

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents about the introduction of the research. It consist of the background of research, statement of problems, research objectives, research significance and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of Research

Language is not merely a system of signs and structures; it is the primary medium through which human beings think, relate, and act upon the world. (Danesi, 2018) argues that language constitutes an essential dimension of human civilization, enabling the expression of ideas, intentions, and emotions across social contexts. (Fairclough, 2003) further emphasizes that language is inseparable from social practice. It does not merely reflect reality but actively constructs and transforms it. Accordingly, the study of language requires attention not only to grammatical form but also to how meaning is produced, interpreted, and negotiated in real communicative situations.

This concern with meaning in context defines the field of pragmatics. (Yule, 1996) describes pragmatics as the study of speaker meaning, how speakers communicate intentions, and how listeners interpret those intentions within specific situational contexts. Within pragmatics, one of the most foundational frameworks is speech act theory, originally introduced by (Austin, 1962) and systematically developed by (Searle, 1975). Austin's central insight is that utterances do not merely describe the world; they perform actions within it. When a speaker produces an utterance, three simultaneous acts occur: the locutionary act, involving the production of a meaningful linguistic expression; the illocutionary act, referring to the communicative intention or function performed through the utterance; and the perlocutionary act, referring to the

effect produced on the hearer. Among these three, the illocutionary act has received the greatest scholarly attention because it most directly reflects the speaker's communicative purpose (Austin, 1962). Building on Austin's framework, (Searle, 1975) proposed a systematic taxonomy of illocutionary acts consisting of five major types: assertives, which commit the speaker to the truth of a proposition; directives, which attempt to influence the hearer to perform an action; commissives, which commit the speaker to a future course of action; expressives, which communicate the speaker's psychological or emotional state; and declarations, which bring about a change in institutional or social reality through the act of speaking itself. This taxonomy has become the standard reference point for pragmatic analyses of communicative behavior across diverse discourse contexts.

In recent decades, the emergence of digital communication has significantly expanded the contexts in which language operates. YouTube, in particular, has become one of the most prominent platforms for public discourse, enabling content creators to communicate with global audiences through audiovisual media. According to (Shoufan & Mohamed, 2022) ,YouTube functions not only as a content distribution platform but as a social space in which creators construct identities, build communities, and engage audiences through spoken language. In this environment, creators frequently cultivate parasocial interaction a one-sided yet emotionally meaningful relationship in which viewers develop a sense of familiarity and personal connection with content creators despite the absence of direct reciprocal communication (Beautemps & Bresges, 2022). In this study, parasocial interaction refers specifically to the ongoing sense of personal closeness, trust, and emotional investment that The Wizard Liz's viewers develop toward her through repeated exposure to her motivational content, even though the relationship remains nonreciprocal and mediated entirely through digital audiovisual communication.

This digital communicative environment makes YouTube a particularly productive medium for motivational discourse. Unlike political speeches or scripted film dialogue, YouTube motivational content operates through informal registers, personal storytelling, and emotional appeals that simultaneously construct authority and parasocial intimacy. (Fairclough, 2003) describes this as the conversationalization of public discourse, a process through which speakers adopt the stylistic features of everyday conversation within public or semi-public communicative spaces in order to appear accessible and authentic. Within this context, illocutionary acts play a central role: they allow speakers to simultaneously assert belief systems, guide audience behavior, express emotional solidarity, and establish motivational authority through language.

One prominent example of this discourse is produced by The Wizard Liz, a motivational content creator on YouTube who has amassed more than 8.49 million subscribers as of May 2026. Her content focuses on self-development, emotional healing, personal empowerment, and confidence building. Her video entitled "Turn Your Pain Into Power" exemplifies the complexity of motivational digital discourse, combining personal narrative, philosophical assertion, practical instruction, and emotional expression to construct a coherent ideology of self-empowerment. As (Yule, 1996) observes, every utterance carries a communicative intention beyond its literal meaning a principle especially relevant in motivational discourse where language functions not merely to inform but to inspire, persuade, and emotionally transform the audience.

Recent studies on speech acts have increasingly expanded beyond traditional face-to-face communication and literary texts into various forms of mediated discourse. Researchers have examined the realization of illocutionary acts in political speeches, podcasts, classroom interaction, films, and other forms of public communication, demonstrating a broader trend toward investigating how speech acts function across different communicative settings and media environments. Nevertheless, most studies continue to focus on institutional,

scripted, or semi-formal discourse contexts. (Rostiana & Novari, 2021) examined illocutionary acts in podcast discourse; (Sitorus & Elfrida, 2021) analyzed speech acts in political speeches; and (Tutuarima, 2018) focused on movie dialogues. While these contributions have enriched the understanding of illocutionary acts in various settings, they reveal a pattern in which speech act research has predominantly engaged with institutional or broadcast discourse, leaving the domain of digital motivational influencer discourse comparatively underexplored from a pragmatic perspective. Studies that specifically examine how illocutionary acts function within the intersection of self-help ideology, parasocial intimacy, and informal digital registers where the speaker simultaneously performs identity, constructs motivational authority, and reproduces self-help ideologies through language (Fairclough, 2003; McGee, 2005) remain limited in number and scope.

