



AN ANALYSIS OF SPEECH ACTS IN THE EPISODE “THE STRESS EXPERT” OF JAY SHETTY’S PODCAST: A PRAGMATIC STUDY

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Abstract

This study examines illocutionary acts in the episode “The Stress Expert” of Jay Shetty's podcast through a pragmatic approach. The study aims to identify the dominant types of illocutionary acts and explain their communicative functions in mental health discourse. The method used is descriptive qualitative. Data were obtained through listening and transcription techniques of relevant conversation segments in podcast episodes available on YouTube. Each utterance was classified based on illocutionary act categories and analyzed for its pragmatic function. The results showed three dominant types of speech acts, namely assertive, directive, and expressive. Assertive speech acts function to convey information and explanations about stress and psychological well-being. Directive speech acts serve to guide and encourage behavioral change in listeners. Expressive speech acts serve to build emotional closeness and interpersonal support. The combination of these three types of speech acts forms a layered communication strategy that combines education, persuasion, and empathy. This study contributes to the development of pragmatic studies in the realm of digital discourse and shows that podcasts serve as a means of social action in mental health communication.

Keywords: *pragmatic; speech act; podcast discourse; mental health communication; illocution.*

Abstrak

Studi ini meneliti tindakan ilokusi dalam episode “The Stress Expert” dari podcast Jay Shetty melalui pendekatan pragmatik. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis tindakan ilokusi yang dominan dan menjelaskan fungsi komunikatifnya dalam wacana kesehatan mental. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif. Data diperoleh melalui teknik mendengarkan dan transkripsi segmen percakapan yang relevan dalam episode podcast yang tersedia di YouTube. Setiap ujaran diklasifikasikan berdasarkan kategori tindakan ilokusi dan dianalisis fungsi pragmatiknya. Hasil menunjukkan tiga jenis tindakan tutur yang dominan, yaitu asertif, direktif, dan ekspresif. Tindakan tutur asertif berfungsi untuk menyampaikan informasi dan penjelasan tentang stres dan kesejahteraan psikologis. Tindakan tutur direktif berfungsi untuk membimbing dan mendorong perubahan perilaku pada pendengar. Tindakan tutur ekspresif berfungsi untuk membangun kedekatan emosional dan dukungan interpersonal. Kombinasi dari ketiga jenis tindakan tutur ini membentuk strategi komunikasi berlapis yang menggabungkan pendidikan, persuasi, dan empati. Studi ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan studi pragmatik dalam ranah wacana digital dan menunjukkan bahwa podcast berfungsi sebagai sarana aksi sosial dalam komunikasi kesehatan mental.

Kata kunci: pragmatik; tindak tutur; wacana podcast; komunikasi kesehatan mental; ilokusi.





INTRODUCTION

Language plays a major role as the primary medium for shaping social meaning, interpersonal relationships, and the articulation of human experiences. Through language, individuals negotiate identities, express attitudes, and build mutual understanding in the public sphere. The development of digital media has encouraged the emergence of new forms of interaction that are multimodal and cross-cultural. Podcasts have become a prominent medium because they present natural conversations that are accessible to a wide audience. These conversations reveal linguistic practices that are not only informative, but also persuasive and reflective. The dynamics of speech in podcasts show how meaning is collaboratively constructed between speakers and listeners. This phenomenon opens up great opportunities for linguistic studies, especially pragmatics, to examine the function of speech in depth. Pragmatic studies focus on the relationship between language form, speaker intent, and listener interpretation. Through this perspective, language is understood not merely as structure, but as social action.

One of the main concepts of pragmatics is speech acts, which are actions performed by speakers through utterances. Speech acts include locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary aspects that represent communicative goals. This framework allows researchers to examine utterances as forms of action, not just a series of words. In natural conversation, speech acts appear variably, depending on the communication goal and interaction situation. Podcasts provide rich authentic data for such analysis. The conversations in them reveal strategies for conveying ideas, giving advice, expressing emotions, and even implicit invitations. Each form of utterance reflects a particular pragmatic choice. Therefore, the analysis of speech acts in podcasts is relevant for understanding modern communication practices. Such studies also contribute to the development of pragmatic theory in the realm of digital media.

