

An Analysis of Illocutionary Speech Acts In Instagram Comments on @Skintificid Posts

**Bella Yanti Marpaung¹, Fadya Sahira Zulham², Khairunnisa Fitri³,
Niaarota Buulolo⁴, Rachel Mutiara Lolita Marpaung⁵, Meisuri⁶**

^{1,2,3,4,5,6}Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia

Email: bellayanti.2233220051@mhs.unimed.ac.id¹,

fadyasz.2232520001@mhs.unimed.ac.id²,

khairunnisaf2231220026@mhs.unimed.ac.id³, niaarota.bll@gmail.com⁴,

rachel.2233220007@mhs.unimed.ac.id⁵, meisuriw@yahoo.com⁶

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the various types of illocutionary speech acts present in comments on the Instagram account @skintificid, focusing on identifying which type is most frequently employed by users in reaction to promotional content. A qualitative descriptive method is utilized, aided by basic quantitative analysis to determine the occurrence and percentage of each illocutionary act. Data were gathered from five posts made on Instagram on March 10, 12, 14, 16, and 17, 2026, including 50 selected comments. The analysis follows Searle's (1979) framework for categorizing illocutionary acts, which includes assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. The results indicate that all five categories of illocutionary acts are present, with assertive acts being the most prevalent at 44%, followed by commissives at 26% and expressives at 24%. In contrast, directives account for 4% and declaratives for 2%, appearing less often. These results imply that users on Instagram primarily engage in evaluative, emotional, and intention-driven communication when interacting with promotional content. Additionally, the illocutionary acts signify the interactions between customers and brands, with assertives serving as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), expressives demonstrating emotional involvement, and commissives reflecting an intention to purchase. Overall, this research highlights the significant impact that comment sections on Instagram have in shaping brand image and influencing prospective consumers within the realm of digital marketing.

Keywords: Illocutionary Acts, Speech Act Theory, Instagram Comments, Digital Communication, Pragmatics, Customer, Brand Interaction

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, social media stands out as a key medium for communication, interaction, and sharing information. Of the many available platforms, Instagram is highly popular not only for personal exchanges but also for advertising and brand enhancement. Numerous businesses use Instagram to showcase their products and

connect with their audiences through various types of posts, captions, and comment areas. The comment area, especially, acts as a space for users to share their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives on the content presented.

From a linguistic perspective, these interactions can be analyzed using a pragmatic approach, especially speech act theory. According to J. L. Austin (1962), language is not only used to convey information but also to perform actions. John Searle expanded this theory in 1979 by categorizing illocutionary acts as assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Among these categories, illocutionary acts are deemed crucial since they reflect the speaker's intent behind what is said.

In social media interactions, speech acts frequently appear in the form of comments, replies, or captions. Many users express opinions, compliments, complaints, or suggestions through written comments. Previous studies have shown that speech acts can be clearly identified in online communication, including in Instagram comment sections. For example, Cut Natalia et al. (2022) investigated the illocutionary speech acts in Instagram comments and posts by students, discovering that different kinds of illocutionary acts were utilized to convey opinions, feelings, and reactions in online exchanges. Similarly, Simanullang and Fatmawati (2024) examined expressive speech acts in the comment section of the Instagram account @infopku and discovered that users often express feelings such as admiration, satisfaction, or disappointment toward certain posts.

Other studies also highlight how speech acts appear in different Instagram contexts. Juwita and Ghaitasa (2025) analyzed sarcastic speech acts used by netizens in the comment section of the Instagram account @fuji_an and showed that digital communication often contains implicit meanings that require pragmatic analysis to understand the speaker's intention. In addition, research on Instagram accounts such as @punapibali, @kompascom, and @folkative also demonstrates that speech acts in social media are varied and reflect different communicative purposes, including expressing opinions, giving evaluations, or reacting to posted content.

