Analysis of Illocutionary Acts in Instagram Captions about Covid-19

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Abstract- The Covid-19 pandemic has altered communication patterns, particularly on social media, where Instagram has become the main platform for disseminating information, opinions, and emotions related to this global crisis. This study aims to explore the types of illocutionary speech acts in the Instagram captions of the WHO account related to Covid-19. This research is a descriptive qualitative study. The data in this research consists of captions and sentences containing illocutionary speech acts, while the data source is the Instagram captions from the WHO's Instagram account about Covid-19 during the pandemic. The method used in this research is the non-participant observation method. The researcher observed the captions on WHO's Instagram about Covid-19 during the pandemic by recording and noting them. Additionally, the researcher transcribed the caption data into written form. After collecting the data, the researcher performed reduction, classification, verification, and tabulation based on their types. Next, the researcher coded the data, interpreted it, and drew conclusions. The results of this study identify five types of illocutionary speech acts in WHO's Instagram captions about Covid-19, namely representative, directive, expressive, commissive, declarative, declarative & directive, and directive, representative, & declarative. The findings from this research could significantly influence communication strategies and policies by offering a deeper understanding of how illocutionary speech acts are utilized in health-related messaging. By analyzing the WHO's Instagram captions about Covid-19, this study reveals how specific language choices can effectively convey critical information, persuade audiences, and encourage public compliance with health guidelines. These insights can be applied to refine future health communication campaigns, ensuring that messages are not only clear and informative but also strategically crafted to achieve desired behavioral outcomes on a global scale.

Keywords: Communication Policy, Instagram Captions, Language Functions, WHO's Communication

I. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has transformed the way we communicate, especially on social media, where platforms like Instagram have become the primary means for sharing information, opinions, and emotions related to this global crisis. In a situation filled with uncertainty, the language used on social media plays a crucial role in shaping public understanding and response to the pandemic.

Instagram captions, as a form of communication on this platform, are often used to convey important messages about Covid-19, both by individuals and institutions. Illocutionary acts, which refer to the intentions embedded in a speech act, are a critical aspect of understanding how these messages are constructed and received by the audience. Captions intended to inform, persuade, or express feelings contain illocutionary acts that influence how the audience

understands and responds to the information. Given the importance of effective communication during a crisis, analyzing illocutionary acts in Instagram captions about Covid-19 is highly relevant. This research not only helps to understand the dynamics of communication on social media but also provides insights that can be used to improve public communication strategies in the future.

Studying Instagram captions in the context of Covid-19 is particularly significant due to the platform's unique combination of visual and textual communication, which makes it a powerful tool for disseminating health information. Instagram is a key platform for this analysis because it has a vast and diverse user base, enabling health organizations like WHO to reach a global audience. Unlike other social media platforms, Instagram's emphasis on visual content paired with concise captions allows for effective engagement and quick dissemination of critical information. This makes it an ideal medium for communicating important public health messages during a global pandemic, where timely and clear information can directly impact public behavior and health outcomes.

The WHO has made the Covid-19 virus a central focus, emphasizing its importance to global awareness. Covid-19, a highly contagious and dangerous virus that attacks the respiratory system, has symptoms such as cough, fever, flu, and shortness of breath, as noted by Detikhealth.com. To combat the spread of the virus, WHO frequently recommends mask usage and shares healthy living tips during the pandemic via various social media platforms, including Instagram. As a popular platform for sharing opinions, ideas, and moments, Instagram offers features like photo and video uploads, comments, and likes, enabling users to creatively engage with content (Bambang, 2012).

Focusing on Instagram captions, which are a form of written communication that conveys meaning in specific contexts, pragmatics is a key framework for analyzing the function of language. According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). In understanding language, context plays a crucial role, with time, place, and situation being essential components that clarify the speaker's (or writer's) intent and purpose, enabling the listener (or reader) to grasp the intended meaning. Paltridge (2016) asserts that speech acts are ways in which people perform actions through language, such as giving orders, offering advice, making requests, or engaging in other speech acts that convey meanings beyond their literal interpretation.

