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### STRATEGIC SPEECH ACTS ON TIKTOK LIVE: (Campaign Tactics on Presidential Candidate 01, 02, 03 in Indonesia's 2024 Election)

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#### Abstrak

*Studi ini fokus pada kampanye Pasangan Calon No. 01, 02, dan 03 selama Pemilihan Presiden Indonesia 2024 di TikTok Live. Analisis ini mengkaji bagaimana komunikasi publik melalui TikTok Live memobilisasi empati, menggunakan teori tindak tutur untuk meneliti fungsi sosial dari teks-teks ini. Kampanye ini menyasar generasi milenial dan Generasi Z, oleh karena itu media yang digunakan mengandalkan media sosial, yang sesuai dengan cara komunikasi baru generasi muda ini. Analisis ini didasarkan pada teori tindak tutur Austin (1962), dengan fokus pada Lokusi dan Ilokusi, dilengkapi dengan kategori Searle (1979) seperti Assertif, Direktif, Komissif, Ekspresif, dan Deklaratif. Dengan fokus pada tindak tutur strategis, studi ini membandingkan tindak tutur persuasif yang digunakan oleh pasangan calon. Studi sebelumnya mengenai analisis tindak tutur dalam strategi komunikasi kampanye hanya berfokus pada pidato dan poster. Ismail, F. (2013) fokus pada studi pragmatik terhadap pidato Jokowi, sementara Ulum et al. (2018) membandingkan strategi pidato Trump dan Clinton dengan fokus pada analisis komissif, dan Ali et al. (2022) mempelajari pragmatik dalam poster kampanye. Studi ini berbeda secara signifikan karena strategi tindak tutur diidentifikasi pada kampanye politikus di TikTok Live, sebuah media sosial yang baru menjadi tren dalam komunikasi publik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa tindak tutur di TikTok Live menunjukkan strategi komunikasi yang berbeda dibandingkan dengan wawancara formal yang menunjukkan 90% assertif dengan komissif dan deklaratif yang rendah. Fenomena ini sangat unik karena dalam kampanye konvensional, sebagian besar ucapan mewakili komissif*

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*dan deklaratif untuk mendapatkan dukungan. Ini menawarkan wawasan baru tentang strategi komunikasi publik di era digital. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis deskriptif, menggunakan analisis konten dan diskusi kelompok fokus dengan para ahli pragmatik dan psikologi.*

**Kata kunci:** *tindak tutur; live TikTok; sosio-pragmatik; strategi komunikasi*

### **Abstract**

This study focuses on the campaign of Candidate Pairs No. 01, 02, and 03 during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election in TikTok Live. This analysis examines on how public communication through TikTok Live mobilizes empathy, using speech act theory to examine the social functions of these texts. The campaign is targeting millennial and Generation Z that's why the media used reliance on social media, that caters to the new communication way of these younger generations. The analysis is grounded in Austin's (1962) speech act theory, focusing on Locution and Illocution, completed by Searle's (1979) categories such as Assertive, Directive, Commissure, Expressive, and Declarative. Focusing on the strategic speech acts by comparing the persuasive speech acts used by the candidate pairs. Previous studies on speech act analysis in champaign communication strategy only focus on speech and poster. Ismail, F. (2013) focusses on pragmatis study on Jokowi's speech, while Ulum et.all (2018) compares Trumpt and Clinton speech strategy and focus on commisive analaysis and Ali et.all (2022) studied on pragmatic in campaign poster. This study significantly diferent in case that speech act strategies are identified on politicians' camphaign in TikTok Live. A social media that newly become trend in public communication. The findings shows that Live TikTok speech act shows different communication strategy comparing to formal interview that shows 90% assertive with low commisive and declarative. This phenomenon is very unique since in conventional campaign, most utterances are representing commisive and declarative to gain support. It offers new insights into public communication strategies in the digital era. The research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive analysis approach, employing content analysis and focus group discussions with pragmatics and psychology experts. Reader and listener motivation will also be analysed through the lens of empathy psychology.

**Keywords:** speech act; live TikTok; sociopragmatic; communication strategy

## **INTRODUCTION**

TikTok Live is a new media trend for sharing information. Feldkamp (2021) in his research on social media trends also mentioned that TikTok rises its influence in empowering social media trends during the global pandemic. It is not only meant as personal interaction media anymore, but also as market place, digital advertisement media and campaign media.