However, most previous studies focus on general speech act analysis rather than specifically examining illocutionary acts. In addition, studies that focus on Instagram comment sections of brand promotion accounts, particularly in the skincare industry, are still limited. In fact, analyzing illocutionary acts can provide deeper insights into users' communicative intentions and how audiences interact with promotional content.

One of the popular skincare brands in Indonesia that actively uses Instagram for promotion is Skintific through its account @skintificid. This account frequently posts promotional content and receives numerous comments from users. These comments contain various forms of illocutionary acts, such as expressing admiration, asking questions, giving suggestions, or showing intention to purchase. Therefore, the

comment section of @skintificid serves as an abundant resource for studying speech acts in online interaction.

Based on this background, the purpose of this research is to recognize and examine the various kinds of illocutionary acts present in comments on the Instagram handle @skintificid. Additionally, it seeks to ascertain which type is most frequently utilized by users when reacting to promotional content.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Illocutionary

Illocutionary are an essential aspect of speech act theory, concentrating on what the speaker intends when they communicate. Searle (1979) defines illocutionary as actions carried out through speech, including stating, requesting, promising, or sharing emotions. Thus, when someone speaks, they are doing more than just providing information; they are also fulfilling a communication role.

Searle categorizes illocutionary into five primary types: assertives (statements or assertions), directives (requests or commands), commissives (promises of future actions), expressives (displays of emotions), and declaratives (statements that alter a situation or condition). This categorization is commonly applied in pragmatic research as it aids in pinpointing the communicative objective of an utterance more clearly.

In social media contexts, illocutionary hold great significance since users frequently indicate their intentions subtly through brief written remarks. Fatima and Sa'i (2025) contend that online communication often contains hidden meanings, making it crucial to analyze illocutionary acts to grasp what users genuinely wish to express. As a result, this research utilizes illocutionary theory to examine how Instagram users articulate their views, emotions, and intentions regarding promotional content.

Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory is a vital structure within pragmatics that was established by Austin (1962). Austin posits that language serves not only to convey information (to say something) but also to perform actions (to do something). He identifies three categories of speech acts: locutionary acts (literal meanings of statements), illocutionary acts (the speaker's intended meanings), and perlocutionary acts (the impact on the listener).

This theory was expanded upon by Searle (1979), who highlighted the importance of illocutionary acts in communication. Searle suggests that each utterance possesses an illocutionary force, which guides how others should decipher it. Thus, understanding meaning relies not just on the language used but also on the surrounding context and the speaker's communicative aim.

In research on digital communication, speech act theory is frequently employed to investigate exchanges on social media. Rahmawati and Halim (2026) note that this theory is particularly beneficial for analyzing brief, context-sensitive messages like comments. Therefore, speech act theory provides the foundational framework for this study in examining how language operates in interactions between users and brands.

Instagram as a Digital Communication Platform

Instagram ranks among the most widely used social media platforms, serving as a tool for communication, content distribution, and digital marketing. Users can share images and videos while engaging with others through captions, likes, and comments. Xiuwen and Razali (2021) point out that Instagram operates not just as a source of entertainment but also as a venue for interaction and communication among users globally.

For businesses, Instagram has emerged as a powerful marketing instrument as it allows brands to connect with vast audiences and directly engage with consumers. Rininggayuh et al. (2024) emphasize that social media significantly influences how the public perceives products through user engagement.

Moreover, interactions on Instagram generally tend to be concise, expressive, and frequently casual. These attributes highlight the importance of pragmatic analysis to grasp the underlying meanings in user exchanges. This research selects Instagram as the focus area due to its considerable user engagement, especially noticeable in the comments on promotional content.

Comments in Social Media

Social media comments serve as a direct means of interaction between users and the content, as well as between users themselves. Viewing comments through a pragmatic lens reveals them as statements containing a variety of speech acts. Research by Natalia et al. (2022) indicated that Instagram comments are often used to share opinions, provide criticism, offer suggestions, and articulate emotional responses related to the posted material.

Additionally, comments serve as a means of two-way engagement that promotes interaction between brands and consumers. Ahmadi et al. (2024) contend that comments frequently act as electronic word-of-mouth, where individuals communicate their experiences or viewpoints that could potentially sway others' choices.

