Analysis of Netizens' Expressive Illocutionary Acts in the Comment Section and Video Content of Denny Sumargo's *Curhat Bang* Podcast Episode "Arra": A Multimodal Pragmatic Study

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the forms, functions, and meanings of expressive illocutionary acts found in internet users' comments and visual content in the podcast episode Curhat Bang Denny Sumargo featuring Arra. The study employs a multimodal pragmatic approach, integrating linguistic analysis with non-verbal elements such as facial expressions, body movements, and vocal intonation. Expressive speech acts serve as the central focus because they reflect the speaker's feelings, attitudes, and emotions toward certain events or experiences. Data were collected from the transcript of the podcast episode as well as comments posted by internet users in the YouTube comment section. The analysis was conducted by identifying verbal and non-verbal expressions that indicate expressive illocutionary acts and interpreting their functions and contextual meanings based on Searle's theory and multimodal pragmatic principles. The findings reveal a wide range of expressive acts, including expressions of empathy, sympathy, praise, and criticism, produced by the host, the guest, and internet users. Visual elements and vocal intonation further strengthen the emotional meanings conveyed. This study indicates that communication on digital platforms is inherently complex and multimodal, reflecting the dynamic forms of emotional expression through which audiences respond to content with psychological and social impact.

Keywords: expressive illocutionary acts, multimodal pragmatics, podcast

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has revolutionized the ways in which people communicate, particularly through social media and video-sharing platforms such as YouTube. One form of digital communication that has gained significant popularity is the podcast, which relies not only on verbal elements but also incorporates visual and gestural modes. In this context, the *Curhat Bang* podcast hosted by Denny Sumargo represents a compelling phenomenon of digital communication, as it presents personal narratives of guests through a narrative and emotional approach.

The *Curhat Bang* podcast functions not only as a space for guests to express their life experiences but also as a site of social interaction between the content creator and netizens through the comment section. One notable episode features Denny Sumargo interviewing Arra, a five-year-old child who went viral for his unexpectedly mature and wise manner of speaking, prompting various emotional reactions from viewers in the comments. This phenomenon opens opportunities for examining expressive illocutionary

acts, namely utterances that convey the speaker's psychological attitude toward a given situation—such as sympathy, empathy, admiration, or anger Searle1976. According to Searle1976, expressive illocutionary acts function to articulate the speaker's feelings or attitudes toward a particular state of affairs, such as gratitude, sympathy, or annoyance. Meanwhile, multimodality theory developed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (as cited in Xerri, 2012) posits that communication does not occur solely through verbal language but also involves other modes—such as images, sound, and gestures—that collectively construct meaning.

In online interaction, particularly on YouTube, netizens' responses are not limited to textual comments but also appear through likes, emojis, and users' interpretation and reproduction of meaning derived from non-verbal expressions displayed in the video. Therefore, communication analysis on this platform cannot rely solely on linguistic approaches; rather, it requires a multimodal pragmatic framework that considers verbal, visual, and gestural elements as an integrated meaning-making process, in line with Kress and Van Leeuwen (as cited in Xerri, 2012). As a contemporary digital media genre, podcasts create a form of interpersonal communication that is public in nature, in which emotional expressions from both speakers and audiences can be observed and analyzed. The study of expressive illocutionary acts in netizen comments and podcast video content is thus relevant because it reveals how digital communities construct, negotiate, and express social and emotional attitudes within the virtual public sphere. Although numerous studies have examined speech acts in digital communication, research specifically focusing on expressive illocutionary acts through a multimodal pragmatic approach on YouTube—particularly in the context of podcasts such as *Curhat Bang*—remains limited.

Based on the aforementioned background, this study is guided by three central research questions: (1) What forms of expressive illocutionary acts are used by netizens in the comment section of the podcast video? (2) What forms of verbal and visual expressive illocution are displayed by the speakers within the podcast? and (3) How do verbal and visual modalities interact to construct expressive meaning?