Austin (1962) categorizes speech acts into three types: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. A locutionary act involves a sentence that has a clear meaning and is easily understood. An illocutionary act, on the other hand, conveys a deeper or ulterior motive behind the literal sentence. Finally, a perlocutionary act refers to the reaction or response from others who understand the utterance in a discussion. This study focuses on illocutionary acts, analyzing them based on their types. According to Searle (1969), there are five types of illocutionary acts used as a reference in discourse analysis: directives, expressives, representatives, declaratives, and commissives. Building on this framework, the researcher seeks to identify and analyze the types of illocutionary acts present in Instagram captions, particularly those related to Covid-19 on the WHO Instagram account.

Although there has been no specific research addressing Illocutionary Acts in Instagram Captions about Covid-19, several previous studies share similarities and relevance on illocutionary acts and Istagram captions. Key studies on Instagram captions and illocutionary acts have explored how language is used to perform various functions, such as giving information, persuading, and commanding, within social media contexts. These studies highlight the strategic use of illocutionary acts in digital communication, particularly in influencing audience behavior and engagement. For example, research has shown that captions often serve as tools for reinforcing the intended message of an image, guiding the viewer's interpretation, and prompting specific responses. Additionally, studies have examined the effectiveness of different types of illocutionary acts, such as directives and assertives, in achieving communication goals on platforms like Instagram. These studies inform that by providing a foundation for understanding the role of language in Instagram captions, particularly in the context of health communication during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, a gap exists in the specific analysis of how the WHO employs illocutionary acts in its Instagram captions to influence public behavior and perceptions about Covid-19. My study aims to fill this gap by focusing on this unique intersection of health communication and social media, offering

insights that could enhance the effectiveness of future public health campaigns.

Research conducted by (Wahyuni et al., 2018); (Naibaho & Simanjuntak, n.d.); (Tindak et al., 2020); (Hidayat & Defianty, 2021); & (Sofyan, Badrudin, et al., 2022) identified various types of illocutionary acts, namely assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. The illocutionary functions identified in these studies include convivial, collaborative, and conflictive functions. Meanwhile, research by (Akhmad Sofyan et al., 2022) identified four types of conversational implicatures, including general conversational implicatures, scalar implicatures, particularized conversational implicatures, and conventional implicatures. Another study by (Dewi, 2021) identified illocutionary acts in the online shopping account @nyxcosmetics, which included directive and expressive acts. The directive illocutionary acts on this account included commands and requests, while the perlocutionary goal was to describe the act of offering something to others. (Fauziyah & Nurjannah, 2019) found that the role of illocutionary acts, particularly in giving directives such as commands, recommendations, and requests, as well as expressives such as complaints and congratulations, can be identified as Indirect Illocutionary Acts in Declarative Sentences. These studies provide a valuable foundation for further research on illocutionary acts in digital contexts, including in Instagram Captions about Covid-19, which could offer new perspectives and findings related to how communication occurs on social media platforms during the pandemic.

Research on Illocutionary Acts in various contexts, including social media, provides an important foundation for understanding digital communication, especially in situations like the Covid-19 pandemic. The study by (Batubara et al., 2020) identified four types of illocutionary acts used by Indonesian athletes in Instagram captions during the 2018 Asian Games, namely representative, expressive, directive, and commissive acts. In contrast, the research by (Abdullah et al., 2023) emphasized the significance of context in interpreting illocutionary acts in WHO's Instagram captions related to Covid-19. These findings contribute to linguistic understanding and offer benefits to writers, readers, and educators in interpreting the meanings behind digital messages. (Haryono et al., 2023) discovered the presence of three levels

of speech in communication, while (Muta'allim et al., 2020) identified various uses of language such as motivating, praising, commanding, scolding, accusing, and criticizing in communication. Lastly, the study conducted by (Irsyadi, 2023), focusing on the Covid-19 context, found that the main issues faced by respondents were online learning systems (54.8%) and the applications used as learning media (29%). Other challenges included limited internet access, difficulty understanding English language materials, lack of detailed material presentation, and a sense of demotivation. These studies demonstrate that illocutionary acts in digital communication are heavily influenced by context and the purpose of communication. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, such research can provide deeper insights into how messages are conveyed and received on social media platforms like Instagram.