Furthermore, comments often possess hidden meanings that require pragmatic analysis to be fully comprehended. Septiani et al. (2023) identified that various illocutionary acts in Instagram comments can be discerned based on the communicative intentions of users. Thus, examining comments is critical for this study, aiming to recognize the kinds and functions of illocutionary acts that Instagram users employ.

@skintificid as a Promotional Account

The Instagram handle @skintificid embodies a skincare brand that actively engages with social media for promotional purposes. The account frequently shares material related to its offerings, including details about products, ads, and campaigns to engage users, which elicit diverse reactions in the comment section.

In the realm of digital communication, brand accounts such as @skintificid serve not only as sources of information but also as interactive platforms where brand-consumer exchanges take place. Fatima and Sa'i (2025) note that these interactions illustrate a vibrant communicative relationship where users take an active role in creating meaning instead of merely receiving messages passively.

The comments left on @skintificid's posts showcase a range of user reactions, such as assessing products, sharing feelings, and expressing intentions to buy. This indicates that the comment section holds valuable data for analyzing illocutionary acts within a digital marketing context.

From the above considerations, it is evident that illocutionary speech acts are crucial for understanding communication on social media, particularly within Instagram comments. Nevertheless, research explicitly targeting customer-brand interactions in skincare promotional accounts remains scarce. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the varieties of illocutionary acts in comments on @skintificid to offer a deeper understanding of digital communication and consumer behavior.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze illocutionary acts found in Instagram comments. A qualitative approach is used because this study focuses on interpreting the meaning and communicative intentions behind users' utterances in digital interactions. The data for this study were taken from the Instagram account @skintificid, which is used by the skincare brand Skintific. This account actively shares promotional content and receives high engagement from users in the comment section. Five Instagram posts, published on March 10, 12, 14, 16, and 17, 2026, were selected as data sources. These posts were chosen because they had a large number of user interactions and comments related to product promotion. A total of 50 relevant comments were collected through a documentation technique, where irrelevant or unintelligible comments were excluded from the analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using speech act theory introduced by John Searle in 1979, with a specific focus on illocutionary acts. During the analysis, each remark was recognized and sorted into one of five categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. The analysis followed a systematic procedure: first, the researchers read and understood each comment in its context, then identified the communicative intention behind each one, and categorized them according to Searle's classification. Finally, the frequency of each type was calculated

to determine the dominant illocutionary act used by Instagram users. To ensure consistency in the categorization process, the researchers discussed and agreed on the criteria before beginning the analysis. Additionally, simple quantitative analysis was used to calculate the frequency and percentage of each illocutionary act. Data reliability was ensured by cross-checking the classification through researcher agreement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

This section presents the findings of the study based on the analysis of Instagram comments collected from several posts on the account @skintificid, published on March 10, 12, 14, 16, and 17, 2026. The data consist of various user comments that have been classified into types of illocutionary acts following the framework suggested by John Searle.

From the analysis, five distinct categories of illocutionary acts were recognized: assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative.

Table 1. Post 1 : 10 March 2026 'PDKN Glass Skin Moisturizer'

Comments	Type
Waww	Expressive
Jadi mau punya produknya @skintificid	Commissive
Produk @skintificid makin gong aja	Expressive
Pilihan Terbaik dan Tepat @skintificid	Assertive
Bahaya siehh!!!! Bisa se gloww itu??	Expressive
Wish list	Commissive
Auto glowing	Assertive
The best produk	Assertive
Wah best banget semua produknya	Expressive
Sebagai itu	Expressive

Table 2. Post 2 : 12 March 2026 'Pink Glow Cushion'

