

Original Article

A Pragmatic Discourse Analysis on Illocutionary Speech Acts in TikTok Videos for Language Learning Among Filipino Educational Content Creators

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Abstract. The increasing use of social media platforms in education has created new opportunities for language learning through short-form digital content. However, limited studies have examined how pragmatic features, such as illocutionary speech acts, function within these instructional environments. This study investigates how Filipino Educational content creators on TikTok employ illocutionary speech acts to support language learning. Specifically, it identifies the types of illocutionary speech acts used in TikTok-based language-learning videos, examines how these acts are realized through verbal and non-verbal features, and analyzes how they facilitate comprehension and interaction among learners. The study utilized qualitative discourse analysis of selected TikTok videos produced by Filipino language educators. The analysis was anchored in John Searle's (1976) classification of illocutionary speech acts, Dell Hymes' (1974) SPEAKING framework for verbal features, and Mark L. Knapp and Judith Hall's (2014) framework for non-verbal communication. The findings reveal that four types of illocutionary speech acts - assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive - are commonly used in TikTok educational content. Assertive acts primarily explain grammatical rules and clarify language use, while directive acts encourage learner participation through prompts and instructions. Commissive acts signal the speaker's commitment to providing explanations and examples, whereas expressive acts help establish rapport and maintain a positive learning environment. The integration of verbal explanations and non-verbal cues, such as gestures, eye contact, and vocal modulation, enhances instructional clarity and promotes audience engagement. Overall, the study highlights the role of speech acts and multimodal communication in facilitating comprehension and interaction in digital language-learning contexts and demonstrates the potential of TikTok as an effective platform for microlearning and technology-mediated language instruction.

Keywords: Digital language learning; Illocutionary speech acts; Multimodal communication; TikTok education; Technology-mediated learning.

Technology-mediated learning has broadened language instruction beyond the traditional classroom. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok are now widely used by modern learners and are increasingly serving as alternative tools for accessible English language education. Among these platforms, TikTok stands out as an innovative space where Filipino educational content creators engage learners

with short-form language lessons. Although TikTok is frequently used as an informal platform for language learning, there is a lack of research on how Filipino content creators employ educational discourse pedagogically. Consequently, learners' skills in interpreting and responding to intended meanings are often underemphasized in English language teaching. Investigating illocutionary speech acts in TikTok videos made by Filipino educational creators is relevant, as it uncovers how pragmatic features are integrated into digital learning and how this discourse aids learners' comprehension and mastery of English.

The international emergence of TikTok is not only for entertainment; it is also used as a platform for learning, particularly for students. For instance, in Indonesia, Adistri et al. (2024) highlighted TikTok as an effective entertainment medium that meets consumers' information needs by providing educational and social content. Additionally, a similar study by Abduh and Bakistuta (2023) found that TikTok significantly improves English-speaking skills among elementary students, as the platform exposes them to various types of content and shapes how they communicate. In Vietnam, the study of Nguyen and Tran (2024) found that TikTok improves students' speaking proficiency and emphasized how the platform promotes interactivity, enhances the English language, and provides communication ideas. Furthermore, a collection of studies conducted in Malaysia indicated that TikTok facilitates and improves vocabulary development and comprehension by functioning as a supplementary instructional tool that enhances students' engagement and learning effectiveness (Anumanthan & Hashim, 2022; Bernard, 2021; Roshdi & Rahmat, 2023). These studies indicate that the rise of TikTok not only provides entertainment but also serves as an effective digital platform that promotes interactivity, language acquisition, motivation, and practical language use in academic settings. Collectively, the aforementioned studies show that TikTok extends beyond its primary purpose—entertainment—and can serve as an effective digital tool for language learning, promoting learner motivation, interaction, and authentic language use. Moreover, existing research studies have been conducted in Southeast Asian countries where TikTok is widely used, particularly Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and the Philippines. However, there remains a deficiency of studies regarding its academic impact in a Western context or other global settings, which constrains the generalizability of the findings.

