

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter explains the study's background, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope, and limitations.

1.1 Background of The Study

Language is the primary tool for humans to communicate, convey thoughts, express emotions, and build social relationships in everyday life. Through language, humans can convey ideas, influence others, and shape meaning in social interactions. According to Yule (1996), language is understood not only in terms of its linguistic structure, but also in terms of how speakers use it to achieve specific goals. This makes language more than just a series of words, but a crucial instrument in shaping social reality and constructing meaning among members of society (Yule, 2010). Aitchison (2001) emphasizes that language always evolves according to the patterns of social life that occur within society, so every language act must be understood as a social activity with a specific purpose. Therefore, within linguistic studies, a branch of pragmatics has emerged, focusing on the use of language in real-world contexts. Pragmatics studies how the meaning of an utterance can be understood based on the context, situation, and intentions of the speaker during communication.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on how language is used in real-world contexts. Pragmatics examines the relationship between language form and meaning, which is determined by the situation, the purpose of communication, and the social relationships between speakers (Huang, 2017). The pragmatic approach allows for a more holistic analysis because it considers factors beyond linguistic structure. According to Mey (2001), pragmatics should be understood as social action influenced by situation, power, and culture, not just linguistic structure. This view is further supported by Yule (2006), who argues that the interpretation of meaning depends on shared social processes and interactions between speakers and listeners. Furthermore, Culpeper (2011) expands the study of pragmatics to include aspects of politeness and impoliteness, showing that language choices play a role in building or destroying social relationships. Thus, the

pragmatic approach provides a strong foundation for this research because it allows for language analysis based not only on what is said, but also on how, why, and in what context the utterance is delivered.

Speech acts are an important concept in pragmatic studies, which emphasize that language does not only function to convey information, but also to carry out actions. Austin (1962) explained that when someone speaks, they not only utter a few words (locutionary acts), but also perform actions through their utterances (illocutionary acts), and can have certain effects on the listener (perlocutionary acts). Based on this framework, Searle (1969) defines speech acts as actions intentionally performed by speakers through language to achieve certain communicative goals. In developing Austin's theory, Searle maintains the distinction between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, with particular emphasis on the illocutionary act as the core of the speech act. Searle emphasizes that illocutionary acts constitute the core of speech act theory, as they reflect the speaker's intention embedded in an utterance. Furthermore, Searle groups illocutionary acts into five main types, namely assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative, each of which represents a different social function performed through language. The focus on illocutionary acts is particularly relevant because every utterance inherently carries an intended action beyond its literal meaning. For example, when someone says, "You should try that hairstyle," this utterance is not only giving advice, but also carrying out a directive act that aims to influence the actions of others. Or when someone says, "Congratulations on your achievement," they are carrying out an expressive speech act to show appreciation. These examples show that language always has a social function that goes beyond simply conveying information. Over time, speech act theory has expanded to encompass an understanding of communication in the modern era. Mey (2001) emphasized that speech acts are always related to the social context and the speaker's communicative goals. Therefore, speech act theory, particularly the analysis of illocutionary acts provides an appropriate framework for examining how speakers perform actions, express attitudes, and negotiate social relationships through language.

The development of communication technology has expanded the ways in which humans use speech acts. Social media has become a digital interaction space that enables millions of people to communicate quickly, spontaneously, and across cultures. One of the most tangible impacts of this progress is the emergence of social media, which has become a new space for people to communicate, share information, and express themselves. Platforms such as Instagram, X (Twitter), YouTube, and TikTok present new forms of communication characterized by instant responses and dynamic interactions (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In this regard, social media has now become an integral part of everyday life, especially among the younger generation. This demonstrates that social media plays a strategic role in shaping public opinion, expanding communication networks, and becoming a primary means for people to express their ideas and feelings. Boyd (2014) explains that social media is transforming traditional communication patterns by providing users with access to actively participate in digital public spaces. Tagg (2015) adds that social media creates a new linguistic environment where emotions, identities, and social actions are expressed more directly. Androutsopoulos (2014) even calls social media a linguistic marketplace, showcasing a wide variety of language and communicative actions.