Comments	Type
How to get this one?	Directive
Mau banget nyobain cushion terbaru nya @skintificid	Commissive
Gak lupa si Pink Glow Cushion nya nemenin aku kemana pun buat tampil maksimal di hari Raya	Assertive

wawwww ini superr duper gemess asli deh buat gantungann	Commissive
Skintific cushion pink emang idola di hati ♡♡	Assertive
gemes bngttt ya ampunnn!! pokonya mauuuuuu, kelihatan lucu bngtt apalgi pink pink htuuuu	Commissive
Cantik banget Ya Allah pengenn....	Commissive
Beautiful product	Assertive
Cantik bangeetttt	Commissive
pinkkyy pinkyy lucu	Commissive

Table 3. Post 3 : 14 March 2026 'Pink Glow Cushion'

Comment	Type
bikin GLOWING	Assertive
Mau bnget dapetin Cushion nya skintific buat tampil makin cantik dan mempesona setiap hari	Commissive
Udah cobain dan sebaug ituuuu	Assertive
cushion paling besttt	Assertive
Mau banget nyobain cushion terbaru nya @skintificid	Commissive
Zuzurly penasaran bgt sm pinky satu iniiii	Expressive
wahhh si pinky ini lucu nan baguss yaaa pasti bikin kitaaa makin syantikkkk	Assertive
Juaraaa banget cushion satu ini	Assertive
The best cushion	Assertive
Love bgt	Expressive

Table 4. Post 4 : 16 March 2026 'Series Hydrated Night'

Comments	Type
Cantik banget tampilan nya, bikin pengen langsung coba semua nya	Expressive
Wahh skintific emang paling the best skintificid salah satu produk yang terbaik buat kulit wajahku	Expressive
Mau banget cobaa	Commissive
Dijamin waktu pagi langsung glowing Masyaallah♡	Assertive

Wahh ini si combo gacor buat yang ada permasalahan kulit seperti kusam, bekas jerawat menghitam ataupun dark spot	Assertive
Uda cobain moist nya best deh pokoknya	Assertive
Umur 17 tahun Uda boleh pakai min?	Directive
Bikin wajah glowing dan sehat♥	Assertive
Fix hari ini resmi jadi pengguna skintific	Declarative

Table 5. Post 5 : 17 March 2026 'Blue Cushion'

Comments	Type
Suka banget sama hasil akhirnya	Expressive
Awet sepanjang hari♥	Assertive
Huaaaa wishlist ku ni min	Commissive
Coverage dapet, glow dapet, semuanya dapet mantep banget	Assertive
Definisi cantik ga pakai ribet, must have items banget	Expressive
Flawless banget sumpah	Expressive
Fix ini cushion wajib banget ada di pouch makeup	Commissive
Recommended	Assertive
Flawless tahan lama untuk oily skin	Assertive
Hasilnya natural and flawless	Assertive

Table 6 Distribution of Illocutionary Acts

Type	Frequency	Persentase
Assertive	22	44%
Expressive	12	24%
Commissive	13	26%
Directive	2	4%
Declarative	1	2%

The table indicates that assertive actions are the most prevalent category, with expressive and commissive actions coming next. In contrast, directive and declarative actions show up less often.

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings in relation to the research questions, emphasizing the various kinds of illocutionary speech acts identified in Instagram

comments on @skintificid posts and how these speech acts appear in customer-brand interactions.

Types of Illocutionary Speech Acts in Instagram Comments

Based on the analysis of 50 comments, all five categories of illocutionary speech acts suggested by Searle in 1979 : assertives, commissives, expressives, directives, and declaratives were identified in the Instagram comments on @skintificid posts. Each type reflects different communicative intentions performed by users through language.