This study therefore addresses this gap by analyzing the types and functions of illocutionary acts and examining how these acts construct the discourse dimensions of motivational authority and emotional engagement in The Wizard Liz's YouTube video "Turn Your Pain Into Power." The video contains a rich variety of utterances that not only convey information but also persuade, motivate, and emotionally engage the audience through strategic language use, making it an appropriate source for investigating how illocutionary acts contribute to the construction of motivational discourse.

1.2 Research Questions

- 1 What types and functions of illocutionary acts are found in The Wizard Liz's YouTube video "Turn Your Pain Into Power"?
- 2 How do the illocutionary acts identified in The Wizard Liz's YouTube video "Turn Your Pain Into Power" function to construct motivational authority and emotional engagement with the audience?."

1.3 Research Objective

Based on the statement of problem above, the objectives of this research are as follows:

- 1 To identify the types and functions of illocutionary acts found in The Wizard Liz's YouTube video "Turn Your Pain Into Power."
- 2 To examine how the identified illocutionary acts contribute to the construction of motivational authority and emotional engagement in the video.

1.4 Research Significance

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of linguistics.

Theoretically, this study contributes to pragmatics scholarship by extending speech act analysis into the domain of digital motivational influencer discourse, a communicative genre that has received comparatively limited scholarly attention. While previous studies applying (Searle, 1975) taxonomy have largely focused on political speeches, films, or classroom interaction, this research examines how illocutionary acts function within YouTube motivational discourse, specifically in terms of how they construct motivational authority and emotional engagement with the audience. By integrating Searle's classification with (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) interpersonal metafunction, (McGee, 2005) self-help ideology framework, and parasocial interaction theory, this study offers an analytical framework that captures not only the types of illocutionary acts present in motivational discourse, but also how those acts operate to build motivational authority and sustain emotional engagement in digital communication. This contributes to the emerging field of digital pragmatics and enriches broader scholarly conversations about language, persuasion, and ideology in online media.

Practically, this research benefits students of linguistics and English literature by demonstrating how pragmatic analysis can be applied to spoken digital discourse beyond traditional contexts. It may also serve as a methodological reference for future researchers interested in speech acts, motivational communication, or digital discourse on social media platforms. More broadly, this research raises critical awareness of how motivational language on platforms such as YouTube strategically constructs audience beliefs, emotions, and behaviors through carefully chosen illocutionary acts.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding and to provide clarity in this research, several key terms are defined as follows.

- 1 **Pragmatics:** Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics concerned with the study of meaning in relation to context and the communicative intentions of speakers. According to (Yule, 1996), pragmatics focuses on the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener in a specific communicative situation.
- 2 **Speech Act:** Speech act refers to an action performed through an utterance, in which a speaker not only says something but also performs a communicative action. (Austin, 1962) introduced this concept, arguing that utterances function as actions in communication rather than merely as descriptions of reality.
- 3 **Illocutionary Act:** Illocutionary act refers to the communicative intention or function behind an utterance. (Austin, 1962, p.101) defines it as the performance of "an act in saying something as opposed to performance of an act of saying something." In this study, illocutionary acts are the primary focus of analysis as they most directly reflect the speaker's communicative purpose.

- 4 **Illocutionary Force:** Illocutionary force refers to the communicative weight or strength carried by an utterance the degree to which a speech act exerts its intended effect on the hearer. (Austin, 1962) introduced this concept, while (Levinson, 1983) elaborates that force varies according to linguistic features such as mood, modality, repetition, and intensifiers. In this study, illocutionary force is used to explain why utterances of the same type may carry different degrees of persuasive or emotional impact.
- 5 **Motivational Discourse:** Motivational discourse refers to a type of discourse that aims to inspire, encourage, and influence the audience's thoughts, emotions, and behavior through language. (Brown & Yule, 1983) explain that discourse is language used in communication that is shaped by the speaker's communicative goals and the context of interaction. In this study, motivational discourse refers to the spoken language used by The Wizard Liz in her YouTube video "Turn Your Pain Into Power."
- 6 **Self-Help Ideology:** Self-help ideology refers to a discourse system that positions individuals as exclusively responsible for managing, improving, and transforming their own lives, attributing life outcomes primarily to personal agency rather than structural or social conditions (McGee, 2005). In this study, self-help ideology is treated as the ideological framework underlying the speaker's motivational assertions.
- 7 **Parasocial Interaction:** Parasocial interaction refers to a one sided yet emotionally meaningful relationship in which a viewer develops a sense of personal familiarity, closeness, and emotional investment toward a media personality despite the absence of direct reciprocal communication (Beautemps & Bresges, 2022). In this study, parasocial interaction describes the relationship between The Wizard Liz and her viewers, in which the emotional authenticity of her digital communication creates a

sense of personal connection that amplifies the persuasive force of her illocutionary acts.

- 8 **YouTube:** YouTube is a digital video sharing platform that enables users to upload, share, and access audiovisual content through the internet. According to (Shoufan & Mohamed, 2022), YouTube functions as a global platform for communication and content distribution. In this study, YouTube serves as the medium through which the data are obtained.
- 9 **Conversationalization:** Conversationalization refers to a discourse process in which speakers adopt the informal registers and interpersonal strategies of everyday conversation within public or semipublic communicative spaces (Fairclough, 2003). In this study, conversationalization describes how The Wizard Liz employs an informal, emotionally expressive speaking style to construct parasocial intimacy and authenticity with her audience despite communicating at scale through digital media.