This study aims to analyze the expressive illocutionary acts employed by netizens in the comment section and the multimodal expressions presented in the *Curhat Bang* YouTube podcast episode featuring Arra. The primary focus is to identify the types of emotional expressions manifested through both verbal and non-verbal forms, whether produced by the guest in the video or by netizens through their comments. Additionally, the study seeks to understand how multimodal elements—such as verbal language, facial expressions, vocal intonation, and bodily gestures—contribute to conveying complex emotional meanings. Through a multimodal pragmatic approach, this study is expected to reveal the dynamics of digital communication that unfold not only through text but also through non-verbal symbols and signs embedded in online interactions. Thus, the study contributes to contemporary pragmatic scholarship, particularly in understanding patterns of emotional communication within video-based social media platforms such as YouTube.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Expressive Illocutionary Speech Acts

Expressive illocutionary speech acts are types of linguistic actions through which speakers express their psychological attitudes or emotions toward a particular situation, such as thanking, praising, criticizing, apologizing, or congratulating. These speech acts play a crucial role in building social relationships because they allow speakers to convey

emotions and personal stances directly to their interlocutors, thereby fostering interpersonal connection and mutual understanding.

In terms of definition and characteristics, expressive speech acts are intended to reveal the speaker's internal psychological state, including feelings of gratitude, regret, admiration, or sympathy. Common realizations of expressive illocutionary acts include expressions of thanks, apologies, congratulations, criticism, and praise. Through these utterances, speakers demonstrate emotional involvement with specific events or actions, signaling how they feel about what has occurred or what others have done (Risnawati, 2021).

Empirical studies have identified various forms of expressive illocutionary acts across different communicative contexts. These include thanking, congratulating, forgiving, condemning, praising, and expressing condolences, which appear in both online interactions, such as on Twitter, and offline communication (Rodearni & Siagian, 2023). In service-based interactions, for example on digital platforms such as Gojek, expressive acts most frequently occur in the form of gratitude and criticism, reflecting users' evaluations of service experiences (Risnawati et al., 2025). Research on children with autism also indicates that praise and expressions of gratitude are the dominant forms of expressive speech acts used in their interactions (Prasetyoningsih et al., 2020). Overall, these findings illustrate the diversity of expressive forms and their adaptation to specific social and communicative settings, as reflected in various studies across media, service contexts, and special populations.

From a social and pragmatic perspective, expressive illocutionary speech acts function to strengthen social bonds, stabilize communicative norms, and serve as indicators of the speaker's sincerity or genuineness. Expressive norms help ensure that emotional expressions are difficult to falsify, which in turn enhances trust in communication (Witek, 2021). In the context of language learning, understanding expressive speech acts is particularly important, as it enables learners to interpret and respond appropriately to the emotions and attitudes of their interlocutors, thereby improving pragmatic competence and interactional effectiveness (Al-Ghazo, 2023).

In conclusion, expressive illocutionary speech acts constitute a primary means through which speakers articulate their feelings and attitudes in communication. Although their forms vary depending on context, they consistently play a vital role in establishing, maintaining, and reinforcing social relationships, as well as in building trust and mutual understanding between individuals.

Multimodal Pragmatic Study

Multimodal pragmatics emphasizes that meaning in human communication is constructed through the integration of multiple channels, including spoken language, gestures, facial expressions, intonation, gaze, and other visual elements. This perspective highlights that communication does not rely solely on words, but is fundamentally shaped by non-verbal signals that complement, reinforce, and enrich meaning in social interaction. Meaning emerges from the dynamic coordination of these semiotic resources within specific contexts, allowing interlocutors to negotiate intentions, attitudes, and relationships more effectively.

Research on the dimensions and mechanisms of multimodal pragmatics shows that gestures, prosody, gaze, and facial expressions operate flexibly and adaptively during conversation, forming patterned configurations often referred to as "pragmatic modes" (Alviar et al., 2023). These multimodal signals enable speakers to adjust continuously to changing topics and interlocutors, supporting interactional coherence. Visual bodily signals, such as hand movements, head nods, and facial expressions, play a crucial role

in coordinating shared understanding and go beyond purely referential or propositional meaning (Holler, 2022). Through their combination, these signals accelerate comprehension and deepen pragmatic interpretation in interaction.