In the Philippine context, TikTok is gradually being recognized not only as a social media platform but also as a space where language use and learning take place. For example, Suarez et al. (2023) examined how Filipino TikTok influencers use unclear or “vague” language in advertisements and found that content creators employ various linguistic strategies to influence how audiences interpret online messages. Similarly, the study of Mariano and Agbayani (2024) revealed that TikTok videos focusing on vocabulary development can help English major students in the Philippines improve their English vocabulary. In addition, De Matta et al. (2025) reported that TikTok English teaching videos positively supported elementary students' English learning. These findings suggest that researchers in the Philippines are beginning to explore the role of TikTok in language learning and education. However, there are still limited studies that investigate the broader sociolinguistic and pragmatic strategies used by Filipino social media content creators to engage diverse learners across different educational levels.

In Mindanao, particularly in the Davao Region, students are increasingly using TikTok to study English by watching short videos that cover grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation drills. Notably, Abantas (2025) reported that learning content from TikTok has led to significant improvements in learners' oral communication skills. Another study by Jamisolamin et al. (2025) highlights the platform's pedagogical advantage at Southern de Oro Philippines College in Cagayan de Oro City and finds a significant relationship between students' TikTok usage and their improvement in English vocabulary. While there have been relatively few studies in the local setting, most focus on the platform's learning outcomes and its potential for instructional discourse, particularly on the illocutionary speech acts used by Filipino educational content creators in their content.

Despite speech act theory being widely studied, research examining the role of TikTok in language learning remains limited, with most studies conducted in Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam. This pattern highlights a gap in the global literature. In the Philippines, existing studies also provide limited discussion of how Filipino social media content creators engage learners through their sociolinguistic and pragmatic practices. Local research also overlooks how these creators strategically use the platform to fulfill their instructional goals in their content. Methodologically, many studies have focused on categorizing speech acts or measuring their frequency. However, less emphasis has been placed on the advantages of speech acts for achieving instructional goals in spoken pedagogical discourse. In response to these gaps, this study applies pragmatic discourse analysis to examine the types and functions of illocutionary speech acts in TikTok-based

educational language videos produced by Filipino content creators, offering context-specific insights to pragmatic research in technology-mediated language learning.

This study was grounded in Searle's Speech Act Theory (1976) to examine how illocutionary acts were used in TikTok-based instructional content to convey meaning and instructional intent. Using this framework, the utterances in the transcribed TikTok videos were analyzed and classified according to the five major types of illocutionary speech acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. The study further explored how these acts explain concepts, give instructions, encourage learners, and organize interaction during the lesson.

The trend toward learner-centered digital environments highlights the growing importance of technology-mediated language learning (TMLL) in modern educational practices. Digital tools in TMLL have enabled microlearning, a strategy in which learners engage with concise, self-paced language learning. Recent findings by Conde-Caballero, Castillo-Sarmiento, and Ballesteros-Yáñez (2024) show that microlearning delivered through TikTok's short-form video can improve learner engagement and increase the usage of digital learning resources in higher education. In ESL contexts, researchers have also explored how the platform's features can support pedagogical approaches. Tan et al. (2022) highlighted that TikTok's short-form videos and interactive tools, such as video-related elements and the Duet challenge, may foster engaging and meaningful learning environments even in virtual settings.

Searle (1969) later refined the principles of Speech Act Theory introduced by Austin (1962), which has led many scholars to study how illocutionary acts such as stating information, giving directions, making commitments, expressing feelings, and influencing social realities work in different communication settings. With platforms like TikTok, communication has gone beyond face-to-face or written forms, encompassing short, multimodal content that combines speech, visuals, music, and interactive features. Recent research in pragmatics and digital discourse shows that online environments demand strong pragmatic skills, as users need to match their language to their audiences and the features of each social media platform. In ESL or EFL settings, this means learners need to focus not just on grammar but also on using illocutionary force effectively to achieve both teaching and social goals in technology-based learning.

Digital platforms have transformed language learning by providing more flexible, accessible, and engaging instructional methods (Slota, 2026). TikTok, characterized by its short-form videos and ease of access, has been shown to enhance learners' motivation, vocabulary acquisition, and speaking confidence. The emergence of "Edutok" and educational influencers further shapes learners' exposure to English (Tan et al., 2022; Roshdi & Rahmat, 2023). However, challenges remain regarding authenticity and formality, as TikTok content frequently employs informal language, slang, and simplified explanations that diverge from conventional classroom instruction. Furthermore, research on the construction and dissemination of pragmatic meaning on TikTok is limited, particularly regarding illocutionary speech acts (Bernard, 2021; Anumanthan & Hasmin, 2022).