Various relevant linguistic studies have been conducted by several researchers, exploring the forms, types, roles, and uses of language in social, educational, and pedagogical contexts. These studies contribute significantly to understanding language as a communication tool and as a means to enhance the quality of education and social relationships. Research by (Hairus Salikin et al., 2021); (Muta'allim et al., 2021); (Muta'allim et al., 2021); (Muta'alim, 2022); (Sofyan, Firmansyah, et al., 2022); (Muta'allim et al., 2022); (Yudistira et al., 2022); (Muta'allim et al., 2022); (Irsyadi et al., 2022); (Merizawati & Munawir, n.d.); (Karuru et al., 2023); (Suryanti et al., 2023); (Yudistira, R., 2023); & (Daulay et al., 2024) discusses various linguistic aspects in societal contexts, such as the role of language in education, the development of learning methods, and the influence of language on social interaction. Besides, research conducted by (Sutanto et al., 2022); (Ghasi Pathollah et al., 2022); (Muta'allim et al., 2023); (Muta'allim et al., 2023); (Mahardhani et al., 2023); (Julhadi et al., 2023); (Kamil et al., 2023); & (Dumiyati et al., 2023) highlights educational contexts related to linguistics, improvement, development, tolerance, and moderation. These studies emphasize the importance of language as a tool for promoting unity, peace, and togetherness. They demonstrate how appropriate language strategies can be used to support social harmony and inclusive education. Therefore, these studies not only enrich linguistic scholarship but also play a role in creating a more harmonious society through inclusive and

tolerant linguistic approaches.

Based on the existing research, there has been no specific study focusing on illocutionary acts in Instagram captions about Covid-19. This research offers a significant new perspective in the fields of linguistics and digital communication, especially within the context of a global pandemic. Firstly, this study explores illocutionary acts in a highly relevant situation— during the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic has impacted various aspects of life, including communication on social media platforms such as Instagram. By analyzing illocutionary acts in Instagram captions during this global health crisis, the study provides new insights into how messages are conveyed, feelings are expressed, and information is shared during difficult times. Secondly, this research highlights Instagram as a popular yet underexplored social media platform in the context of illocutionary acts. The unique characteristics of Instagram, such as the use of images and brief text, may influence how illocutionary acts are employed. Focusing on this platform contributes valuable insights into understanding how Instagram's features affect digital communication.

Besides, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought significant emotional and psychological impacts. This study reveals how illocutionary acts in Instagram captions are used to express concerns, solidarity, or hope amidst a high-pressure situation. Understanding these emotional and psychological dimensions in digital communication during the pandemic is crucial. The research also has the potential to explore how the pandemic has affected language and communication. With the emergence of new terms and changes in language use, this study contributes importantly to understanding the evolution of language during a global crisis. Lastly, if the study includes an analysis of captions from influencers or public figures, it would provide insights into how persuasive messages are conveyed by influential individuals during the pandemic. These findings are relevant for understanding the role of social media in shaping public opinion and behavior during a health crisis. Therefore, this research not only offers new contributions to linguistic studies but also enriches the understanding of digital communication in the pandemic era.