A number of previous studies have examined Jay Shetty's podcast from various linguistic perspectives. Larasannti (2025) shows that social factors influence language choice and communication style in Jay Shetty's podcast. Putri (2023) highlights the turn-taking mechanism in the interaction between Jay Shetty and Selena Gomez on YouTube. Untari and Magria (2024) confirm the existence of regular patterns in the management of turn-taking in the podcast conversations. Cahya, Duwila, and Astutuik (2025) find variations in turn-taking strategies that reflect power relations and communication goals. Wardani (2024) examines the use of phatic expressions and their relationship to turn-taking mechanisms. Jasmir and Magria (2024) focused their analysis on the phenomenon of speech overlap. Gee et al. (2025) discussed presuppositions in Jay Shetty's podcast interviews. Mauliana and Mubarak (2025) examined hedging and politeness in the topic of mental health.

Although these studies enrich our understanding of the interactional and pragmatic aspects of Jay Shetty's podcast, the focus on specific speech acts is still limited. Most studies emphasize conversational mechanisms or politeness strategies, rather than a comprehensive classification and function of illocutionary acts. In fact, speech acts are key to understanding the communicative purpose behind each utterance. Analyzing the types and functions of speech acts can reveal how speakers convey information, build trust, and influence their audience. Podcasts on mental health and self-development have unique characteristics because they often contain advice, motivation, and personal reflections. These characteristics make certain episodes worthy of examination from a speech act perspective. The selection of the episode “The Stress Expert” is relevant because it contains an intense discussion about stress, thoughts,





and self-regulation strategies. The utterances in this episode have the potential to reveal the dominance of directive, assertive, and expressive speech acts.

The study of speech acts in this episode is expected to provide an overview of the communication patterns used by Jay Shetty and the interviewee. This analysis can show how mental health messages are constructed through specific illocutionary choices. In addition, this study can also reveal the relationship between communicative goals and the responses of the targeted audience. The pragmatic approach allows researchers to interpret the meaning of utterances more deeply than structural analysis alone. The results of this study are expected to complement previous studies that focused more on interaction mechanisms. This research also has the potential to contribute to the development of digital media-based pragmatic studies. Through this analysis, communication practices in podcasts can be understood as a complex form of social action. This understanding is useful for applied linguistic studies, especially in the field of health communication. In addition, the findings of this study can be used as a reference for content creators in designing effective communication strategies.

Based on the above description, this study aims to analyze speech acts in Jay Shetty's “The Stress Expert” podcast episode through pragmatic analysis. The main focus of this study includes identifying types of speech acts and their illocutionary functions. Data was obtained from transcripts of conversations in selected episodes. The method used is descriptive qualitative. The analysis was carried out through the stages of classification, interpretation of functions, and discussion of findings. This study is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of speech act practices in mental health-themed podcasts. In addition to enriching the field of pragmatic studies, this research also adds to the literature on contemporary digital communication. Thus, this study occupies a strategic position at the intersection of linguistics, media, and mental health.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative design to analyze illocutionary acts in the episode “The Stress Expert” of Jay Shetty's podcast. The data source is verbal utterances produced by the host and guests throughout the episode. Data were collected through listening and transcription techniques. Utterances related to discussions of stress, emotions, and behavioral guidance were selected as units of analysis. The data were classified into assertive, directive, and expressive speech acts based on their illocutionary force. The analysis was carried out through the stages of speech act identification, speech act type grouping, and communicative function interpretation. The results of the analysis are presented descriptively in the form of tables and descriptions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the transcript of the episode “The Stress Expert” on Jay Shetty's podcast shows the emergence of three dominant types of speech acts, namely assertive, directive, and expressive. These three categories represent communicative orientations that are educational, persuasive, and empathetic. From all the data analyzed, assertive speech acts appeared most frequently, followed by directive and expressive speech acts. This distribution pattern indicates that the conversation focuses on conveying information and knowledge about stress and mental health. The presence of directive speech acts indicates an effort to guide the listener's behavior. Meanwhile, expressive speech acts serve to strengthen the emotional relationship between the speaker and the audience. These findings are in line with Larasannti