In the Philippine context, English has become a localized variety shaped by culture, multilingualism, and daily communication. Philippine English shows how people adapt the language to fit their identity and social setting. Taglish, which mixes Tagalog and English, is often used in schools and online. Studies show that Taglish is not just for casual conversation but is also an effective way to communicate. Clemente (2024) found that Tagalog and English help clarify messages and make them more culturally relevant. Perez et al. (2025) noted that Filipino influencers use Taglish to explain ideas naturally and connect with their audience. Furthermore, Abad and Sapan (2024) observed that Filipino English teachers use Taglish and local expressions online when delivering lessons and keeping learners engaged. Likewise, Perez and Perez (2024) also showed that code-switching helps students to understand and participate more effectively. Social media has allowed Filipino content creators to serve as informal teachers, sharing knowledge beyond traditional classrooms through explanations, interactions, and relatable examples. This shows that influencers build trust by using local language, humor, and familiar situations (Factor, 2022). These findings suggest that influencers are becoming important language educators in digital spaces. However, limited studies on how these creators use specific communication strategies, such as speech acts and communicative intentions in teaching English, highlight the need for further research in this area.

Research Questions

1. What types of illocutionary speech acts are used in TikTok videos created by Filipino educational content creators for language learning?
2. How are these illocutionary speech acts realized through verbal and non-verbal features in TikTok Videos
3. How do Filipino content creators use illocutionary speech acts to facilitate comprehension and interaction in language learning?

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative design using Pragmatic Discourse Analysis (PDA) to examine the illocutionary speech acts used in TikTok videos created by Filipino educational content creators. The qualitative approach was appropriate for exploring how language constructs meaning and expresses communicative intent within instructional discourse. Using pragmatic discourse analysis, the study analyzed how utterances function in authentic teaching contexts within technology-mediated learning platforms.

Research Corpus and Sampling

The research corpus consisted of thirty (30) TikTok videos related to English language learning created by Filipino education content creators. These videos were retrieved from the TikTok platform that were uploaded within the period of 2020 to 2026. The videos were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they were relevant to the study's objectives. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) the creator identifies as Filipino; (2) the video contains instructional content focused on English language learning, including grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, or usage; (3) the video includes spoken instructional discourse; and (4) the content demonstrates interactional intent through explaining concepts, asking questions, or directing learners to perform tasks. Conversely, the exclusion criteria included (1) videos produced by non-Filipino content creators; (2) videos uploaded prior to 2020; and (3) videos that do not contain clear instructional discourse or lack relevance to English language learning objectives. A checklist was used to verify adherence to these inclusion and exclusion criteria systematically.

Data Gathering Procedure

The selected thirty (30) TikTok videos were downloaded from the platform and were transcribed verbatim. The transcription focused on the spoken utterances of the content creators, including pauses, emphasis, and relevant discourse markers when these features were relevant for interpreting pragmatic meaning. Nonverbal cues were also recorded to support the interpretation of the illocutionary force of the utterance.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data were analyzed through a systematic process. The transcripts were first examined and reviewed multiple times to develop familiarity with the data. Each utterance was then coded according to its illocutionary force based on Searle's (1976) speech act classification. After the coding stage, recurring patterns and the most frequently occurring speech act types were identified. Finally, the function of these illocutionary acts was interpreted in relation to the instructional goals of the videos and the language learning context of TikTok.

After the initial analysis, the findings were subjected to peer debriefing with an expert in language education and discourse analysis. This process enabled critical evaluation of the coding scheme, categorization, and interpretations, thereby strengthening the study's credibility and validity. Transcripts were reviewed multiple times to ensure familiarity with the dataset. Each utterance was coded according to its illocutionary force based on Searle's (1976) speech act classification. Recurring patterns and dominant speech-act types were then identified, and their functions were interpreted in relation to the instructional objectives of the videos and the TikTok language-learning context.

For the first research question, the analysis examined the distribution and functions of illocutionary acts in the selected videos using Searle's taxonomy. For the second research question, both verbal and non-verbal features were analyzed, including linguistic choices, discourse markers, gestures, facial expressions, tone, and visual cues, to determine how they reinforced illocutionary force. For the third research question, the study evaluated how these communicative features facilitated comprehension and interaction, particularly in terms of learner engagement and the clarity of instructional content.