Applications and case studies further demonstrate the significance of multimodal pragmatics across domains. In education and the study of language disorders, multimodal skills have been shown to predict children's narrative and pragmatic abilities, both in typically developing children and those with developmental disorders (Florit-Pons et al., 2025). Prosody and gesture, in particular, facilitate pragmatic meaning processing and are especially supportive for children with language impairments. In the analysis of digital and social media, studies of Twitter memes and digital campaigns reveal how multimodality—through the interaction of text, images, and video—shapes meaning-making, identity construction, and user engagement (Sindoni, 2021). Digital platforms thus introduce new variations and strategies in pragmatic expression and interpretation (Reiter & Blitvich, 2025).

Methodologically, the development of multimodal corpora has enabled richer and more systematic analyses of pragmatic phenomena. Such corpora integrate verbal and non-verbal data, supporting more comprehensive research in areas such as foreign language teaching and communication disorders (Huang, 2021). By capturing the full range of semiotic resources used in interaction, multimodal corpora contribute to a deeper understanding of how pragmatic meaning is produced and interpreted across contexts.

Overall, the evolution of multimodal pragmatics research—from theoretical models of multimodal coordination to applications in education, health, and digital media—underscores the complexity of human communication. Contemporary studies consistently highlight the central role of non-verbal signals in meaning construction, learning processes, and digital interaction. A multimodal pragmatic approach therefore enriches our understanding of how meaning and social relationships are formed and maintained in diverse communicative environments (Reiter & Blitvich, 2025).

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design, focusing on multimodal pragmatic analysis. The purpose of the research is to describe and analyze expressive illocutionary acts that appear in netizen comments and visual content in the podcast episode *Curhat Bang Denny Sumargo* featuring Arra. The data source of this study is the aforementioned podcast episode published on the YouTube platform. The primary data consist of netizen comments posted in the YouTube comment section, as well as the visual and verbal content arising from the interaction between the host and the guest (Denny Sumargo and Arra) in the video. The analyzed data include comment utterances and visual cues (facial expressions, gestures, and vocal intonation) containing elements of expressive illocutionary acts.

Data were collected through documentation and a listening–noting technique. The podcast video was watched and transcribed, while netizen comments were collected using purposive sampling, selecting only comments relevant to expressive meanings. Gestures and nonverbal expressions were observed and documented as part of the visual modality.

Data validity was ensured through source and theoretical triangulation. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data drawn from comments, verbal dialogue, and visual elements. The validity of the findings was strengthened by referencing Searle's theory of speech acts and theories of visual multimodality. The data analysis technique employed qualitative content analysis based on Searle (1976) framework of illocutionary acts and the multimodal analysis model of (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). The analytical procedures began with transcribing netizen comments and podcast dialogue. The

researcher then identified and classified types of expressive illocutionary acts in both comments and spoken interaction using Searle's classification. For visual and audio aspects, facial expressions, intonation, and gestures were analyzed using the multimodality framework. Expressive meanings were subsequently interpreted holistically by integrating verbal and nonverbal modalities. Validation was conducted through source and theoretical triangulation to ensure the credibility of the data.

RESULTS
Table 1. Types of Expressive Speech Acts in the Comment Section of the Podcast Video

No	Type of Expression or Response	Number of Data
1	Praise	6
2	Criticism	3
3	Insult	3
4	Sadness Expressions	2
5	Support	3
6	Blaming	4

From a total of approximately 3.1 thousand comments found in the comment section of the YouTube video on *Curhat Bang Denny Sumargo* titled *"Bapak Ibunya Punya Tr4u-m4—Arra Disuruh Makan di Got—Apakah Bagus Didikan Seperti Ini??"*, several types of expressive speech acts were identified, namely: praising, criticizing, insulting, expressing sadness, supporting, and blaming. The most dominant speech act identified is praise, as many netizens commented that Arra is perceived as a smart child. The following sections present explanations of each type of expressive speech act found in the comment section.

