Speech Acts in Digital Communication: Analysing Performance and Interpretation Online

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Abstract
This paper explores the performance and interpretation of speech acts in digital communication through the lens of Speech Act Theory (Searle, 1969). By examining online interactions on social media and forums, the paper investigates how digital environments influence the illocutionary force and perlocutionary effects of speech acts, such as requests, apologies, and complaints. The qualitative analysis reveals the complexities of digital communication, where limited contextual cues and text-based interactions require individuals to negotiate meaning in unique ways. The findings highlight the importance of understanding digital pragmatics, as online interactions present distinct challenges and opportunities for communication. The paper sheds light on how individuals navigate these interactions, manage relationships, and construct meaning in the digital age. The study has implications for online community building, conflict resolution, and digital literacy, emphasizing the need for effective communication strategies in digital environments. By examining the intricacies of speech acts in digital communication, the paper contributes to our understanding of the dynamics of online interactions. It also demonstrates the value of applying Speech Act Theory to digital communication, providing insights into the ways language is used to perform actions and achieve social goals online. Finally, the paper illuminates our understanding of the evolving nature of communication in the digital age and informs on strategies for effective online interaction.
Keywords: Speech Acts, Digital Communication, Pragmatics, Speech Act Theory, Online Interactions, Digital Pragmatics.

Introduction

The rise of digital communication has transformed the way people interact, collaborate, and build relationships. With the proliferation of social media, online forums, and messaging platforms, individuals are increasingly relying on digital technologies to communicate with others across geographical and temporal boundaries. However, digital communication also presents unique challenges, particularly in terms of understanding and interpreting meaning (Herring, 2007). One crucial aspect of digital communication that has received relatively little attention is the performance and interpretation of speech acts.

Speech Act Theory (SAT), developed by John Searle (1969) and J.L. Austin (1962), posits that language is not just a matter of conveying information, but also a means of performing actions, such as requesting, promising, or apologizing. Speech acts are a fundamental aspect of human communication, and their effective performance and interpretation are critical for building and maintaining social relationships (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In digital communication, however, the lack of nonverbal cues, such as tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language, can make it more difficult to perform and interpret speech acts effectively (Walther, 1996).

Research has shown that digital communication can affect the way speech acts are performed and interpreted, with implications for online relationships and communities (Lee, 2015). For example, the use of emoticons and emojis can help to convey tone and attitude in digital communication (Dresner & Herring, 2010), while the asynchronous nature of online interactions can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations (Walther, 1996).

This paper explores the performance and interpretation of speech acts in digital communication, with a particular focus on online interactions on social media and forums. By examining how individuals use language to perform actions such as requests, apologies, and complaints in digital environments, this research seeks to contribute to our understanding of digital pragmatics and the ways in which digital technologies are shaping human communication.

Statement of Problem

The increasing reliance on digital communication has transformed the way people interact, collaborate, and build relationships. However, the lack of nonverbal cues and contextual information in digital environments can lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and conflicts. Despite the importance of speech acts in human communication, there is a limited understanding of how speech acts are performed and interpreted in digital communication.

The problem is that digital communication platforms often lack the nuances of face-to-face interaction, making it challenging for individuals to convey and interpret meaning effectively. This can lead to:

- Misunderstandings and conflicts: Misinterpreted speech acts can escalate into online conflicts, damaging relationships and online communities.
- Ineffective communication: Digital communication can fail to convey intended meaning, leading to confusion, frustration, and decreased productivity.
- Digital literacy gaps: Individuals may lack the skills to navigate online interactions effectively, hindering their ability to build and maintain online relationships.

The consequences of ineffective speech acts in digital communication can be far-reaching, affecting personal and professional relationships, online communities, and even mental health. Therefore, it is essential to investigate how speech acts are performed and interpreted in digital communication to develop strategies for improving online interactions and relationships.