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In Indonesia 2024 election, TikTok live as campaign media is new. It became an alternative for direct voter engagement since Indonesia 2024 election was targeting millennials (born between 1981-1996) and Generation Z (born between 1997-2012) who are technology savvy, especially generation Z who are more digital native (Persada,2021). Musch (2021) emphasized that Generation Z and Millennial cohorts are increasingly using social media as their primary source of news, communication, shopping and branding. Seeing this phenomenon, politicians with their public speaking strategy, see this opportunity and turn from conventional one to TikTok for gaining more voters. Medina (2020) said that Political communication on TikTok is “much more interactive in comparison to other social media platforms”, with users generating responses and communication chains. It means that TikTok also enables spontaneous authentic expression comparing to traditional. Another emphasizes also done by Van Boheemen et al. (2025) who said that TikTok Live combines immediacy and interactivity, making it powerful for political communication. But the factual digital campaign on TikTok in this election seems to be far from interactive, and the speakers tend to share the similar speech strategies that are more boring and ineffective to persuade the target voter. This gap in linguistic study triggers more studies on speech strategies especially on how candidates construct influence through language in digital spaces and how candidates put social media in shaping democratic participation and voter behavior .

There are many previous studies about campaign method, such as by Natsheh (2019) who studied Trump’s tweet during presidential election 2019 and focusing on his persuasive strategy, while another study about speech act analysis on political campaign was done by Ulum et al (2018) who compare Trump and Clinton’s speech act strategies in campaign. Both of those studies initiated further exploration on the method, media and data. This study is significantly different for it is focusing on the Live TikTok as a social media trend to communicate and see the speech act strategy. Those studies different with this studies in case that the population in this study are TikTok Live interaction videos on each candidates official Youtube account and the study integrates Public Sphere Theory Habermas(1989) to frame TikTok Live as a digital space of political interaction, Uses and Gratifications Theory to explain audience participation, and Speech Act Theory Austin & Searle (1975) to analyze candidates’ strategic language use. Based on Media Richness Theory, richer media enable more effective communication due to immediate

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feedback and multiple cues (Daft & Lengel, 1986) adapted in Sheer (2004). In this context, TikTok Live can be considered a highly rich medium because it combines video, audio, and real-time interaction. This study becomes significant to see whether campaign speech act strategies in interactive media like TikTok can be varied and interactive with high engagement or not. It will give more alternatives and suggestions for better public communication and also enrich linguistic studies on speech act strategies in popular digital media.

## METHOD

The study is taken from all live TikTok video uploaded in the three presidential candidates during the election period. The data collection applied Interaction model by Miles and Hubberman (2002) in Pawito (2007). The analytical technique consists of four stages; reduction, display, drawing and verifying.

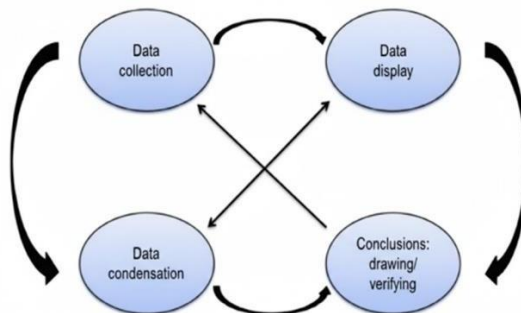


Figure 1. Miles dan Hubberman (1998:12) in Pawitom (2007:105) Interactive Model

While for analysing data, triangulation method is used by combining Austin pragmatics theory and Searle speech act theory and being analyzed through Media Richer Theory to see the componential analysis. The data were selected using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) the videos must originate from the candidates' verified official accounts, (2) the content must contain campaign-related discourse, (3) the videos must include spoken interaction or public-directed speech acts, and (4) the videos must be complete and accessible (i.e., not edited or truncated). For data analysis, this study applies methodological triangulation by integrating speech act theory, discourse analysis and pragmatic equivalence. First, the data are analyzed using Searle's speech act theory to identify illocutionary acts (e.g., assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and

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declarations). Second, a discourse analysis approach is employed to examine how the speech acts function within the broader socio-political and communicative context of TikTok live interactions, including persuasive strategies, audience engagement, and power relations. Furthermore, this study adopts Spradley’s componential analysis to systematically categorize and compare the semantic and functional contrasts among speech acts across the three candidates. This analysis focuses on identifying distinguishing features (components of meaning) within each category of speech act.

There are three pragmatics in Austin theory; Locution, Illocution and Perlocution. Locution is the literal meaning uttered by speaker, while illocution has already put speakers’ intention on it and Perlocution entails actions/response from the listener.