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates the research question, what types of illocutionary acts are used in WHO's Instagram captions about Covid-19?. To address this question, it is essential to apply pragmatic theory. According to Leech (1983), pragmatics is the study of meaning in speech, emphasizing that the meaning of language cannot be separated from its context. Language and context are intertwined in realizing effective communication, with situational and cultural contexts serving as key sources of meaning. Through this relationship, pragmatics emerges as a distinct field that examines various aspects, such as deixis, implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and other elements of discourse structure. Focusing on speech acts, Yule (1996) notes that individuals express themselves through actions or utterances, where the utterance not only conveys sentence structures but also performs actions, known as speech acts. These speech acts, which involve action and response in communication, are categorized into three types: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts.

Paltridge (2006) states that a locutionary act represents the basic meaning of a word or sentence, where sentences are interpreted directly. According to Austin (1962), the interpretation of a locutionary act is concerned with its literal meaning. In other words, a locutionary act involves understanding the meaning of language exactly as it is spoken or written. For example, when someone says, "Put on your mask!" the speaker is instructing a person who is not wearing a mask to do so. The phrase "Put on your mask!" functions as a locutionary act, as it can be understood by a listener who shares a common understanding of the words "put," "on," "your," and "mask."

An illocutionary act represents the speaker's or writer's intention conveyed through words, whether spoken or written. Austin (1962) emphasizes this concept in his book, how to do things with words, explaining that an illocutionary act can be summarized by the idea of "by saying something, we are doing something." For instance, when a priest declares a man and woman as husband and wife in front of an audience, the priest is not just making a statement but is performing the act of uniting them in marriage. This declaration, understood by all present, serves as a symbol of the couple's union, which is essentially a promise—a key component of an illocutionary act. Similarly, Searle (1969) suggested that an illocutionary act focuses on the impact that words have in performing an action. For example, there is a distinct difference between saying "I swear" and

"I hereby swear." The latter phrase, "I hereby swear," typically carries more weight, leading the listener to trust and feel reassured by the speaker's promise.

Paltridge (2006) defines a perlocutionary act as the impact that a person's expression has on others, manifesting as changes in thoughts or actions. Similarly, Austin (1962) describes a perlocutionary act as the reaction elicited by a speech act. In essence, a perlocutionary act refers to the response, in terms of thoughts or actions, that a speaker's utterance generates in others. Through these three types of speech acts—locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary—people express various intentions, such as apologizing, making promises, or naming something. Searle (1969) further explains that speaking involves three distinct acts: the utterance act (the simple string of words), the propositional act (the context and meaning of the utterance), and the illocutionary act (the speaker's intended function of the utterance). Searle identifies five types of illocutionary acts: representatives, directives, expressives, declaratives, and commissives, each serving a specific purpose in communication.

A representative is a type of illocutionary act where the speaker or writer conveys a belief about a fact related to the topic being discussed or written about. In this type, the language used reflects the speaker's belief in what they are saying or writing, such as making assumptions, claims, descriptions, hypotheses, or predictions. For example, if someone observes a black cloud in the sky and says, "It will rain soon," the speaker is assuming that the cloud signifies impending rain, even if it doesn't actually occur. This statement falls into the category of 'assuming' based on the speaker's belief. When using a representative, the speaker aligns their words with their perception of the world. On the other hand, a directive is a speech act designed to influence the listener's actions. Yule (1996) explains that directives involve a speaker using language to prompt others to perform specific actions, through words such as ordering, suggesting, prohibiting, inviting, or asking. For example, the sentence "Could you open the window?" is a request from the speaker for the listener to open the window. This sentence can be categorized as an 'asking' act where the speaker aims to get the listener to act according to their request. In using a directive, the speaker strives to make the world conform to their words by influencing the hearer.