This study aims to address this problem by exploring the performance and interpretation of speech acts in digital communication. By examining how individuals use language to perform

actions such as requests, apologies, and complaints in digital environments, this research seeks to contribute to our understanding of digital pragmatics and the ways in which digital technologies are shaping human communication.

Research Objectives
The primary objective of this study is to investigate the performance and interpretation of speech acts in digital communication, with a focus on online interactions on social media and forums. The specific research objectives are to:

(i)   examine how speech acts are performed in digital communication: This objective analyses how individuals use language to perform actions such as requests, apologies, and complaints in online environments.
(ii)   investigate how speech acts are interpreted in digital communication: This objective seeks to understand how online audiences interpret speech acts, including the role of context, tone, and language in shaping interpretation.
(iii)   identify the factors that influence the performance and interpretation of speech acts in digital communication: This objective explores the impact of digital platforms, cultural background, and individual differences on the performance and interpretation of speech acts.
(iv)   develop insights into the implications of speech acts in digital communication for online relationships and communities: This objective seeks to understand how speech acts shape online interactions, relationships, and communities, and how they can be used to build and maintain social capital.

Research Questions
This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How are speech acts performed in digital communication, particularly in online social media and forums?
2. How do online audiences interpret speech acts, and what factors influence their interpretation?
3. What role do digital platforms play in shaping the performance and interpretation of speech acts?
4. How do cultural background and individual differences affect the performance and interpretation of speech acts in digital communication?
5. What are the implications of speech acts in digital communication for online relationships, communities, and social capital?

Review of Related Literature
The review of related literature provides a comprehensive overview of the existing research on speech acts in digital communication aimed at identifying gaps in current research, highlight areas of agreement and disagreement among scholars and provide bases for the present research.

Conceptual Review

Speech acts refer to the actions performed through language, such as making requests, giving orders, or offering apologies (Austin, 1962). They refer to those actions performed through language, enabling individuals to convey meaning, express intentions, and achieve specific goals. According to J.L. Austin (1962), speech acts are actions that go beyond the literal meaning of words, and they can be categorized into three main types: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. A locutionary act refers to the act of producing an utterance with a specific meaning. It is the literal meaning of the words being spoken.

Locutionary acts involve the production of an utterance with a specific meaning, while illocutionary acts are the actions performed through the utterance, such as requesting, promising, or apologizing. Perlocutionary acts, on the other hand, refer to the effects of the utterance on the listener, such as persuading, convincing, or offending. In other words, a locutionary act is the act of saying something with a particular meaning.

Example:
Utterance: "The door is open."
Locutionary act: The speaker is saying that the door is not closed.
An illocutionary act is the act performed through the utterance, such as making a statement, giving an order, or expressing a feeling. It is the intended meaning or force behind the words.

Example:
Utterance: "The door is open."
Illocutionary act: The speaker might be warning someone that the house is not secure, or requesting someone to close the door.
A perlocutionary act is the effect of the utterance on the listener, such as persuading, convincing, or frightening them. It is the consequence or outcome of the speech act.

Example:
Utterance: "The door is open."
Perlocutionary act: The listener might become aware of the potential security risk and decide to close the door, or they might feel a sense of unease or fear.
To illustrate the difference between these three acts, consider the following example:
Utterance: "You're going to fail the exam."
Locutionary act: The speaker is saying that the listener will not pass the exam.
Illocutionary act: The speaker might be warning the listener, or trying to motivate them to study harder.
Perlocutionary act: The listener might become anxious or demotivated, or they might take the warning seriously and start studying more.

Understanding locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts can help us appreciate the complexities of language use and the ways in which words can have different meanings and effects on listeners.

John Searle (1969) further developed the concept of speech acts by classifying them into five main categories. Assertives are speech acts that assert a state of affairs, such as stating, claiming, or describing. Directives are speech acts that direct or request someone to do something, such as ordering, requesting, or begging. Commissives are speech acts that commit the speaker to a course of action, such as promising, vowing, or pledging. Expressives are speech acts that express emotions or attitudes, such as thanking, congratulating, or apologizing. Declarations are speech acts that change the social reality, such as declaring war, pronouncing someone husband and wife, or naming a ship.