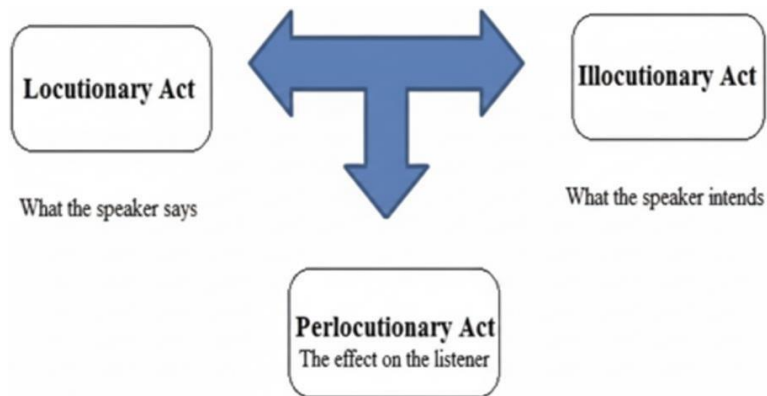


Figure 2. Austin (1975) Pragmatics Theory

Austin pragmatics theory will be combined with Searle speech act classes to see the speech act pattern and strategy in the Live TikTok campaign. Searle proposes 5 speech act classes; Assertive, Directive, Commissive, Expressive and Declarative. It can be seen from the figure 3 that there are three classes; the top, middle and bottom. It can be seen from figure 2.

The top class is speech act type that is categorized by assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative, while the middle class is categorized by reference or from (direct or indirect) and the bottom class is the content that show us type of monologue, group and sequential interaction. The class can be seen from the following diagram that shows us the level and types.

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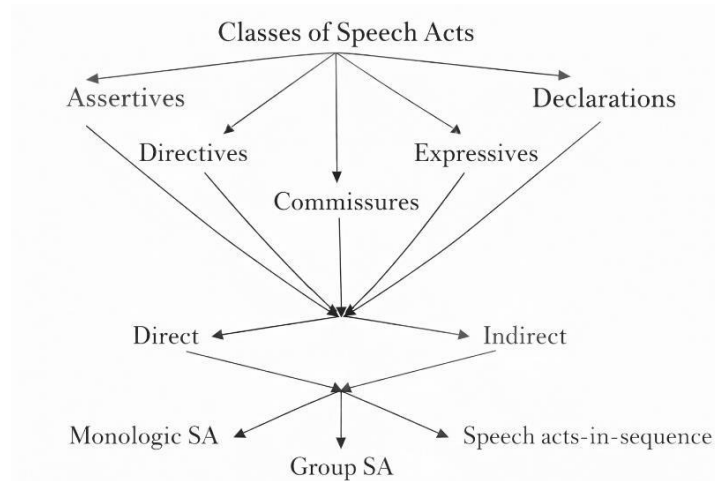


Figure 3. Searle (1979) Speech Act Classes

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Austin Pragmatic Analysis

Pragmatic provides the speaker's intention and purpose in communication. It helps us understand beyond words that mostly appear in political campaigns. It is full of intention, persuasion and meaning. Most political contexts in pragmatic are onsite Campaign, speech and interview. Beside context, communication relies on media used. After covid-19, media social emerged into main communication media, and Campaign in social media is new and contemporary nowadays, especially Live TikTok as the first Campaign media in Indonesia presidential election history. By comparing three presidential candidates 01,02,03 in Live TikTok during Campaign in 2024, we can find a new communication pattern as seen on table 1.

Tabel 1. Austin Pragmatic Analysis

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Code	Austin			Austin			Austin		
	Locution	Illocution	Perlocution	Locution	Illocution	Perlocution	Locution	Illocution	Perlocution
	1			2			3		
T1	v					v	v		
T2	v			v			v		
T3	v			v			v		
T4	v			v			v		
T5	v				v		v		
T6	v			v			v		
T7	v			v			v		
T8	v			v			v		
T9	v					v	v		
T10	v			v			v		
T11	v			v			v		
T12	v			v			v		
T13	v			v			v		
T14	v				v		v		
T15	v			v			v		
T16	v				v		v		
T17	v			v				v	
T18	v				v			v	

Communication in Live Tiktok is able to engage with all people both their followers and haters and it also meets the possibility for them to read comments and accept two ways audio communication. The characteristics of all Live TikTok Campaign, done by those three candidates is communication with their team audio visually and indirect communication with followers via comment and emoticons. This communication forms a pattern that all of them use Live TikTok for light topic discussion or small talk without intending to persuade or gain the voters. They use Live TikTok for self-branding and engaging to all people for being recognized and later indirectly can raise their electability.