Expressives are a type of speech act used to convey the speaker's or writer's emotions. According to Yule (1996), expressives reflect the feelings of the speaker or writer and include acts such as congratulating, apologizing, criticizing, praising, and regretting. For instance, the sentence "Sorry, I kept you waiting" expresses the speaker's regret about having made the listener wait. When using an expressive, the speaker aims to align their words with their emotional state. Commissives, as defined by Leech (1983), are a type of illocutionary act where the speaker commits to performing a future action. This type involves speech acts that bind the speaker to a commitment, such as promising, offering, refusing, swearing, or threatening. For example, when someone says, "I will be there tomorrow," the speaker is making a promise to themselves and others. In using a commissive, the speaker commits to making their words align with future actions. The final type is the declarative act. According to Yule (1996), a declarative is an illocutionary act that functions to effect changes in the world through authoritative statements. This type involves the speaker using their authority to alter the state of affairs by making declarations, determinations, decisions, or announcements. For example, when an official declares a district as independent, this act falls into the 'declaring' category, and the declaration is recognized by the wider community as creating a new independent territory. Based on Searle's classifications of illocutionary acts, the following table summarizes these types:

Table 1.1: Types of Illocutionary Acts

The types of illocutionary act	Direction of fit	S : speaker / X : situation
Representative	Make words fit the world	S believes x
Directive	Make the world fit words	S wants x
Expressive	Make words fit the world	S feels x
Commissive	Make the world fit words	S intends x
Declarative	Words change the world	S causes x

The five general functions of speech act from Searle (1969) cited in Batubara (2019).

Covid-19 is a disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which belongs to the acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus family. This disease affects the respiratory system, presenting symptoms that range from mild, such as a common flu, to severe conditions like pneumonia. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Covid-19 can cause respiratory infections of varying severity, similar to MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV. Alodokter.com notes that transmission occurs through several methods: inhaling droplets released when a person with Covid-19 sneezes or coughs; touching the mouth, nose, or eyes without washing hands after coming into contact with surfaces contaminated by droplets; and being in close contact (within 2 meters) with an infected person without wearing a mask.

Founded in 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) is tasked with preventing and eradicating epidemics and improving nutritional, sanitary, hygienic, and environmental conditions worldwide. According to the WHO's official website, the organization comprises over 8,000 leading health professionals, including doctors, epidemiologists, scientists, and managers, who work together to provide essential health services. These services include responding to emergencies, promoting well-being, offering disease prevention tips, and expanding access to healthcare. The WHO uses its social media platforms to post about various health topics, such as updating health systems in different countries, sharing health knowledge, and commemorating significant health-related events. Notably, the WHO's Instagram account, which has posted around 2,700 health-related updates, was established in June 2011 by an admin based in Switzerland.

According to the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, a caption is a brief text placed under a picture in books, magazines, or newspapers that describes the image or explains what the people in it are doing or saying. Vocabulary.com defines a caption as a short description accompanying an illustration. Before the advent of social media, captions were used in newspapers and magazines to explain photos, pictures, or graphics. Today, captions continue to serve this purpose on social media and online articles, providing explanations or additional information about images or videos. Captions have a social function, offering essential information about an object, and thus require engaging and informative writing. Kompas.com notes that effective captions typically consist of three parts: an opening, content, and a closing, using clear and accessible vocabulary.

In conclusion, this research uniquely explores the intersection of linguistic theory and digital health communication by analyzing how the WHO utilizes illocutionary acts in Instagram captions during the Covid-19 pandemic. Unlike previous studies that have broadly examined social media communication, this study specifically focuses on the strategic use of language in a global health crisis. By uncovering the ways in which illocutionary acts shape public perception and behavior, this research not only contributes to the field of linguistics but also offers practical implications for enhancing the effectiveness of health communication strategies on social media platforms.