(2025), who asserts that social factors influence language choice in Jay Shetty's podcast. Language is used not only to convey messages but also to build closeness and credibility. Assertive speech acts are realized through statements that explain concepts, provide generalizations, and convey views on human psychological conditions. Assertive speech often appears in the form of analogies and metaphors. For example, the statement “Your brain is like a phone battery, it needs regular recharging” represents the illocutionary function of explaining. Another statement such as “Stress is not just mental, it affects the body as well” demonstrates the informative function. This pattern shows that the speaker is trying to simplify complex concepts to make them easier to understand. Mauliana and Mubarak (2025) state that the mental health discourse on Jay Shetty's podcast makes extensive use of mitigation and caution strategies. Assertiveness plays a role in building the speaker's epistemic authority. Listeners are positioned as recipients of valid knowledge. Assertive dominance indicates the podcast's orientation as an educational medium.

Directive speech acts appear in the form of advice, instructions, and reflective invitations. Examples such as “Try taking a few minutes each day just to breathe” demonstrate the illocutionary function of advising. The utterance “Start paying attention to what drains your energy” represents the function of directing. Directives are not conveyed coercively, but rather through soft formulations. This pattern creates a supportive impression. Putri (2023) found that the turn-taking structure in the Jay Shetty Podcast provides ample space for speakers to deliver lengthy advice. This explains the high occurrence of directives. Directives serve to encourage listeners to change their behavior. The podcast positions listeners as active agents in the process of self-recovery.

Expressive speech acts are evident through expressions of empathy, sympathy, and appreciation. Statements such as “I understand how exhausting stress can feel” demonstrate the illocutionary function of empathy. The statement “That's really powerful” represents appreciation. Expressive speech acts play a role in building warmth in interactions. Wardani (2024) explains that phatic and emotional expressions maintain the continuity of conversation. This pattern is also evident in the analyzed episode. Jasmir and Magria (2024) note that emotional responses are often associated with overlapping utterances. Expressive speech reinforces the acceptance of informative and persuasive messages. Listeners not only understand the message but also feel emotional support.

Group A consists of assertive speech acts functioning to state, explain, and inform.

Group A: Assertive Speech Acts

Cod e	Tim e	Utterance	Illocutionary Function
A1	04:5 8	Your brain is like a phone battery, it needs regular recharging.	Explaining
A2	06:4 0	Stress is not just mental, it affects the body as well.	Informing
A3	09:2 1	Most people don't realize how exhausted they actually are.	Stating
A4	13:0 5	We live in a culture that celebrates being busy.	Describing
A5	17:4 2	Your nervous system is always listening to your thoughts.	Emphasizing



A6	22:1 8	Rest is not a reward, it is a necessity.	Asserting
A7	27:3 0	Small habits repeated daily shape long-term wellbeing.	Claiming

Assertive speech acts dominate because the speaker positions himself as a source of psychological insight. Many assertives are delivered through metaphor and generalization, simplifying abstract concepts for listeners. This strategy increases accessibility and cognitive resonance. Mauliana and Mubarak (2025) report that mental-health discourse on Jay Shetty’s Podcast frequently employs mitigation and careful phrasing, a pattern reflected in the present findings. Assertives establish epistemic authority and legitimize the speaker’s perspective. Listeners are constructed as recipients of credible knowledge. This dominance indicates that the podcast primarily operates as an educational platform.

Group B contains directive speech acts serving to advise, guide, and encourage behavioral change.