All of them tend to share literal meaning in each of their statements because what they utter are just responding to the comments from passive opponents (followers) and questions from their active opponents as live partners. Candidate 01 shares 100% locution, followed by 03 in 88% and 02 in 66% locution.

The high Locution across all candidates indicate that they focus on literal meaning, on responding to the comment and answer live questions without intending to persuade, or expect responses from listeners. This pattern is new in communication for Campaign since politicians mostly expect engagement to their target voters, but through Live TikTok, they just emphasize

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what they are saying. It reflects their communication purpose for informing only, not expecting interaction in two ways communication.

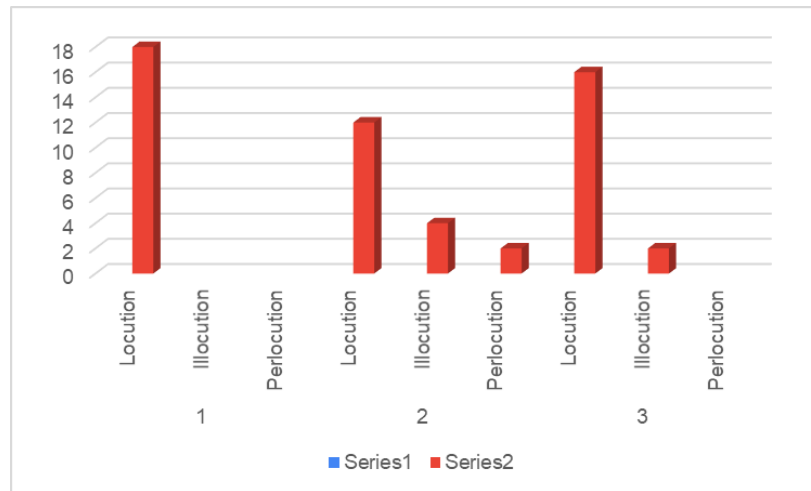


Figure 4. Austin Pragmatic Analysis

President candidate 2 and 3 depicted varied results by also applying illocution and perlocution. 22% and 11% illocution act reflected that speaker engaged through request or expected response from his live opponent, but its low percentage proved that the intention for communication commitment didn't work. It was still on a responding level rather than an interacting one. And for a level of campaign, it is a new phenomenon to be found.

### Searle Speech Act Class

Searle Speech class is divided into three levels, the bottom is informing the context that we analyse as a Live TikTok campaign done by presidential candidate 01,02 and 03. The the second level talked about communication type, this data is categorized as both direct and indirect communication. It is indirect communication in case that it is one to many formats. The communication is only one direction although in this case, the speaker responded to the followers' viewers' comment, but indeed it is not an ongoing communication with less

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interaction. Sometimes, late response to some comment also led to non-real time communication. But on the other hand, it also can be categorized as direct communication because it allows the speaker to get real time audio visual calls or questions. Bainotitti (2025) explained audio and video played pivotal engagement in TikTok and Mubarok (2024) emphasized on how Live TikTok perceived new pattern in commercial communication strategies between seller and buyer. The same case happens in the phenomenon on LiveTikTok as new digital campaign platform. The top layer of speech act class can be seen from table 2 below.

Table 2. Searle Speech Act Class

Code	Searle								
	Ass ertiv e	Co mm isiv e	De clar atio n	Ass ertiv e	Co mmi sive	Dec larat ion	Ass ertiv e	Co mmi sive	Decl arati on
	1			2			3		
T1	v			v			v		
T2	v			v			v		
T3	v			v			v		
T4	v			v			v		
T5	v			v			v		
T6	v			v			v		
T7	v			v			v		
T8	v			v			v		
T9	v			v			v		
T10	v			v			v		
T11	v			v			v		
T12	v			v			v		
T13	v			v			v		
T14	v			v			v		
T15	v			v			v		
T16	v			v			v		
T17	v			v			v		
T18	v			v				v	

On the top level of Speech Act there are five categories; assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declaration. Assertive is a situation when the speaker just informs or provides a literal answer, while in directive, the speaker is expecting reaction or response from listeners. Commissive is applied for promising, while expressive implies feeling and emotion. The last category is declaration to state commitment or power. The result reflected a similar pattern that all of the candidates performed assertively and were absent for other categories. The comparison can be seen from the figure below.

