or sometimes called assertive, illocutionary acts in natural interactions. In the context of this research, the variable under study is live-stream communication, where similar patterns of

illocutionary acts have been observed.

Directive

Previously, there was an explanation regarding the realization of representatives found in TikTok live streaming and secondly, let's continue with the existence of illocutionary acts directives in this research. Following the term, "direct" this means directing or providing guidance for someone to do something. The function of directive expressions in selling-buying live broadcasts is to facilitate the audience to gain easy access when making transactions or asking questions and answers regarding the desired product. Sometimes it is also used to give instructions to online store teams such as "Stella what can be found in a surprise" and "oh check this wrong". Illocutionary acts directives are also used by speakers to get answers or confirmation, such as the following example "do you have a little wrist so cute" which describes the speaker's curiosity about the customer's ownership of the item and of course hopes to get an answer to be able to decide on the next step. Then offer that item or another item. Witek (2015) also identified the use of persuasive directives, particularly in transactional contexts where the speaker aims to encourage the listener to take a specific action. This is in line with the findings of this study, which also highlights the use of directive illocutionary acts in TikTok live-stream sales. However, this research also revealed differences in the implementation of directives when compared with traditional settings, these differences have been corroborated by previous research, including research by Ahmad et al. (2019) and Natalius et al. (2019). These differences underscore the unique nature of communication strategies on digital platforms like TikTok, where persuasive techniques are adapted to fit the dynamics of live streaming interactions.

Commissive

The findings of this study show the significant presence of commissive actions, highlighting their important role in facilitating effective communication during buying and

selling interactions. Given that commissive expressions inherently convey the potential for future action or possibility, the frequent occurrence of commissive expressions in this context is natural and logical, thus underscoring their importance in the dynamics of live e-commerce communications. Some of the sentences found were "Pinky, purple - purple pink purple pink purple" which seemed to only mention colors repeatedly even though the original intent was to offer other color options for the product being displayed. There are also expressions "and also let me get you little surprise bag", "I get a mini bag I love to offer you the little Winnie" which is also a form of offering. Commissive illocutionary acts are common in the context of TikTok Live sales and purchases because they underlie the transactional nature of the interaction. Sellers make promises regarding product delivery, discounts, or exclusive offers, committing to future actions that create trust and urgency among buyers. The interactive, real-time environment encourages sellers to commit to engaging audiences and encourage immediate purchases. Additionally, the negotiation aspect, where the buyer asks for a better deal and the seller responds with promises, further reinforces the use of commissive actions in these direct interactions. The prominence of the commissive illocutionary act in this study which plays a central role is different from the findings of several previous studies. For example, research by Ahmad et al. (2019) and Nurul et al. (2021) identified commissive actions that only occurred a few times. These differences underscore the unique contribution of this research, where commissive expressions play a more significant role in the context of live-stream communication, highlighting the importance of commissive expressions in facilitating interaction during e-commerce interactions.

Expressive

The last illocutionary act found in this research was expressive. This type is closely related to feelings, emotions, etiquette, and other psychological matters. This expression is usually born from personal speakers who are also

influenced by situations and conditions. In the live broadcast of buying and selling, the existence of this type of illocutionary act has the aim of branding the online shop @Carina's pen02 which carries out service standards that are not only good but also optimal. The commissive expressions found in this paper are "Thank you mini back" and "and here two thank you" which are expressions of gratitude for the actions given by the audience. Then, there is "oh sorry my I'm I'm losing my hair everywhere" which is an apology because there was a misunderstanding between the speaker and listener. Apart from thanking and pardoning, some compliments and accusations are shown in the form of jokes or casually. Putu and I Made (2018) identified several illocutionary acts in their research, focusing on improving polite behavior and maintaining appropriate social etiquette in various contexts. Like Putu Ayu and I Made's research, this research emphasizes the importance of fostering respectful communication, especially in live-streaming buying and selling interactions. Commissive actions, which involve a commitment to future action, play an important role in building trust and ensuring cooperative communication, aligned with the broader goal of encouraging polite and constructive social behavior.

Declarative

Declarative illocutionary acts, which primarily involve stating facts or providing information, were not frequently used in the live broadcast context of this study. This is because the primary function of live streaming interactions, particularly in an e-commerce environment, is to engage viewers and encourage active participation, such as making a purchase or responding to a call to action. In contrast to declarative, which serves to inform or confirm, commissive and directive actions are more relevant in this context because they involve commitments, requests, or suggestions that directly influence the behavior of the audience. The focus in livestream sales is on fostering interaction, building trust, and encouraging response, making commissives and directives

more appropriate and effective communication tools than declaratives. Declarative illocutionary acts are speech acts that can change the social or institutional state of affairs simply by being uttered, such as "I declare the meeting open" or "I pronounce you husband and wife." These acts are typically executed by someone with the researchery or power to make such declarations, and they involve a formal or institutional context that brings about an immediate transformation in the situation.