The role of context in shaping speech acts is a crucial aspect of effective communication. Context plays a vital role in shaping speech acts, influencing their meaning, function, and interpretation. According to J.L. Austin (1962), speech acts are not performed in a vacuum, but are instead embedded in a specific context that affects their meaning and function. Context can influence the interpretation of speech acts in various ways, including disambiguating meaning, determining illocutionary force, and shaping perlocutionary effects.

The linguistic context, which refers to the words and phrases surrounding the speech act, can significantly impact its meaning (Grice, 1975). For example, the phrase "I'm going to the bank" can have different meanings depending on whether it's preceded by "I need to withdraw some cash" or "I love to fish." The social context, which includes factors like power dynamics, social status, and familiarity, can also shape the interpretation of speech acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For instance, a boss might use a more direct tone with an employee, while a friend might use a more casual tone.

Cultural context is another important factor that can influence the meaning and function of speech acts (Gumperz, 1982). Cultural norms, values, and expectations can affect the interpretation of speech acts, and what is considered polite or impolite can vary significantly across cultures. For example, in some cultures, directness is valued, while in others, indirectness is preferred. The situational context, which refers to the physical and temporal context in which the speech act occurs, can also shape its meaning (Hymes, 1974). For example, a speech act that is appropriate in a private setting might not be suitable in a public setting. Understanding the situational context can help individuals use language more effectively and avoid misunderstandings.

Digital communication has revolutionized the way people interact with each other, enabling instant connections across geographical boundaries. According to Katz and Rice (2002), digital communication refers to the exchange of information through digital technologies, such as computers, smartphones, and other electronic devices. Digital communication encompasses a broad range of technologies, including social media platforms, instant messaging apps, email, online forums, and video conferencing tools (Herring, Stein, & Virtanen, 2013). These platforms have transformed the way people communicate.

The impact of digital communication on human interaction has been profound. Digital platforms, such as social media, instant messaging, and email, have enabled people to connect with each other in ways that were previously impossible (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media platforms, in particular, have become an integral part of modern life, allowing users to share information, photos, and videos with others. Digital communication has also enabled new forms of communication, such as video conferencing, which has become increasingly popular

in recent years (Katz & Rice, 2002). Video conferencing allows people to hold virtual meetings and communicate face-to-face, regardless of their geographical location.

However, digital communication also raises several challenges. For example, excessive use of digital communication can lead to social isolation and decreased face-to-face interaction (Turkle, 2015). Additionally, digital communication can lack the nuance and depth of face-to-face communication, leading to misunderstandings and miscommunications. Despite these challenges, digital communication has many benefits. It enables people to connect with others across geographical boundaries, facilitating global communication and collaboration (Wellman et al., 2003). Digital communication also provides a platform for people to express themselves and share their ideas with others.

In digital communication, speech acts play a crucial role in shaping online interactions and relationships. Digital communication has several characteristics that distinguish it from face-to-face communication, including the lack of nonverbal cues, the permanence of online messages, and the potential for asynchronous communication (Walther, and the potential for miscommunication (Baym, 2010). These characteristics can affect how speech acts are performed and interpreted in digital communication.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies have explored how speech acts are performed and interpreted in digital communication. Research has shown that social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook shape speech acts in unique ways. A study on Twitter found that users employ direct and concise language to convey requests and opinions, often using hashtags to facilitate discovery and engagement (Zappavigna, 2012). Another study on Facebook found that users use politeness strategies like expressing gratitude and appreciation to maintain social relationships and build rapport (Liang & Chen, 2015).