Ethical Considerations

This study followed established ethical guidelines for research that uses publicly available online content. The TikTok videos were publicly accessible and did not require direct interaction with the content creators. As per the institution's research ethics committee, this study was limited to publicly accessible TikTok videos and did not involve any participant recruitment or interaction. Moreover, ethical precautions were still observed to respect the creators' privacy and intellectual ownership. Their usernames, channel names, and other identifiable details were anonymized in the transcripts and analysis to avoid traceability. The data were solely for academic purposes, and the original content was not modified or misrepresented. In line with the ethical principles for internet-mediated research, online discourse was treated as context-dependent data while maintaining respect, confidentiality, and responsible interpretation of digital communication (British Psychological Society [BPS], 2021; Markham & Buchanan, 2012).

Results and Discussion

Illocutionary Speech Acts in TikTok Videos by Filipino Educational Content Creators for Language Learning

Table 1 presents the illocutionary acts, sample corpus, and language-learning content used by Filipino educational content creators on TikTok. To provide a comprehensive view, the data were organized to highlight key aspects of Searle's (1976) illocutionary speech acts: assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive, including the language learning content of each sample corpus.

Table 1. *Illocutionary speech acts in TikTok videos by Filipino educational content creators for language learning*

| Illocutionary Acts | Sample Corpus | Language Learning Content |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Assertive | <i>"Kasi standard or basic conjugation tells us to add an 'S' to the verb kapag yung noun mo ay singular." [Because standard or basic conjugation tells us to add an 'S' to the verb when the noun is singular.] (V18)</i> | Explains a grammatical rule about subject-verb agreement. |
| | <i>"Okay. Ang can at could ay parehong pwedeng gamitin when we talk about ability." [Okay. Can and could can both be used when we talk about ability.] (V1)</i> | The speaker explains a grammatical rule about the use of <i>can</i> and <i>could</i> . |
| | <i>"Sit in a chair and sit on a chair are both correct." (V3)</i> | The speaker states a grammatical fact about the correctness of both expressions. |
| Directive | <i>"Complete the sentence. 'When I was young, I blanked very fast.' Can or Could?" (V1)</i> | The speaker instructs learners to complete the sentence and choose between the options. |
| | <i>"Come join our confidence speaking program." (V30)</i> | The speaker encourages the audience to enroll in the program. |
| | <i>"Write your answer in the comments." (V4)</i> | The speaker instructs learners to post their responses. |
| Commissive | <i>"Now that you know, I will always say 'ungrammatical' from now on." (V22)</i> | The speaker commits to consistently using the term "ungrammatical". |
| | <i>"And I want to point out bakit tama." [And I want to point out why it is correct.] (V24)</i> | The speaker commits to explaining why the statement is correct. |
| | <i>"So, ano natin to gagamitin sa isang pangungusap bibigyan ko kayo ng isang halimbawa." [So, how do we use this in a sentence? I will give you an example.] (V25)</i> | The speaker commits to providing an example for explanation. |
| Expressive | <i>"Hi guys..." (V21)</i> | The speaker greets the audience to open the conversation and establish rapport. |
| | <i>"Bye guys!" (V18)</i> | Leave-taking expression that conveys a friendly attitude toward viewers. |
| | <i>"Thank you so much for this comment." (V24)</i> | The speaker expresses gratitude to the commenter. |

Table 1 shows Filipino educational content creators on TikTok employed four types of illocutionary acts: assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive. Assertive acts were primarily used when creators explained grammar rules and clarified language use. Directive acts were present when viewers were prompted to complete sentences or provide answers in the comment section. Commissive acts indicated the creator's intention to elaborate on the lesson or provide additional examples. Expressive acts were evident through greetings and expressions of gratitude, which helped maintain interaction with viewers.

Moreover, the frequent use of specific speech acts (illocutionary acts) demonstrates that TikTok educational content is heavily focused on engaging the audience. By employing directives and expressives, creators prioritize interaction, building rapport, and active learner participation. Simultaneously, assertive and commissive acts help structure the content, ensuring information is presented clearly and cohesively. Thus, it shows how traditional educational approaches are adopted to fit with TikTok's unique communicative styles—concise, clear, and direct instruction. Overall, these findings highlight the way digital environments shift conventional instruction toward immediate, accessible, and highly engaging, learner-centered experiences.