Assertive Acts

Assertive actions represented the most prevalent category, appearing 22 times (44%). As stated by Searle (1979), assertive statements are aimed at holding the speaker accountable for the accuracy of a claim, meaning that the speaker expresses beliefs, opinions, or descriptions about a particular situation. In this study, assertive acts are reflected in comments such as: *"Pilihan terbaik dan tepat @skintificid"*, *"Auto glowing"*, *"The best produk"*, *"Skintific cushion pink emang idola di hati ♡♡"*, *"Beautiful product"*, *"bikin GLOWING"*, *"Udah cobain dan sebagus ituuuu"*, *"cushion paling besttt"*, *"wahhh si pinky ini lucu nan baguss yaaa pasti bikin kita makin syantikkkk"*, *"Juaraaa banget cushion satu ini"*, *"The best cushion"*, *"skintificid salah satu produk yang terbaik buat kulit wajahku"*, *"Dijamin waktu pagi langsung glowing Masyaallah"*, *"Wahh ini si combo gacor buat yang ada permasalahan kulit seperti kusam, bekas jerawat menghitam ataupun dark spot"*, *"Uda cobain moist nya best deh pokoknya"*, *"Bikin wajah glowing dan sehat"*, *"Awet sepanjang hari"*, *"Coverage dapet, glow dapet, semuanya dapet mantep banget"*, *"Recommended"*, *"Flawless tahan lama untuk oily skin"*, and *"Hasilnya natural and flawless"*.

These comments function as statements that describe or evaluate the product, indicating that users are asserting their beliefs about its quality, effectiveness, and performance. Linguistically, these utterances perform the function of stating or claiming something as true, which aligns with Searle's concept of assertives. The dominance of assertive acts suggests that Instagram users tend to act as evaluators or informal reviewers who provide information to others. This behavior reflects the role of social media as a space for opinion-sharing and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), where users' statements can influence the perceptions and decisions of potential consumers. This finding is consistent with Cut Natalia et al. (2022), who found that assertive acts dominate Instagram interactions as users frequently express opinions and evaluations.

Commissive Acts

Commissive acts were found in 13 occurrences (26%). According to Searle (1979), commissive speech acts are used to commit the speaker to a future course of action, such as promising, offering, or expressing intention. In this study, commissive acts are reflected in comments such as: *"Jadi mau punya produknya @skintificid"*, *"Wish list"*, *"Mau banget nyobain cushion terbaru nya @skintificid"*, *"wawww ini superr duper gemess aslii deh buat gantungannn"*, *"gemes bngttt ya ampunnn!! pokonya mauuuuuu"*, *"Cantik banget Ya Allah pengenn..."*, *"Cantik bangeetttt"*, *"pinkkyy pinkyy lucu"*, *"Mau bnget dapetin Cushion nya skintific buat tampil makin cantik dan mempesona setiap hari"*, *"Mau banget nyobain cushion terbaru nya @skintificid"*, *"Mau banget cobaa"*, *"Huaaa wishlist ku ni min"*, and *"Fix ini cushion wajib banget ada di pouch makeup"*.

These comments indicate that users are expressing intentions, desires, or plans to try or purchase the product in the future. Although not always explicitly stated as promises, these utterances function pragmatically as commitments to potential actions. This aligns with Searle's concept of commissives, where the speaker commits themselves to doing something. The presence of commissive acts suggests that the promotional content is effective in influencing users' intentions and encouraging consumer behavior.

Expressive Acts

Expressive acts appeared in 12 occurrences (24%). As stated by Searle in 1979, expressive speech acts serve to convey the speaker's emotional state or feelings toward a particular situation. In this study, expressive acts are reflected in comments such as: *"Waww"*, *"Produk @skintificid makin gong aja"*, *"Bahaya siehh!!!! Bisa se gloww itu??"*, *"Wah best banget semua produknya"*, *"Sebagus ituu"*, *"Zuzurly penasaran bgt sm pinky satu iniiii"*, *"Love bgt"*, *"Cantik banget tampilan nya, bikin pengen langsung coba semua nya"*, *"Wahh skintific emang paling the best"*, *"Suka banget sama hasil akhirnya"*, *"Definisi cantik ga pakai ribet, must have items banget"*, and *"Flawless banget sumpah"*.

These comments clearly express users' emotions such as admiration, excitement, satisfaction, and curiosity. Unlike assertives, which focus on truth claims, expressive acts focus on the speaker's internal emotional state. The use of exaggerated expressions and emotive language shows that users are highly engaged emotionally with the product. This aligns with Searle's concept of expressives and highlights the importance of emotional engagement in digital marketing. This finding is also supported by Simanullang and Fatmawati (2024), who found that expressive acts are commonly used in Instagram comments to convey users' feelings.