Other studies have examined the role of speech acts in online communities and forums. Research has shown that users in online forums tend to use more formal language and explicit speech acts, such as stating opinions and providing evidence to support their claims (Herring, 2013). A study on online forums found that users employ politeness strategies like hedging and indirectness to mitigate potential face threats and maintain social harmony (Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2014).

Speech acts have also been studied in the context of instant messaging apps and text messaging. Research has shown that users in these contexts tend to use more informal language and implicit speech acts, such as using emojis and abbreviations to convey meaning (Lee, 2017). A study on WhatsApp found that users employ speech acts like requests and apologies to manage social relationships and negotiate group dynamics (González-Lloret, 2019).

Speech acts can vary significantly across different digital contexts. For instance, a study on email communication found that users tend to use more formal language and explicit speech acts, such as stating requests and providing evidence to support their claims (Dabbish & Kraut, 2008). Another study on online reviews found that users employ speech acts like expressing opinions and providing evaluations to convey their experiences and attitudes (Vásquez, 2014).

Methodology

The methodology employed in this research work involved a qualitative research approach, combining content analysis and discourse analysis to examine the speech acts used in digital communication. To collect data, the study utilized various digital platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp. These platforms were chosen for their popularity and relevance to the research questions, allowing for a diverse range of speech acts to be analyzed. The study's sampling approach was purposive, selecting data from specific digital platforms and contexts to ensure that the data were relevant to the research question. While this approach may have introduced some limitations, such as sampling bias, it allowed for a focused examination of speech acts in digital communication.

Theoretical Framework
The study of speech acts in digital communication is underpinned by Speech Act Theory, a framework developed by philosophers J.L. Austin and John Searle. This theory posits that language is not just a means of conveying information but also a way of performing actions and conveying meaning. According to Speech Act Theory, speech acts are the basic units of communication and can be classified into different types, such as assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.

Assertives are speech acts that involve making statements or claims about the world. For instance, a social media post that states "The new policy is unfair" is an assertive speech act. Directives, on the other hand, involve directing or requesting someone to do something. An example of a directive speech act is a tweet that says "Please sign this petition to support our cause." Commissives involve committing to a course of action, such as "I promise to attend the meeting." Expressives involve expressing emotions or attitudes, like "I'm so excited for the concert." Declarations involve making a statement that changes the social reality, such as "I now pronounce you husband and wife," although this type is less common in digital communication.

Speech Act Theory also highlights the importance of illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect. Illocutionary force refers to the intended meaning or force of a speech act. For example, the illocutionary force of the statement "Can you pass the salt?" is a request. Perlocutionary effect, on the other hand, refers to the effect of a speech act on the listener. The perlocutionary effect of the same statement might be to prompt the listener to pass the salt.

In digital communication, speech acts can be performed in various ways, including using explicit language and implicit language. Explicit language involves using clear and direct language to convey meaning, while implicit language involves using indirect language or inference to convey meaning. For instance, a Facebook post that says "It's getting late" might imply that it's time to leave, without directly stating it. The application of Speech Act Theory to digital communication provides insights into the complex dynamics of online interactions and the ways in which individuals manage social relationships and convey meaning. By examining the speech acts used in digital communication, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how individuals interact and communicate in online environments.

Speech Act Theory can be applied to various forms of digital communication, including social media, instant messaging, and online forums. For example, a study on Twitter might examine how users employ speech acts like directives and expressives to convey meaning and

manage social relationships. Another study on online forums might analyze how users employ speech acts like assertives and commissives to engage in discussions and debates. Speech Act Theory provides a useful framework for understanding speech acts in digital communication. By applying this theory to the study of digital communication, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how individuals interact and communicate in online environments, and how they use language to perform actions and convey meaning.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Using extracts from online platforms to analyze the performance and interpretation of speech acts in digital communication through the lens of Austin and Speech Act Theory (Searle, 1969)

Datum 1
Online platforms: Twitter
The Twitter is an online platform that is useful for studying short-form, public posts and interactions, particularly for analyzing requests, apologies, and compliments in a concise format.