DISCUSSION
Speech Acts of Expressing Praise
The speech act of expressing praise is a form of utterance that conveys admiration and appreciation toward a person, object, or any positive attribute or action. Such speech acts may also be performed due to various factors, including the interlocutor's behavior aligning with reality. The speaker may intend to please, flatter, reassure, or acknowledge praiseworthy actions carried out by the interlocutor. In this study sample, five instances of speech acts were classified as expressive praise. One example is the following:

@Lidyameyland: "Disini arra sopan bgt dan sudah menerapkan adabnya♥😍"

This comment was made by @Lidyameyland, who observed that Arra exhibited very polite behavior and proper manners in the video. The use of a heart emoji (♥) and an admiration-face emoji (😍) indicates the speaker's positive emotional engagement with Arra's conduct. This suggests that Arra's behavior is not only normatively accepted but also emotionally appreciated by the speaker. Therefore, @Lidyameyland's comment functions not merely as an appreciative expression but can also be interpreted as part of a discursive practice that reflects and affirms the importance of politeness and proper manners within social spaces, including the open and interactive context of social media.

Speech Acts of Expressing Criticism
The speech act of expressing criticism is an utterance intended to reproach or provide feedback on a matter, often involving judgments of right or wrong (Herfani et al.,

2020). This type of speech act typically occurs when the speaker disagrees with or disapproves of a particular issue. Criticism can be conveyed solely as negative feedback or accompanied by constructive suggestions for the interlocutor. In this study, three social media comments were identified as expressive criticism. One illustrative example is as follows:

> @tokosagalaaya78: "Bubu baba ajarin jg Arra adab bicara trhadap orgtua, jg empati ke tmn2nya."

This comment by @tokosagalaaya78 represents an expressive utterance containing social criticism with a subtle sarcastic tone. Linguistically and pragmatically, the comment can be unpacked as follows: "Bubu baba" refers to Arra's parents or guardians, most likely the child of a public figure discussed in the podcast content. Arra is the target of the criticism, identified by the speaker as needing guidance in ethical and empathetic behavior.

Implicitly, the speaker critiques Arra's behavior, which is perceived as lacking proper manners when addressing parents—a violation of Indonesian cultural norms emphasizing politeness and respect for social hierarchies. Additionally, the comment points out a deficiency in Arra's empathy toward peers, indicating shortcomings in social affect and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, this utterance not only expresses an opinion about a particular individual but also reflects broader societal values, including politeness, respect for elders, and social solidarity.

Speech Acts of Expressing Insult

The speech act of expressing insult is an utterance intended to demean or belittle the interlocutor. Such expressions aim to harm the reputation or offend the feelings of the target. The presence of a psychological reaction from the speaker or interlocutor indicates that insulting constitutes a form of expressive speech act. Within expressive speech acts, there is a gradation: insulting is considered one level below cursing or outright disparagement. In this study, two comments were identified as expressive insults. One example is as follows:

> @Itsnadhifaaa: "Ortu dua2 nya punya inner child yg belum selesai. kalo aku liat si arra ini pinter ngapalin doang, ga usah di lebih2an kecerdasan nya"

This comment represents an evaluative discourse containing an expressive speech act. The speaker conveys an insult toward a public figure and their child, focusing on psychological and intellectual aspects, evaluated from the speaker's personal perspective. Specifically, "Ortu dua2 nya" refers to both parents of the child, Arra, extending the critique beyond the child to include the parents' psychological state. The phrase "inner child yg belum selesai" invokes a popular psychological concept, implying that Arra's parents may carry unresolved childhood emotional wounds or trauma, which purportedly influence their parenting style. The statement "Arra ini pinter ngapalin doang" evaluates Arra as having rote memorization skills without attributing deeper or substantive intelligence. Finally, "ga usah di lebih2an kecerdasannya" functions as a subtle admonition or criticism toward public or media tendencies to overstate Arra's intellectual abilities.

The tone of the comment is sharp and subtly sarcastic, conveyed through phrasing such as "ga usah di lebih2an," which implicitly belittles the subject. Pragmatically, the speaker positions themselves as an objective observer aiming to correct what they perceive as exaggerated public perceptions, thereby exemplifying an expressive speech act that communicates negative evaluation and personal judgment.

