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LOCUTIONARY ACTS IN TOM HOLLAND'S PODCAST '*LEARN ENGLISH WITH TOM HOLLAND*': A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Podcasts have become an increasingly popular means of digital media, opening up new ways of learning what language means to daily lives. A podcast can shed light on a part of spoken communication by utilizing the use of speech acts. This study aims to identify and describe the locutionary acts found in Tom Holland's utterances in the *Learn English with Tom Holland* podcast based on Austin's (1962) theory. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with the data consisting of Tom Holland's spoken utterances throughout the podcast. The data were collected by listening to the podcast, transcribing the conversation, and taking notes on relevant utterances. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (2014) model, which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed eight utterances representing the three aspects of locutionary acts: phonetic, phatic, and rhetic acts. These aspects illustrate that locutionary acts involve not only the production of speech sounds but also the formation of meaningful expressions to communicate ideas. By examining these aspects, this study contributes to a better understanding of how speakers

produce and organize utterances to convey meaning in everyday spoken communication, particularly in digital media such as podcasts.

Keyword: Podcast, Speech act, Locutionary, Pragmatics.

Abstrak

Podcast telah menjadi salah satu bentuk media digital yang semakin populer, membuka cara-cara baru untuk memahami arti bahasa dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Sebuah podcast dapat mengungkap aspek tertentu dari komunikasi lisan melalui pemanfaatan tindakan wicara. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan mendeskripsikan tindakan lokusional yang terdapat dalam ucapan Tom Holland dalam podcast *"Learn English with Tom Holland"* berdasarkan teori Austin (1962). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, dengan data berupa ucapan lisan Tom Holland sepanjang podcast. Data dikumpulkan dengan cara mendengarkan podcast, mentranskripsikan percakapan, dan membuat catatan mengenai ucapan yang relevan. Data dianalisis menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman (2014), yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan penelitian ini mengungkap delapan ucapan yang mewakili tiga aspek tindakan lokusional: tindakan fonetik, fatik, dan retik. Aspek-aspek ini menggambarkan bahwa tindakan lokusional tidak hanya melibatkan produksi bunyi ucapan, tetapi juga pembentukan ekspresi bermakna untuk mengkomunikasikan gagasan. Dengan mengkaji aspek-aspek ini, penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih baik mengenai bagaimana penutur menghasilkan dan mengatur ucapan untuk menyampaikan makna dalam komunikasi lisan sehari-hari, khususnya dalam media digital seperti podcast.

Kata kunci: Podcast, Tindak Tutur, Lokusi, Pragmatik.

Introduction

Language is used for actions as well as for informational purposes. When speaking, we not only string together words, but also make claims, ask questions, and give instructions. This perspective lies at the main idea of pragmatics, which is concerned with how meaning is produced and interpreted in context relation (Levinson, 1983; Yule & Widdowson, 1996). Levinson (1983) and Yule (1996) describe pragmatics in terms of the ways in which meaning is created and used in context. Speech act theory, a systematic account of the ways in which

utterances show actions, forms a major part of this field. The works of the American philosopher, Searle (1969) were also refined by Austin's work.

According to Austin (1962) every single utterance consists of three interrelated acts: the locutionary act, the illocutionary act and the perlocutionary act. Looking at the form of the locutionary act mainly occurs by way of declarative, interrogative and. Austin's distinction, as discussed by Huang (2007) treats the locutionary act as the most fundamental of the three. The locutionary act refers to the act of uttering words with a definite sense and reference, and it operates on three levels: the phonetic act (producing speech sounds), the phatic act (arranging words in accordance with grammatical rules), and the rhetic act (using those words with a particular sense and reference). Locutionary acts typically are expressed by way of declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences. As has already been noted, the form of an utterance is a necessary preliminary to any consideration of its illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect; for it is only by first determining the locutionary content.

In the last few years, podcasts have become one of many media of English learning to develop listening and speaking skills of the learner. Video podcasts in particular can be used for entertainment or for education, thus they are a very relevant object of study for a linguistic analysis. Instead of scripted dialogues from textbooks, natural spoken language from authentic podcasts can be used as data for the pragmatic analysis. Learn English with Tom Holland is a podcast by the host of the program who provides information, asks questions and gives instructions to the listeners. It is a good source of a variety of utterances which are studied in examining locutionary acts in learning English.

Studies have investigated speech acts in a variety of media, including films, YouTube videos, and novels (Fata et al., 2023; Prawitri & Utami, 2025; Saptiko et al., 2021). Several of them examined locutionary acts in particular. In a study of the Forrest Gump screenplay, declarative sentences were the most frequent locutionary type. Septiawan et al. (2022) reported the same pattern in the movie Matilda, where declarative forms made up 37% of the data. In an EFL classroom, Arifah et al. (2024) found that the teacher used declarative, imperative, and interrogative forms. (Sudartinah, 2022) found that preschoolers mostly used incomplete declaratives with literal, direct strategies.