Within social media interactions, comment sections represent one of the most dynamic and meaningful forms of digital communication. Within social media interactions, comment sections represent one of the most dynamic and meaningful forms of communication. Comments function as open public forums where users respond to posts while simultaneously performing social actions such as praising, requesting information, giving advice, criticizing, or expressing emotions. Importantly, Instagram comments are not random or neutral texts, but rather reflect spontaneous and authentic language use that reveals users' intentions, attitudes, and social positioning. Studying Instagram comments is, therefore, significant because they provide direct access to naturally occurring public interactions involving participants from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Instagram is currently a very interesting platform to study due to its visual nature and high level of public interaction. Saud and Dewanti (2025) note that comments on celebrity posts often contain evaluations, praise, criticism, or

emotional expressions. Fuchs (2021) also explains that Instagram has evolved into a global public interaction space that reflects contemporary communication practices. This makes comments on celebrity accounts a rich source of data for pragmatic analysis. One figure with a high level of interaction on Instagram is Ariana Greenblatt, a young actress active in the international entertainment world. Each of her posts receives hundreds, even thousands, of comments displaying various forms of expression, opinions, support, or evaluations from users from various countries. This phenomenon demonstrates the complexity of global interaction through language, making it an appropriate context for analysis using Searle's speech act theory.

Previous research has shown that speech acts are important in interactions on social media. Putri and Ningsih (2025) examined expressive speech acts in Instagram comments and found expressions of praise, criticism, gratitude, and complaints, which reflect users' emotions and attitudes. Meanwhile, Natalia et al. (2022) analyzed illocutionary speech acts in students' Instagram posts and comments, with the main types being assertive, directive, and expressive. This study confirms that bold comments are not just text but also social acts that carry communicative intent. However, existing studies tend to focus on specific user groups or limited types of speech acts and have not comprehensively examined illocutionary acts and their communicative functions in international celebrity-centered interactions. Therefore, there is a need for further research that specifically focuses on illocutionary speech acts and their functions within globally visible Instagram comment sections using a pragmatic framework.

This study aims to analyze illocutionary speech acts found in celebrity comment sections on Instagram. This research seeks to uncover how utterances in comments function as speech acts in bold interactions, focusing on their types and communicative functions. Through this analysis, the research is expected to deepen understanding of how language is used to carry out social actions on social media, particularly in the context of public interactions on celebrity accounts. Therefore, this study highlights the role of language as an instrument for conveying intent, expressing emotions, giving advice, or building social relationships in the digital environment.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What types of illocutionary acts are found in the comments on Ariana Greenblatt's Instagram Post?
2. What functions of illocutionary acts are used in the comments on Ariana Greenblatt's Instagram Post?

1.1 Objectives of The Study

1. To identify the types of illocutionary acts in Ariana Greenblatt's Instagram comments.
2. To explain the functions of the illocutionary acts that appear in the comments.

1.3 Significance of The Study

This research has important theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the field of linguistics, particularly pragmatics, by increasing understanding of how speech act theory is applied in analyzing comments on social media, particularly Instagram. The findings of this study are also expected to increase knowledge related to the phenomenon of online interaction, especially in the context of digital communication.

Practically, this research is expected to provide practical insights for social media users, content creators, and digital communities by increasing awareness of how utterances in comment sections function as actions, such as requesting, criticizing, praising, or advising. By understanding the illocutionary force behind comments, users can communicate more effectively and responsibly in online interactions. In addition, the findings of this study may serve as a practical reference for digital communication studies and for educators or practitioners interested in promoting more constructive and meaningful interaction on social media platforms.

1.4 Scope and Limitations

This research has a specific scope and limitations to ensure a more focused analysis. This research focuses on the pragmatic analysis of Illocutionary acts using Searle's Theory (1979), namely the study of how speech acts are realized in user comments on social media, including their form, illocutionary function, and the

context of their use in online communication. The scope of this research includes an analysis of comments on Ariana Greenblatt's Instagram account. This research has a specific scope and limitations to ensure a more focused analysis. This research focuses on the pragmatic analysis of speech acts uses Searle's Theory (1979), namely the study of how speech acts are realized in user comments on social media, including their form, illocutionary function, and the context of their use in online communication. The scope of this research includes an analysis of comments on Ariana Greenblatt's Instagram account.

This research limitation emphasizes that data are taken only from comments on the post of Ariana Greenblatt's Instagram post dated November 15, 2025. This research analysis is limited to linguistic pragmatic aspects and uses Searle's (1979) illocutionary act theory as the sole theoretical framework. In analyzing the data, emoticons or emojis are considered only as supporting elements when they appear together with verbal expressions, since they may help clarify the speaker's tone, emotion, or intention. However, comments that consist only of emoticons or emojis without any verbal utterance are not included in the analysis. With this scope and limitation, the research is expected to provide an understanding of how illocutionary acts are realized in Instagram comments within the context of digital communication.