Apologies:
Apologies on Twitter are often brief and concise, due to the character limit. Users may use hashtags like #story or #apologies to acknowledge their mistakes.

Twitter Extract A
"I apologize for my mistake. How can I make it right?"
"Sorry for the mistake in my previous tweet. Thanks for pointing it out #corrected."
Searle's Directive Act in extract attempts to get the hearer to do something. Here, the influencers use apologies to address controversies, mistakes, or criticism. In the second sentence, the user is apologizing for a mistake and showing appreciation for feedback.

Requests:
Requests are used to ask for help, favors, or assistance from others. On Twitter, they are often brief and the point, with users asking for help or information using hashtags like #help or #question.

Twitter Extract B
"I'm looking for recommendations on good restaurants in the area. Can anyone suggest some?" – (Directive act) (Exercitives illocutionary act)
"Can someone help me with this coding issue? I'm stuck #help" (Directive act)

The Austin's illocutionary Speech act in the above Twitter extract B is Exercitives illocutionary act type of Speech act. This shows that the influencers use requests to engage with their audience, ask for feedback, or encourage sharing content. Illocutionary acts are done in speaking, especially acts that indicate the purpose of using a performative sentence. It is speaker's intention of making the utterance making a request, express concern, give a

command, express a wish, etc. Still in the same extract B, the Perlocutionary act in it shows that the influencers aim to persuade their audience to try products, services, or ideas. Perlocutionary acts are the visible effects of illocutionary acts on the listener or audience, whether intended or unintended. This the consequences of the utterance on other participants in the discourse.

Complaint:
Complaints are used to express dissatisfaction or frustration with a person, company, or situation. In Twitter, Complaints on Twitter are often public and vocal, with users using hashtags to raise awareness and mobilize support.

Extract C
"I'm really frustrated with this product. Has anyone else had issues with it?" (Assertive)
"Terrible customer service from @CompanyName! Never buying from them again #badcustomerservice." (Assertive act)

Analyzing the extract C using Searle speech act theory this is assertive. An assertive statements describes a state of affairs, like the above extract. In sentence two, the user is expressing a complaint about a company's customer's service. IIIocutionary speech act in online Twitter complaint: The influencers use the complaints to build relationships, show appreciation, or promote products. The Perlocutionary speech act in the above Twitter extract C is persuasion. The influencers aim to persuade their audience to try products, services, or ideas.

Datum 2
Online platforms: Facebook
Facebook have longer-form posts and comments allow for more detailed apologies, complaints and requests.

Apologies:
In Facebook, apologies can be more detailed and lengthy, allowing users to explain their actions and show remorse.

Online Facebook Extract A
"Hey, I'm really sorry for what I said earlier. Can we talk about it?" (Expressive statement)
"I want to apologize to everyone for my thoughtless comment earlier. I didn't mean to offend anyone." (Declaration act)

With the application of the Searle's theory to this Facebook extract A. In the first sentence the speech act is expressive, that expresses emotion or attitude. And the second sentence is apologizing for a comment and showing remorse. Then, analysis using the Illocutionary speech acts. The illocutionary act in extract C above in this Facebook apologies extract shows the influencers use apologies to address controversies, mistakes, or criticism.

Request
Requests on Facebook can be more detailed and specific, allowing users to ask favors or assistance from their network.

Facebook extracts B
"I'm looking for recommendations on good restaurants in the area. Can anyone suggest some?" - (Directive act)
"Can anyone recommend a good babysitter for tonight? I'll pay extra for last – minute" (Commissives act)

Analyzing the above extract with Searle's speech act, it is a directive statement that shows an attempt to get the hearer to do something. The second extract shows that the user is making a request for a recommendation.