Other studies focused on podcasts. The study of Gritte Agatha's podcast found locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. In the *Daebak Show*, Lenggu et al. (2024)

identified 133 speech act utterances, but only 3 of them were locutionary, while 129 were illocutionary. No declarative acts were found in the studies about the *Daebak Show*'s podcast, probably because of the lack of institutional authority in a podcast setting. Laras and Sulastra (2024) analyzed *the Rich Roll* Podcast, and another study analyzed Jay Shetty's podcast. Studies of English-learning podcasts also focused on illocutionary acts, such as assertive acts in the Real-life English podcast (Anisa, 2023) and illocutionary acts in the *"Advanced English Conversation"* video podcasts on To Fluency's YouTube channel (Isanabiah & Fitrawati, 2022)

Although locutionary acts have been studied in films, classrooms, and news texts, they have received little attention in podcasts, and studies of English-learning podcasts have so far focused on illocutionary acts. To the best of our knowledge, locutionary acts in Learn English with Tom Holland have not been studied. This study aims to identify and analyze locutionary acts in *Learn English with Tom Holland*. The findings from this study will be of value. This study seeks to identify and analyze the types of locutionary acts used in the present study's podcast. The results of this study can be used as a part of pragmatic studies of locutionary acts used in the present day digital media.

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to examine language use in its natural context. The data were obtained from the YouTube podcast entitled Learn English with Tom Holland, focusing on the utterances produced by Tom Holland. The data were collected through observation and transcription of the podcast and analyzed based on Austin's (1962) classification of locutionary acts, consisting of phonetic, phatic, and rhetic acts. The analysis followed the qualitative data analysis model proposed by (Miles & Huberman, 1994), which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure the validity of the findings, the transcribed data were carefully reviewed and compared with the original audio recording to maintain accuracy and consistency.

Finding and Discussion

The researchers found several instances of the use of locutionary acts in the "Learn English with Tom Holland" podcast. In the following, the stages of the analysis of this study are presented in sequence. First, all the host's utterances from the podcast were transcribed. The researchers in this study, further, classified the examined utterances into the three types of

locutionary acts, i.e. phonetic, phatic, and rhetic. The results from these classifications are presented in the following table.

Data	Timestamp	Utterance	Aspect
1	01:35–02:04	“scroll scroll scroll scroll scroll”	Phonetic
2	01:35–02:04	“it was it was becoming a problem”	Phonetic
3	01:35–02:04	“I decided to delete my Instagram”	Phatic
4	01:35–02:04	“I was having a really hard time with the job”	Phatic
5	02:04	“I'm taking a break from social media”	Phatic
6	01:35–02:04	“I was just obsessed with it”	Rhetic
7	02:04	“the thing that really upset me is the Press ran with that”	Rhetic
8	07:14–07:47	“they painted again this negative light on Mental Health”	Rhetic

A. Phonetic

Austin (1962) said that a phonetic act is the speech sound or sounds that a speaker produces when he or she speaks. In this study, the phonetic feature that was studied was the spoken words of Tom Holland, particularly words and phrases that he repeated. Natural speech consists of a number of features, including the pronunciation of words and sounds, their repetition, and the way an utterance is delivered by a speaker. The utterances from selected parts of the episodes of the Learn English with Tom Holland podcast have been analyzed for the production of the sounds in speech.

Data 1: *“scroll scroll scroll scroll scroll”* (01:35 - 02:04)

In this utterance, Tom Holland repeats the word “scroll” five times. Repetition from a phonetic perspective can be studied by analyzing the repeated speech sounds of an utterance, such as when this man is talking about his habits using Instagram while working. This clip is very long for working on individual features such as pronunciation while working. However, the pronunciation, rhythm, and stress patterns of words need to be checked from the original audio for more detailed phonetic analysis.

Data 2: *“it was it was becoming a problem”* (01:35 - 02:04)

The researchers notice that Tom Holland repeats the phrase "it was" before Tom Holland continues Tom Holland's statement. That repetition shows how Tom Holland produces speech sounds in conversation. According to Austin's theory the phonetic act focuses on the sounds produced by Tom Holland not on the arrangement or meaning of the utterance. Therefore, this data can be looked at in terms of speech sound production. However the original audio is needed to spot Tom Holland's phonetic features.

B. Phatic

According to Austin (1962), a phatic act refers to the act of producing words and sentences that belong to a particular language and follow its grammatical conventions. In this study, phatic acts are identified through the use of English vocabulary and grammatical structures in Tom Holland's utterances.