These findings were consistent with those of Tan et al. (2022) and Conde-Caballero et al. (2024), who reported that TikTok-based learning content typically combines concise explanations with interactive prompts to sustain learner engagement in microlearning environments. From a discourse perspective, Barroga and Baradillo (2025) emphasized the significance of illocutionary acts in shaping how intentions and meanings are conveyed in communicative exchanges. Their analysis of settlement agreements demonstrated that illocutionary force determines how utterances perform actions such as declaring decisions, imposing obligations, or establishing agreements.

Illocutionary Speech Acts in TikTok-Based Language Learning Content through Verbal and Non-Verbal Features

Table 2 highlights how illocutionary speech acts in TikTok-based language-learning content are realized through verbal and nonverbal features. The concise analysis of verbal features was anchored in Hymes' SPEAKING framework (1974), while the nonverbal features were analyzed using Knapp & Hall's (2014) nonverbal communication framework. The findings show that educational TikTok videos employ various illocutionary speech acts to support teaching and keep viewers engaged. Based on Hymes' SPEAKING framework (1974), the analysis of verbal features indicates that content creators share information, encourage participation, explain concepts, and express appreciation in a structured manner, directly engaging their audience to achieve learning goals.

The verbal features observable in educational TikTok videos include the strategic use of language to convey clarity of information, audience engagement, and instructional effectiveness. The content creators use code-switching (e.g., English and Filipino), simplify explanations, and adjust the delivery of the information to make complex language concepts simpler and easier to comprehend to a diverse audience by presenting examples, reformulations, and direct address (e.g., "you," "we") to the audience. Moreover, the creators integrate questioning techniques and prompts that encourage the audience's cognitive processing, encouraging them to participate in the learning process by leaving comments. These verbal strategies not only enhance comprehension but also sustain the audience's attention in a short-form digital environment, reinforcing the instructional intent of the content.

Non-verbal features complement the videos' communicative intent, significantly enhancing viewer engagement and message retention. Elements such as eye contact, facial expressions, hand gestures, and body movement are consistently used to emphasize key points and signal enthusiasm or encouragement. Prosodic features—including variations in pitch, stress, and pacing—further enhance meaning by highlighting important information and maintaining audience interest. Visual cues, such as on-screen text, captions, and annotations, also support comprehension by providing reinforcement and aiding recall. These multimodal elements align with principles of effective instructional communication by creating a more dynamic and interactive learning experience, ultimately strengthening the connection between the content creator and the audience.

According to Knapp and Hall (2014), non-verbal features such as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, changes in voice, and tone help reinforce these speech acts. These cues enhance clarity, highlight important points, and build a connection with viewers. Overall, integrating verbal and non-verbal features of communication helps

Filipino educational content creators effectively combine speech acts and multimodal delivery to facilitate comprehension, engagement, and interaction in online language-learning contexts.

Table 2. Illocutionary speech acts in TikTok-based language learning content through verbal and non-verbal features