II. METHODS

To analyze Instagram captions related to Covid-19, this study employs qualitative methods. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research explores and understands the meanings individuals or groups derive from social issues. Qualitative research is broadly applicable to various topics, including personal experiences, historical events, behavior, concepts, social problems, and more. For this study, a descriptive qualitative method was chosen. The research focuses on analyzing Instagram captions from the WHO account that discuss Covid-19. The researcher searched for COVID-19 data on WHO's Instagram, then filtered and categorized this data according to

illocutionary act types. The data consists of 43 captions, but only 8 of these were categorized according to the types of illocutionary acts, as defined by Searle (1969). To analyze the data, the researcher used several theoretical sources related to illocutionary acts, including books, articles, and online journals. The data collection involved capturing and selecting captions based on the types of illocutionary acts, utilizing a note-taking technique to ensure accurate categorization and analysis.

To comprehensively address the research question, the study followed a structured approach to analyzing Instagram captions related to Covid-19 from the WHO. The process began with collecting captions from the WHO's Instagram account that were relevant to Covid-19 issues. These captions were then meticulously categorized into the five types of illocutionary acts as defined by Searle (1969). Once the data was categorized, it was described in detail to provide a foundation for further analysis. This description served as the material for the subsequent analytical stages. The analysis was conducted following the framework established by Miles and Huberman (1994), which involves four key steps:

1. Data Reduction: The initial task involved selecting and transferring relevant captions into written notes. This stage required the researcher to filter and organize the captions according to the types of illocutionary acts, drawing on Searle's (1969) classifications and Leech's (1983) theoretical framework.
2. Data Display: The next step was to organize and present the observed data. The captions were illustrated and analyzed in written form, with a focus on how they aligned with the core theories of illocutionary acts and other supporting theoretical perspectives.
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Finally, conclusions were drawn from the analyzed data. This involved synthesizing the findings into a coherent summary that addressed the research question. The researcher compiled these conclusions as the final step, ensuring that the analysis was thorough and effectively communicated the results. Through these steps, the study provided a detailed examination of how the WHO's Instagram captions convey different types of illocutionary acts

related to Covid-19.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION
RESULT

The analysis of Instagram captions from WHO concerning Covid-19 provided insightful revelations about the different types of illocutionary acts utilized in their communication strategy. The captions were meticulously categorized into five distinct types of illocutionary acts based on Searle's (1969) framework; representative, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative. Each type served a specific purpose in conveying messages related to the pandemic. Representative Acts were the most prevalent among the captions. These acts were used to convey factual information and updates about Covid-19. The WHO frequently used representative acts to describe the symptoms of the virus, the importance of vaccination, and the current state of the pandemic. For instance, captions such as, "Covid-19 primarily spreads through respiratory droplets," provided clear and factual information, reflecting the WHO's role in delivering accurate and reliable updates.

Directive Acts were also a significant component of the captions. These acts were employed to guide and instruct the public on appropriate responses to the pandemic. Common directives included recommendations on wearing masks, maintaining social distance, and practicing good hygiene. An example of a directive act is the caption, "Please wear a mask in public spaces to protect yourself and others," which urged individuals to take specific actions to safeguard their health and that of others. Expressive Acts appeared less frequently but were crucial in conveying the WHO's emotional stance and support. These captions often expressed empathy, encouragement, and appreciation for the efforts of healthcare workers and the general public. For example, a caption like, "We appreciate the hard work of frontline workers around the world," conveyed gratitude and support, highlighting the WHO's acknowledgment of the challenges faced by those fighting the pandemic.

Commissive Acts were noted in some captions, reflecting the WHO's commitments and promises regarding their role in managing the pandemic. These acts included assurances to provide continuous updates and support. A caption such as, "We will continue to provide the latest updates and guidelines on Covid-19,"

exemplifies a commissive act, demonstrating the WHO's dedication to maintaining clear and ongoing communication. Declarative Acts were used to announce significant updates or changes related to the pandemic. These captions served to formally recognize and communicate important developments. For instance, the caption, "The World Health Organization has declared Covid-19 a global pandemic," was a declarative act that officially marked the pandemic's status, reinforcing the gravity of the situation to the public. Therefore, the WHO's use of illocutionary acts on Instagram reflects a well-rounded approach to public health communication. The variety of acts employed—representative, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative—demonstrates the WHO's strategic effort to inform, guide, support, and formally announce key information about Covid-19.