Data 3: *"I decided to delete my Instagram"* (01:35–02:04)

This utterance qualifies as a phatic act because Tom Holland used English words arranged according to grammatical rules. The sentence consists of the subject "I," the past tense verb "decided," and the infinitive phrase "to delete my Instagram." This arrangement of words forms a sentence that conforms to English grammar. Thus, Tom's utterance constitutes a phatic act through the use of vocabulary and sentence structure that follow the rules.

Data 4: *"I was having a really hard time with the job"* (01:35–02:04)

Another example of a phatic act can be found in this data, it demonstrates a phatic act through the way Tom Holland arranges words into a sentence. The phrase "was having" indicates the use of the past continuous tense, while "a really hard time" is a noun phrase that describes the situation he was experiencing. Furthermore, the phrase "with the job" adds information about the topic being discussed. Every part of the sentence follows the rules of English grammar. As a result, this statement can be considered a phatic act, as it uses vocabulary and sentence structures that are correct according to English language rules.

Data 5: *"I'm taking a break from social media"* (02:04)

This statement by Tom Holland is considered a phatic act because the sentence follows the rules of English grammar. The phrase "I'm taking" follows the present continuous tense, which is used to describe an ongoing activity. Meanwhile, the phrase "a break from social

media" describes the activity he intends to do. The use of these words forms a clear sentence that follows standard English structure.

C. Rhetic

As Austin (1962) explained the rhetic act is one of three parts that make up the act. The other two parts are the act and the phatic act. The phonetic act means producing sounds. The phatic act means speaking words that belong to a language. That follow the rules of grammar.. The rhetic act expands on these concepts by utilizing the spoken words with a relatively clear sense and reference, which collectively convey meaning. Austin (1962) illustrates the distinction through the use of reported speech: conveying the exact phrase, such as he said "The cat is on the mat," reflects a phatic act, whereas paraphrasing the content, like he said, shows the rhetic act. He additionally observes that sense and reference are supplementary actions executed while carrying out the rhetic act, and that a phatic act may take place without a rhetic act, but not the other way around.

Data 6: *"I was just obsessed with it"* (01:35 - 02:04)

In data 1, the rhetic act is realized in the utterance "I was just obsessed with it." As stated by Austin (1962) a rhetic act uses words with a more or less definite sense and reference, which together amount to meaning. In terms of sense, the speaker describes a past state of excessive preoccupation, which "just" emphasizes. In terms of reference, "I" points to the speaker and "it" refers back to Instagram, introduced in the preceding phatic utterance, "I decided to delete my Instagram." The past tense "was" locates this state before the decision to delete the account. The act can be reported in indirect speech as *He said that he was just obsessed with it*, which shows that the content, not only the words, is being reported.

Data 7: *"the thing that really upset me is the Press ran with that"* (02:04)

In data 2, the rhetic act appears in the utterance "the thing that really upset me is the Press ran with that." In context of sense, the speaker identifies the press's amplification of the matter as the main source of their distress, and the idiom "ran with" implies that the media took up and publicized it. In terms of reference, "me" refers to the speaker, "the Press" to the news media in general, and "that" to a matter introduced earlier in the talk, so its reference depends on context. The act can be reported in indirect speech as *He said that the thing that really upset him was that the Press ran with it*.

Data 8: *"they painted again this negative light on Mental Health"* (07:14 - 07:47)

In data 3 (07:14-07:47), the rhetic act shows in the utterance "they painted again this negative light on Mental Health." In terms of sense, the idiom "painted ... this negative light" imply that mental health was portrayed negatively, and "again" shows that this portrayal had occurred before. In terms of reference, "they" points to an unknown group, most possibly the media mentioned earlier in the talk, "this negative light" refers to a portrayal already familiar from the context, and "Mental Health" is the subject matter. The act can be reported in indirect speech as *He said that they had painted that negative light on mental health again*, although the reference of "they" would need to be clarified in the report.

Conclusion

This study examined the locutionary acts found in Tom Holland's utterances in the "Learn English with Tom Holland" podcast based on Austin's (1962) theory. The research findings show that eight utterances were selected to illustrate the three aspects of the locutionary act: the phonetic act, the phatic act, and the rhetic act. A phonetic act can be observed in how a speaker produces and repeats certain sounds when speaking. On the other hand, a phatic act focuses on the choice of words and how they are put together to form sentences based on the rules of a particular language. On the other hand, a rhetic act relates to the meaning contained in speech and the speaker's intent when conveying something in a conversation. These findings indicate that the three aspects of locutionary acts are closely related in spoken communication, as speakers produce sounds, arrange words, and express meanings through their utterances. This study concludes that Austin's theory of locutionary acts can be applied to analyze language use in podcast conversations. However, further research involving more extensive data and detailed audio analysis is recommended to provide a deeper understanding of locutionary acts in natural spoken interactions.

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