| Illocutionary Acts | Verbal Features (Hymes, 1974) | Non-Verbal Features (Knapp & Hall, 2014) |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Assertive</p> <p><i>“This is my latest read, Yellow Face by R. F. Kuang.” (V16)</i></p> <p><i>“You can say ‘I wanna talk to you’ or ‘I wanna talk with you’.” (V26)</i></p> <p><i>“Both are correct.” (V13)</i></p> | <p>Within the setting of educational TikTok discourse, the speaker addresses viewers to present information and clarify language usage through declarative statements that assert factual knowledge and confirm grammatical acceptability within the instructional act sequence.</p> | <p>These assertive statements are typically accompanied by steady eye contact, clear articulation, subtle explanatory hand gestures, and confident vocal emphasis, reinforcing credibility and clarity as information is presented.</p> |
| <p>Directive</p> <p><i>“Teka nga, teka nga, teka nga! Mag-usap nga tayó.” [Wait, wait, wait! Let’s talk for a moment.] (V4)</i></p> <p><i>“Aside from saying in my opinion, you can say from my point of view, from my perspective, as I see it, or the way I see it.” (V5)</i></p> <p><i>“Now, it’s your turn.” (V6)</i></p> | <p>In an interactive instructional setting, the speaker directly engages the audience and guides their participation through commands, suggestions, and prompts that structure the act sequence of attention, explanation, and learner response.</p> | <p>These directives are commonly delivered with animated gestures, increased vocal intensity, forward hand movements, and encouraging intonation, which signal engagement and prompt audience participation.</p> |
| <p>Commissive</p> <p><i>“So now, bibigyan ko kayo ng keywords...” [So now, I will give you an example....] (V11)</i></p> <p><i>“Trust me, mag-iimprove yung fluency mo.” [Trust me, your fluency will improve.] (V13)</i></p> <p><i>“I will explain it to you today.” (V22)</i></p> | <p>Within the instructional progression of the video, the speaker commits to providing guidance and future explanation for viewers, performing commissive acts that promise information, reassurance, and instructional support as part of the teaching discourse.</p> | <p>These commitments are typically conveyed through reassuring tone, affirmative nodding, open-hand gestures, and friendly facial expressions, which signal sincerity and encourage learner confidence.</p> |
| <p>Expressive</p> <p><i>“Thank you.” (V22)</i></p> <p><i>“Thank you so much [commenter] for this comment.” (V23)</i></p> <p><i>“Hello class, it’s your human dictionary, translator, context provider, English teacher back at it again with another word of the day.” (V25)</i></p> | <p>In the interactive and relational dimension of the discourse, the speaker acknowledges viewers and establishes rapport through greetings and expressions of appreciation that frame the opening and closing act sequences of the lesson.</p> | <p>These expressive acts are often accompanied by smiling facial expressions, enthusiastic tone, energetic voice modulation, and welcoming gestures, which foster rapport and strengthen the interpersonal connection with the audience.</p> |

Illocutionary Speech Acts by Filipino TikTok Content Creators in Facilitating Comprehension and Interaction in Language Learning

Table 3 presents how Filipino TikTok content creators employ different illocutionary speech acts in facilitating comprehension and interaction in digital language learning environments.

Facilitating Comprehension

Assertive illocutionary acts facilitate comprehension by presenting grammatical explanations through simplified,

clear, and straightforward statements, making language rules easy for learners to understand. These explanations often use familiar words and context-driven examples, and rephrase them to help learners process and understand the information effectively. According to Krashen’s (1985) Input Hypothesis, language acquisition occurs when the learner is exposed to a comprehensible input that is above their current level but can be understood through contextual support and simplified language explanations. In this study, assertive statements, such as explanations of subject-verb agreement (SVA) and modal usage, showed that educational content creators provided clear, structured input that learners can easily understand.

Table 3. *Filipino content creators use illocutionary speech acts to facilitate comprehension and interaction in language learning*

| Illocutionary Acts | Facilitating Comprehension | Facilitating Interaction |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Assertive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declarative statements explain grammar rules clearly. • Simple confirmations (e.g., “Both are correct”) clarify language use. • Structured explanations organize instructional discourse. • Eye contact, articulation, and gestures reinforce clarity. • Multimodal cues help learners process grammatical concepts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertive explanations establish instructional authority. • Clear information prepares learners for participation. • Confident tone maintains viewer attention. • Clarifications prompt follow-up questions from viewers. • Knowledge sharing positions viewers as active learners. • Directives invite viewers to participate actively. • Comment prompts encourage response from learners. • Encouraging tone signals openness to engagement. • Calls to action extend participation beyond viewing. • Directives create a participatory learning environment. |
| Directive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions guide learners in applying grammar rules. • Prompts break tasks into manageable steps. • Verbal cues structure the learning sequence. • Gestures and tone emphasize task instructions. • Multimodal prompts reinforce understanding through practice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitments build trust with viewers. • A friendly tone sustains learner engagement. • Promises encourage continued viewing. • Signals of support promote learner confidence. • Learners are encouraged to return or interact further. |
| Commissive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promises signal upcoming explanations or examples. • Commitments structure the lesson progression. • Reassurance maintains learner attention. • Nodding and open gestures reinforce sincerity. • These cues help learners follow instructional flow. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greetings establish rapport with viewers. • Appreciation acknowledges audience participation. • A friendly tone encourages comments and reactions. • Welcoming gestures signal openness to dialogue. • These acts foster a socially interactive learning space. |
| Expressive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greetings frame the opening of lessons. • Closings signal lesson completion. • Appreciation reinforces learner participation. • Smiles and an energetic tone create a positive atmosphere. • Positive rapport supports learner attention. | |