Directive Acts

Directive acts were found in only 2 occurrences (4%). According to Searle (1979), directive speech acts as those intended to prompt the listener to take action, such as

requesting, asking, or commanding. In this study, directive acts are reflected in comments such as: *“How to get this one?”* and *“Umur 17 tahun uda boleh pakai min?”*.

These comments function as requests for information directed toward the brand or other users. The speakers attempt to obtain responses regarding product availability or suitability. This aligns with Searle’s concept of directives, where the speaker tries to influence the listener’s actions. However, the low frequency of directive acts suggests that Instagram users are less focused on requesting information and more focused on expressing opinions and emotions.

Declarative Acts

Declarative acts were the least frequent, with only 1 occurrence (2%). According to Searle (1979), declarative speech acts are aim to alter the external circumstances or state by means of a statement, typically needing some form of official power. In this study, the declarative act is reflected in the comment: *“Fix hari ini resmi jadi pengguna skintific”*.

This comment indicates a shift in the speaker’s identity, from a potential consumer to an actual user of the product. Although it does not involve formal institutional authority, it pragmatically functions as a self-declaration of status. The minimal presence of declarative acts is expected, as such acts are rarely used in informal digital interactions.

B. Illocutionary Acts in Customer–Brand Interaction

The distribution of illocutionary speech acts reflects how users interact with the brand in a digital environment. Through language, users express their thoughts, emotions, and intentions, which collectively shape the perception of the brand.

Assertive acts dominate the data with 22 occurrences (44%) and function as a form of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). According to Searle (1979), assertives express beliefs or statements considered true by the speaker. In this study, users evaluate product quality and share their opinions, which can influence other potential consumers. This indicates that Instagram users actively participate in shaping brand image through their evaluations.

Commissive acts appear in 13 occurrences (26%) and reflect users’ intentions to take future actions, such as trying or purchasing the product. Based on Searle’s theory, commissives indicate commitment toward future behavior. In this context, these expressions show that promotional content is effective in attracting interest and encouraging potential consumer action.

Expressive acts, found in 12 occurrences (24%), show users’ emotional responses toward the product. As stated by Searle (1979), expressive acts reveal the speaker’s psychological state. The presence of these acts indicates that user interaction is not only based on evaluation but also emotional engagement, which plays an important role in digital marketing.

Directive acts (2 occurrences or 4%) represent attempts to request information or responses. These acts show that Instagram can function as a communication channel between users and the brand, although this function is not dominant.

Declarative acts (1 occurrence or 2%) indicate a minimal level of commitment, where users express a change in their status as product users. This aligns with Searle's view that declaratives are less common in informal contexts.

Overall, the findings indicate that customer-brand interaction on Instagram is dominated by evaluation, emotional expression, and intention. These interactions show that social media is not only a platform for promotion but also a space where users actively contribute to shaping brand perception and influencing others through language.

Based on the analysis of 50 Instagram comments on @skintificid posts, this study found that all five types of illocutionary speech acts: assertive, expressive, commissive, directive, and declarative are present in user interactions. Among these, assertive acts are the most dominant, accounting for 44% of the data, followed by commissive (26%) and expressive acts (24%), while directive (4%) and declarative acts (2%) occur less frequently. This finding indicates that Instagram users tend to express opinions, evaluations, emotions, and intentions when responding to promotional content.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that illocutionary speech acts play an important role in shaping customer-brand interaction in digital environments. Assertive acts function as electronic word-of-mouth, expressive acts reflect emotional engagement, and commissive acts indicate purchase intention. Meanwhile, directive acts show that users use the comment section to seek information, and declarative acts represent a strong level of commitment, although rarely used. Overall, Instagram comment sections serve as an interactive space where users actively contribute to building brand image and influencing potential consumers.

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