Speech Acts of Expressing Sadness

The speech act of expressing sadness is a type of utterance that emerges from feelings of sorrow or distress concerning a particular situation. Speakers convey their emotional state when experiencing sadness, and the responses given by the speaker or interlocutor reflect a psychological attitude, confirming that sadness constitutes an expressive speech act. In this study, two social media comments were identified as instances of expressive sadness. One illustrative example is as follows:

> @Phema6849: "Sedih banget denger cerita keluarga nya A Billy 😭 😭 apalagi pas Billy bilang sekarang sukses bs umrohin mertua sama Tim, tapi gak bs umrohin ibu sm ayahnya, kerasa sampe sini sedihnya. Semangat a Billy & adiknya."

In this comment, @Phema6849 expresses profound sadness upon hearing about Billy's family situation. The phrase "sedih banget denger cerita keluarga nya A Billy 😭 😭" explicitly conveys the speaker's deep emotional reaction. The comment demonstrates strong empathy toward Billy's hardships, reflecting the speaker's psychological state as an outpouring of sorrow and concern. Pragmatically, this utterance exemplifies an expressive speech act of sadness, as it communicates the speaker's emotional response to another's experience.

Speech Acts of Expressive Support

The speech act of expressive support, according to the KBBI (Indonesian Dictionary), is an utterance intended to endorse, assist, or justify the statement being made. The presence of a reaction from the speaker or interlocutor, based on a psychological attitude, indicates that supportive acts are included within the category of expressive speech acts. In this study, three social media comments were classified as expressive support. One example is:

> @arisnurjayanti2194: "Duuuuhh….ini pasangan the best bgt….sblm mnikah sdh matang….saat memutuskn menikahpun mrk sdh siap luar dlm…..halow yg pngen nikah….halow pasangan muda…dengerin nih bubu sm baba..tiru parenting mrk…..ini pasangan bener2 the best"
>
> @arrahma312: "Sumpah keren banget ini parenting ibu -bapak nya. Ibunya pintar dan tegas. Ayahnya pun berperan penting dalam mendidik anaknya. The real orang tua yg sesungguhnya. Selain dari akademis dari agama pun terlihat bagus parentingnya. Masyaallah ❤️ "

Both comments focus on the same subject: parenting, which the commenters consider exemplary and worth emulating. These utterances can thus be categorized as expressive support, as they endorse the parenting practices demonstrated by the parents in the video. In other words, the speakers express approval and support for the parenting behaviors shown, highlighting them as models that should be followed.

Speech Acts of Expressing Blame

The speech act of expressing blame is a type of utterance identified in this study. This speech act involves attributing fault or holding others responsible for a perceived mistake (Pratama & Utomo, 2020). It is typically expressed when the interlocutor is seen as evading responsibility for their actions.
In this study, four comments were classified as expressive blame. One example is as follows:

@Nenti0793: "Yg pling utama jgn kasih gadgets dan kasih arahan2 yang baik, adab yg baik pling pnting"

This comment illustrates an implicit form of expressive blame. The speaker does not directly indicate who is at fault; however, through the use of imperative statements such as "do not give gadgets" and "provide proper guidance," it is implied that the speaker perceives shortcomings in Arra's parental practices. In this context, the provision of gadgets and insufficient guidance regarding manners are seen as primary factors contributing to behavior considered problematic in the child. Although the comment superficially appears as advice, within the fast-paced and responsive environment of social media, it carries an underlying layer of blame, particularly directed toward the parents who are perceived as negligent.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of various netizen comments on the podcast video under study, it can be concluded that the expressive speech acts observed reflect a diversity of speakers' psychological attitudes in responding to the presented content. The identified forms of expressive speech acts include praising, criticizing, insulting, expressing sadness, showing support, and blaming. Among these, praise was the most dominant, particularly in relation to Arra's politeness, manners, and intelligence. In contrast, acts such as criticizing, blaming, and insulting represent negative responses, often characterized by sarcasm or confrontational tones. Meanwhile, expressions of sadness and support demonstrate the empathetic and affirmative stance of netizens toward the stories or figures featured. These findings indicate that social media functions as a multimodal space of expression, reflecting the dynamics of emotions, social values, and public perception in an open and interactive environment.

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