With the application of the Austin's illocutioary Speech act in the above Facebook extract B is Executives illocutionary act type of Speech act. This shows that the influencers use requests to engage with their audience, ask for feedback, or encourage sharing content. Illocutionary acts are done in speaking, especially acts that indicate the purpose of using a performative sentence. It is speaker's intention of making the utterance making a request, express concern, give a command, express a wish, etc.

While the Perlocutionary act in the B extract here shows that the influencers aim to persuade their audience to try products, services, or ideas. Perlocutionary acts are the visible effects of illocutionary acts on the listener or audience, whether intended or unintended. This is the consequences of the utterance on other participants in the discourse.

Complaints
Complaints are used to express dissatisfaction or frustration with a person, company, or situation. Complaint on Facebook can be more detailed and nuanced, allowing users to share their experiences and receive feedback from others.

Facebook Extracts C
"I'm really frustrated with this product. Has anyone else had issues with it?" (Assertive)
"I'm so frustrated with the traffic in my city! Can't we do something about it?" (Directive act)

Analyzing Facebook extracts C using Searle speech act theory this is assertive. An assertive statements describes a state of affairs. In the second extract here, the user is expressing a complaint about a local issue."
IIIocutionary speech act in online Facebook complaint: The influencers use the complaints to build relationships, show appreciation, or promote products. The Perlocutionary speech act in the above Facebook extracts C is persuasion. The influencers aim to persuade their audience to try products, services, or ideas.

Datum online platform WhatsApp 3
Apologies
WhatsApp online conversations are private messages format allows for a more personal and conversational tone. Users often use emojis, abbreviations, and colloquial language to convey emotions and build relationship. Apologies on WhatsApp platform are often used to repair relationships and show remorse for past actions.

WhatsApp Extracts A
"I'm really sorry for what happened. It was a stupid mistake." Declaration act (Illocutionary speech act)
"I'm sorry I forgot to meet you yesterday. Can I make it up to you?" Expressive act (Illocutionary speech act)

Analyzing extract from whatsapp using Searle's speech act theory. In the first sentence is a declarative act, the user is apologizing for their past action and showing remorse. While the second sentence is an expressive act, the user is apologizing for their mistake and offering to make amends. The both extracts are illocutionary speech acts. The extract A is a declarative speech act, the user is creating new states of affairs by representing them as being the case. Extract B is an expressive act, expressing psychological state, or presupposing.

Request
Requests are used to ask for help, favors, or assistance from others. WhatsApp is an online platform for private messaging with a focus on personal relationships; complaints and requests may be more direct and intimate, with users asking for favors or assistance from friends and families.

WhatsApp Extracts A
"Hey, can you pick up some milk on your way home? Thanks!" (Directive act) and (Illocutionary act)
"Can you help me with this task? I'd really appreciate it.? (Illocutionary speech act)
"Yeah, I asked my colleagues for help with a project, and they were happy to assist me." (Directive act) and (Illocutionary act)

The user is sharing a story about a request they made and the response they received. Directive act with Searle's speech act theory is an attempt by the speaker to get or request the hearer to do something. Analysis with extract A, the user is making a request for a favor and showing appreciation. While extract B, the user is asking or requesting for assistance.

Exercitives request and Behabitive appreciation – the three extracts are illocutionary speech acts, in the analysis extract A relates to decisions in favor or against a course of action. While in extract B, the user shows reaction to other people's behaviour, she expresses an attitude towards someone else's conduct. The illocutionary act refers to the type speech act that is being performed, that is the function the speaker intends to fulfill. In the other hand, the

Perlocutionary act is the effect that an utterance could have on the hearer or addressee. It does not depend on the intention of the speaker.

Complaints

Complaints are used to express dissatisfaction or frustration with a person, company, or situation. Online WhatsApp conversation complaints are often private and direct, with users expressing their dissatisfaction with a person or situation.

WhatsApp Extracts C

"I'm really upset about what happened yesterday. Can we talk about it now?" (Assertive)
"I'm disappointed with service I received. What can I do to resolve this?" (Directive)

Analysis using Searle's speech act theory, the user is expressing a complaint or concern about a personal issue. While the second extract is (Directive), the user is making attempts to get hearer to do something and also illocutionary act.