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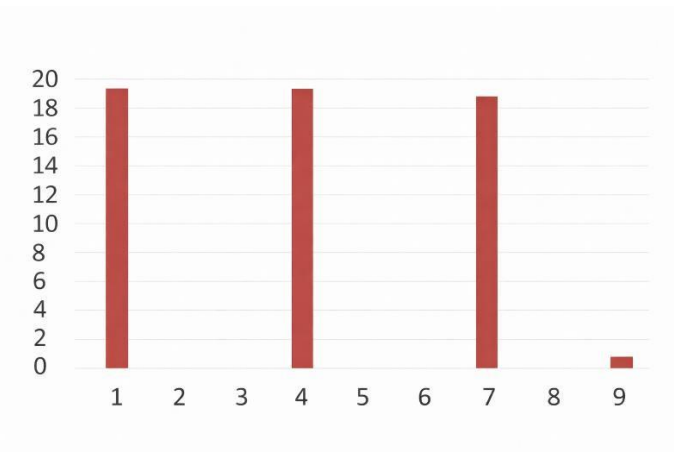


Figure 5. Searle Speech Act Class

It was opposite to the conventional campaign or political interaction that mostly implied commissivity to gain voters. The live TikTok campaign depicted a revolution in political communication strategy that in this case, speakers consistently assertive to avoid commitment and interaction to audiences. The third candidate only who emerged commissive to promise the audience in his response. It means that candidates use Live TikTok as their mean vision and mission sharing session, or as their main base to gain voters. It tends to show up, to introduce their existence and alerted target audiences preference, especially generation Z and millennial who tune in on the TikTok or other social media such as Youtube and Instagram or X.

## Discussion

The data proved that all of the candidates shared a similar pattern in public communication in Live TikTok. It also confirmed that locution was in line with assertiveness, since literal communication could not emerge from interaction, as the result, the speech act level they performed was also dominant assertive. The absence of perlocution also agreed with the absence of declaration and commission that pursued interaction between speakers. The data can be seen from table 3 below.

Table 3. Speech Act Pattern

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Code	locution	illocution	perlocution	assertive	commissive	declaration
1	18	0	0	18	0	0
2	13	4	1	18	0	0
3	16	2	0	17	1	0

This pattern indicates that the main purpose is to inform and describe rather than to respond and agree or act. From the result, we could define that locution was in line with assertive. This context referred to the literal meaning expressed by all candidates in Live TikTok. Haddawy (2023) emphasized that assertiveness in communication has a significant correlation with leadership and organization, that is why candidates put it more to engage with target audiences. The interaction didn't appear in Live TikTok, since the candidates were more focused on the campaign program than on building engagement. Candidate 1 had a unique result for consistently informing, not expecting to two ways communication between the candidates and the followers live in his live TikTok. The second candidates performed locution and illocution although they were minor expression, it happened to emphasize the fact asked by the follower in Live, but keep illocution was avoided in this Live TikTok's pattern. That changed the shape of conventional campaign to a digital one. This phenomenon was also supported by Romadon (2024), who found that Live TikTok communication between idols and fans keeps emerging understanding, and appeared emotion that engaged them through Question and response and virtual gift. This shift was a new phenomenon in communication strategies. Commissive most appeared in conventional political discourses, as stated by Mišić Ilić (2015), who said that commissive was a strategy in political speech for swaying public opinion and winning target audiences, however, in LiveTikTok, it was a null representation and was only used by candidate 3, once only.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, Live TikTok communication performed by presidential candidates 01,02,03 is more informative and neutral without any argument and declarative statement. The communication was mostly indirect by responding viewers' comments rather than direct live communication. The absence of perlocution reflected the absence of commissive and declarative tools that meant no interaction and engagement to all viewers as the target voters. It also indicated that viewers on

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Live TikTok was a media of recognition but not the target voters, although indeed at the end it could also target their preference by seeing the election result. Live TikTok is branding media to introduce the candidate to all social media users as the first stage of a political campaign. Although TikTok as media communication is expected to build engagement and rate high persuasion and perlocution, but this study answered another point of view. This study suggests that TikTok Live functions primarily as a medium for recognition and personal branding rather than as a platform for persuasive political communication. While it allows candidates to increase visibility and familiarity among audiences, its role in influencing voter preference appears indirect and limited. This study contributes to the development of knowledge in pragmatics and political discourse analysis by demonstrating how speech act realization shifts within digital live-streaming contexts, particularly in short-form, interactive media such as TikTok. From a public interest perspective, this research provides insights for political communicators, campaign strategists, and the general public to better understand how political messages are constructed, delivered, and interpreted in social media environments. It highlights the need for more strategic and meaningful engagement to enhance democratic communication and voter awareness in the

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