Furthermore, directive illocutionary acts support understanding by guiding the learner through structured, simplified instructions and rephrased prompts that help learners apply grammatical rules in specific contexts. Similarly, commissive illocutionary acts help learners anticipate the lesson's instructional flow by signaling forthcoming explanations. For further clarification, the content creator maintains learners’ attention and prepares them for additional input that supports understanding. Lastly, expressive illocutionary acts support comprehension through greetings, acknowledgments, and impactful closing statements, creating an engaging and supportive learning environment. These acts help learners reduce anxiety and increase attentiveness, allowing them to process the input more effectively during instructional interactions.

Additional studies support the role of digital and multimodal learning in supporting language comprehension. Li (2022) notes that both cognitive and affective aspects of learning are influenced by technology-mediated instruction, in which clear, well-structured input helps learners better understand and retain information. In a similar study, Metwally (2025) shows that incorporating visual and contextual elements into instructional materials makes content more meaningful and easier to process. Fiorella and Mayer (2022) expand on this idea that in EFL contexts, learners also benefit from digital environments carefully tailored to their needs, as clear

explanations and guided instruction make new information easier to manage and understand. These findings are also evident in the present study, where assertive, directive, and commissive acts facilitate comprehension by organizing input, clarifying meaning, and supporting learners' cognitive engagement in online instructional settings.

Facilitating Interaction

The interaction in language learning is facilitated by illocutionary acts that encourage engagement and participation between the content creator and the audience. Assertive illocutionary acts contribute to interaction by checking comprehension, repeating, and reformulating explanations to ensure that learners are following the instructional content. Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis suggests that language learning occurs effectively when there is learner interaction every time an input occurs. Furthermore, directive illocutionary acts evidently promote interaction by prompting learners to complete tasks, answer questions at the end of the video, and post them in the comment section. Through these prompts, the learners' viewing experiences become an interactive learning activity in which they actively participate.

Commissive illocutionary acts also support interaction by establishing a sense of instructional continuity and commitment from the content creator through assurances and follow-up explanations; they encourage viewers to remain engaged with the lesson and anticipate further explanation and content. Finally, expressive illocutionary acts strengthen interaction by building connections with the audience through greetings, appreciation, and acknowledgments. These relational expressions promote a supportive, interactive learning environment and motivate learners to engage with the content of the instructional discourse.

On the other hand, recent studies continue to underscore the importance of interaction in digital learning environments. For instance, Harun and Bandar (2025) observed that social-media-based platforms encourage active participation, boost learner motivation, and maintain engagement through interactive and multimodal content. Similarly, Gao et al. (2024) point out that social interaction plays a significant role in how effectively learners acquire knowledge, with factors such as social presence and learner engagement helping to shape this process. Zappa (2025) also highlights that interaction is at the core of second language acquisition, as it gives learners the opportunity to negotiate meaning and build a more meaningful understanding of the language.

Conclusion

This study adds to current research on digital language learning by showing how illocutionary speech acts operate as pragmatic strategies in TikTok-based educational content. The examined and analyzed videos created by Filipino educational content creators revealed that assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive speech acts work together in shaping the instructional discourse of short-form language learning videos. These speech acts allow creators to explain grammatical concepts, guide learners through tasks, express commitment to the lesson, and maintain interaction with viewers. The results also indicate that the effectiveness of these speech acts increases when verbal explanations are combined with non-verbal elements. This combination demonstrates how multimodal communication can support understanding and interaction in a social media-based learning environment. In this sense, the study adds to existing research in pragmatics and digital discourse by examining how illocutionary acts operate within microlearning formats and short educational videos.

The findings also highlight several implications for teaching practice and digital learning. Educators and content creators may enhance online instructional videos by using varied speech acts together with visual and interactive elements to improve clarity and engagement. Educational institutions may also consider social media platforms such as TikTok as supplementary learning spaces that support language instruction outside the classroom. Future studies may investigate how learners interpret and respond to these speech acts, explore differences in how instructional discourse differs across social media platforms, or work with a wider range of data to gain a clearer understanding of how pragmatic strategies support language learning in digital environments.

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