In contrast, the language used in TikTok live-stream sales is largely transactional and informal. Sellers engage with potential buyers primarily through speech acts aimed at promoting products, encouraging purchases, answering questions, and negotiating terms. In addition, declarative illocutionary acts usually require institutional support or authority to be influential and meaningful. In more formal or institutional contexts, such as legal, academic, or government environments, declaratives often serve to establish facts, announce decisions, or impose changes with formal consequences. However, the context of TikTok direct sales differs significantly from formal environments. TikTok live streaming has its roots in informal, everyday interactions between sellers and buyers, whose main goal is to facilitate commercial transactions in a relaxed and engaging manner.

In TikTok direct selling, the communicative intent is not to establish new facts or make formal changes, as occurs in declarative actions in more institutionalized contexts. Instead, the goal is to engage the audience, build rapport, and encourage immediate action, such as making a purchase or expressing interest in a product. As a result, the use of declarative actions, which rely on formal authority or structure, has become less common. In contrast, commissive and directive illocutionary acts are more appropriate because they encourage future actions (e.g. promises or offers) and influence decisions in real-time, thus aligning more with the informal and transactional nature of TikTok direct selling. Therefore, the absence of declarative is a reflection of the practical, transactional nature of the interactions, where the

primary goal is to persuade, inform, or promise rather than declare or institute changes in a formal sense. Apart from analyzing the realization of illocutionary acts, this study also aims to find out how the audience reacts to illocutionary acts that appear during the live broadcast process. In live TikTok broadcasts, the interactive and real-time nature of the platform strongly influences how audiences respond to illocutionary acts. Streamers frequently use requests, commands, and suggestions to prompt their audience to take specific actions, such as liking the stream, sending virtual gifts, or purchasing products. Illocutionary acts play an important role in influencing audience responses, especially in interactive environments such as TikTok live streams. The use of commissive actions (e.g. promises or offers) can help build trust and create anticipation, motivating viewers to engage or take action in the future. On the other hand, directive actions (e.g. requests or orders) are more likely to result in an immediate response, such as making a purchase or leaving a comment. Studies conducted by Searle (1969) and Austin (1962) show that illocutionary acts shape the way listeners interpret the speaker's intentions, thereby influencing their subsequent behavior. In the context of live-streaming commerce, the type of illocutionary act used can have a direct impact on how viewers interpret the message and decide whether to interact, further highlighting the importance of communication strategies in e-commerce environments. These illocutionary acts often result in active engagement from viewers, who are quick to respond to direct instructions, like tapping the like button when asked. This highlights the persuasive power of these acts within the live-stream environment. Audience reactions to illocutionary acts can vary greatly. Many viewers respond positively by engaging and participating as appropriate, especially when the illocutionary act is perceived as genuine and performed at the right time. These audiences may respond to commissive actions by expressing interest in future actions or making a purchase, while directive actions may encourage direct engagement, such as commenting or sharing.

However, other viewers may react negatively, especially if the illocutionary act is perceived as too strong, repetitive, or insincere. For example, if requests are too frequent or seem manipulative, viewers may become disengaged or resistant. Negative reactions can also occur if the streamer's tone of voice is unpleasant or the relationship between the streamer and the audience lacks mutual trust. Therefore, the effectiveness of a communication strategy depends on factors such as tone, frequency of requests, and perceived authenticity of the interaction. In this dynamic environment, a streamer's ability to balance engagement with sincerity is critical to maintaining a positive and interactive viewer experience.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, this research examines the use of illocutionary acts in TikTok live streaming, especially on the @Carina pen02 account. Searle's theory identified five types of illocutionary acts, but only four were observed: assertive, commissive, expressive, and directive and no declarative acts were found among the 259 data points. The real-time communication context in buying and selling influences the prevalence of these actions, with commissive actions (promises and offers) being the most dominant, reflecting their persuasive role in driving sales. Assertive actions (36%) play an important role in product explanation and generating audience interest, while directive and expressive actions, although less common, complement the sales process. Audience engagement proved crucial, as positive responses had a direct impact on communication flow and increased visibility, this is in line with TikTok's algorithm which supports active engagement. However, challenges arise in selecting the right data, especially in finding English language live streams by native speakers. Despite these difficulties, this research underscores the importance of illocutionary acts in fostering effective communication and driving sales during live broadcasts, highlighting the need for strategic

communication in e-commerce environments.

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