Datum Online Platform Instagram 4
Apologies:

Apologies on Instagram may be more visual, with users posting images or videos to convey their apology. It is a visual-centric platform with a focus on aesthetics, complaints and requests may be more subtle.

Extracts A

"Sorry for the delay in responding to your messages! I've been really busy lately"
"Have you ever had to apologize to someone? What did you say?"
"Yeah, I apologized to my friend for cancelling plans at the last minute."

Analysis using the Speech act theory by Searle: In the first extract, the user is sharing a story about an apology they made and the context surrounding it. While in the second, the user is apologizing for a delay and providing a reason. Appling to the Speech act theory by Searle:

Requests:

Requests on Instagram may be more creative, with users asking for collaborations or promotions.

Extract B

"DM me if you're interested in collaborating on a project! #collaboration"
"Can you help me move on Saturday? I'll owe you one!" (Commissive act)

Using the Speech act for the analysis, the user is making a request for help and offering to reciprocate. In the first extract, the user is making a request for collaboration. While in the second, the user is making commitments to a future course of action. Analysis of illocutionary

speech act on these extracts show that the influencers are using requests to engage with their audience, ask for feedback, or encourage sharing content.

Complaints

Complaints are used by social media influencers to build relationship, show appreciation, or promote products. It is also used to express dissatisfaction or frustration with a person, company, or situation. Instagram complaints may be more visual, with users posting images or videos to illustrate their grievances.

Extract C

"Ugh, just got ripped off by a fake seller on Instagram. Be careful guys! #scamalert" (Expressive act)

"Thanks to everyone who supported me on my birthday" (Expressive Gratitude or Emotions acts)

"I'm so annoyed with traffic in my city. It's always congested." (Expressive act)

In the first extract, the analysis using Searle's Speech act theory shows that the user is expressing a complaint about a negative experience. In the second extract from the Instagram, the user is expressing gratitude, thanking their followers for their support. While in the third extract, the user is expressing a complaint about a situation that frustrates.

Analyzing the extracts using illocutionary speech act theory for the three extracts above show that the influencers are using expression to give warning about a negative experience of a fake seller, to show appreciations, and expresses frustration situation on Instagram to the audience. Perlocutionary act here shows effect of fake sellers using #scamalert", welcomed and frustration to the Instagram users.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research work explored and analyzed the performance and interpretation of speech acts in digital communication and findings revealed that speech acts in online environments are shaped by the characteristics of the digital platform, which include lack of nonverbal cues, the permanence of online messages, and the potential for asynchronous communication. The study also found that individuals use various strategies to perform speech acts in digital communication, including explicit and implicit language, emoticons, and emojis. The analysis of speech acts in different digital contexts revealed that individuals adapt their language use to the specific platform and audience.

The study concludes that speech acts in digital communication are complex and multifaceted, and are shaped by the characteristics of the digital platform and the social context in which they are used. The findings highlight the importance of considering the nuances of digital communication when analyzing speech acts, and demonstrate the need for further research in this area. It is also worthy to note that individuals use speech acts in digital communication to manage social relationships, convey meaning, and negotiate group dynamics. The findings have implications for our understanding of language use in digital

communication, and highlight the need for individuals to be aware of the potential for miscommunication in online interactions.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Further research is needed to explore the complexities of speech acts in digital communication, including the role of emerging technologies and digital platforms in shaping language use. Individuals should be aware of the potential for miscommunication in online interactions, and should develop strategies for effective communication in digital environments.
- Education and training: Education and training programs should be developed to teach individuals about the nuances of digital communication, including the use of speech acts in online interactions.
- Interdisciplinary approach: Researchers should adopt an interdisciplinary approach to studying speech acts in digital communication so as to possibly develop strategies for effective communication in online environments.

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