Group B: Directive Speech Acts

Cod e	Time	Utterance	Illocutionary Function
D1	08:4 5	Try taking a few minutes each day just to breathe.	Advising
D2	11:1 0	Start paying attention to what drains your energy.	Directing
D3	15:2 6	Write down what makes you feel overwhelmed.	Instructing
D4	18:5 4	Give yourself permission to rest.	Encouraging
D5	23:4 0	Create boundaries around your time.	Advising
D6	29:0 5	Choose one habit you can change this week.	Directing

Directives are realized through soft formulations rather than forceful imperatives. This linguistic choice produces a supportive tone. Putri (2023) observes that turn-taking structures in Jay Shetty’s Podcast provide extended space for advice-giving, which explains the frequent occurrence of directives. These utterances frame listeners as capable agents of self-improvement. The podcast therefore functions not merely as an information source but as a catalyst for personal transformation. Directives are commonly accompanied by explanatory statements, enhancing their persuasive power.

Group C represents expressive speech acts conveying emotional stance and interpersonal alignment.

Group C: Expressive Speech Acts

Cod e	Time	Utterance	Illocutionary Function
E1	12:30	I understand how exhausting stress can feel.	Empathizing
E2	14:02	I’m grateful you’re sharing this.	Appreciating
E3	19:11	That’s really powerful.	Praising
E4	24:55	I feel for anyone going through this.	Sympathizing





E5 28:40 It’s inspiring to hear your story. Admiring

Expressiveness serves to build interpersonal closeness. Wardani (2024) states that phatic expressions maintain the continuity of interaction. Jasmir and Magria (2024) emphasize the connection between emotional responses and conversation dynamics. Expressiveness reinforces the acceptance of informative and persuasive messages. Listeners not only understand, but also feel emotionally validated.

Integratively, the distribution of speech acts shows an assertive-directive-expressive pattern. Assertive builds a knowledge base, directive directs action, and expressive strengthens emotional relationships. This pattern reflects a layered communication strategy. These findings complement Gee et al. (2025), who identified implicit pragmatic intentions in Jay Shetty's interviews. This study expands our understanding of the role of speech acts in mental health discourse. Podcasts serve as both an educational medium and an emotional companion. The organized structure of speech acts shows that podcast conversations are a practice of social action, not just an exchange of information.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that illocutionary acts play a central role in shaping mental health discourse on Jay Shetty's podcast. Assertive speech acts dominate and serve to build the speaker's knowledge and credibility. Directive speech acts encourage listeners to reflect and change their behavior. Expressive speech acts build emotional closeness and interpersonal solidarity. The pattern of speech act usage reveals a layered communication strategy that integrates informative, persuasive, and affective dimensions. Podcasts not only function as entertainment media, but also as educational tools and psychological companions. Further research could expand the data to other episodes or compare different podcast genres to enrich our understanding of pragmatic practices in digital media.

The pattern of assertive speech acts in the episode “The Stress Expert” shows that the discourse on mental health in Jay Shetty's podcast is constructed as an epistemic discourse that positions the speaker as an authoritative source of psychological knowledge. The presence of directive speech acts realized through soft formulations indicates a non-coercive persuasive orientation, positioning listeners as reflective subjects with the autonomous capacity to make changes. Expressive speech acts function as affective mechanisms that reinforce the legitimacy of informative and persuasive messages through the formation of interpersonal closeness. The interaction between these three types of speech acts forms a layered communicative structure that represents the integration of rationality, motivation, and empathy. These findings imply that podcasts do not merely represent conversation but perform the function of socially organized actions in a pragmatic manner. Therefore, speech act analysis proves effective in revealing the strategies of meaning construction in digital media-based mental health discourse.

SUGGESTIONS

This study shows that speech act analysis provides direct access to pragmatic strategies in mental health-themed podcast discourse. Based on this, further research is recommended to examine more episodes so that speech act patterns can be mapped comparatively and longitudinally. A quantitative approach can be combined to calculate frequency distribution more precisely. A cross-genre study of podcasts is also warranted to examine differences in





illocutionary strategies in educational, entertainment, and commercial discourse. For digital content practitioners, the results of this study can be used as a reference in designing communication that combines information, direction, and empathy. For the field of language education, these findings can be used as a source of pragmatic learning based on authentic data.

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