This multifaceted communication strategy underscores the effectiveness of using different types of illocutionary acts to address and manage public health concerns during a global crisis. The results of this study identify five types of illocutionary speech acts in WHO's Instagram captions about Covid-19, namely Representative, Directive, Expressive, Commissive, and Declarative, Declarative & Directive, and Directive, Representative, & Declarative. To provide a clearer understanding of the distribution and prevalence of illocutionary acts in the captions, the study includes quantitative data on their frequency. Specifically, below is the table about the caption, types, and the purpose of illocutionary act.

Table 1.2: Captions, Types, and Purpose of Illocutionary Act

Data Code	Captions	Type of Illocutionary Act	Purpose	Percentage
(RA01)		Representative	Claim	7%
(DA01)		Directive	Suggestion	5%
(EA01)		Expressive	Criticizes	1%

(CA01)		Commissive	Offers	3%
(DA01)		Declarative	Information	1%
(DDA01)		Declarative & Directive	Determines	1%
(DRDA01)		Directive, Representative, & Declarative	Order	1%

It is the detailed breakdown highlights how frequently each type of illocutionary act appears in the Instagram captions, providing insight into the predominant strategies used in WHO's communication about COVID-19.

DISCUSSION

Searle's (1969) type of illocutionary act is more directed and has an accurate indicators compared to other theories. In this study, surely, focused on the Instagram caption sentences from the World Health Organization account related to the Covid-19 issue from July 2021 to December 2021. In collecting data, the researcher found 53 data and categorized each caption based on the type of illocutionary act from Searle (1969) as explained below. In discussing the findings, it is crucial to explicitly relate them to Searle's (1969) theory of illocutionary acts. According to Searle, illocutionary acts are categorized into five types: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations, each serving a distinct function in communication.

The prevalence of assertive acts in the WHO's Instagram captions supports Searle's theory by demonstrating how statements of fact and information are used to provide clear and direct updates about the pandemic. These assertives align with Searle's notion that assertive acts aim to convey information about the world, thus reinforcing the accuracy and credibility of health messages. The use of directive acts, though less frequent, highlights their role in influencing public behavior. This finding supports Searle's framework, as directives are intended to prompt the audience to act in certain ways, such as following health guidelines. The strategic use of directives in health communication during a crisis aligns with Searle's theory on how directives are employed to elicit specific responses from the audience. Commissive acts reflected the WHO's commitments and promises, illustrating how such acts are used to establish trust and responsibility. This supports Searle's framework

by showing how commissives function to convey the speaker's commitment to future actions, which is crucial in building public confidence in health organizations during a pandemic.

Although less frequent, expressive acts were significant in conveying emotional support and solidarity. This finding challenges the expectation of their frequency but aligns with Searle's theory by highlighting how expressives are used to communicate emotional states and attitudes, which are essential in fostering a sense of community and reassurance during a health crisis. Declarative acts were employed to announce significant updates or changes, supporting Searle's view that declarations serve to alter the state of affairs by making formal announcements. This usage underscores the role of declarations in communicating critical updates and decisions, reflecting their importance in crisis communication. Therefore, the findings validate Searle's framework by demonstrating how different types of illocutionary acts are strategically utilized in health communication. This explicit integration of Searle's theory enhances our understanding of how effective communication is structured during a crisis like Covid-19 and provides insights into the practical application of linguistic theory in real-world health communication.

Representative Act (RA)

Representative is a type of illocutionary act that involves a truth or fact that is believed by the speaker/writer. Through this type, a speaker/writer expressed a statement that is assuming, claiming, describing, hypothesizing, and predicting a truth to the listener/reader. Searle (1969) emphasized that this type is categorized as a belief, means the utterance or writing is adapted to the current situation so it can increased the trust of the listener/reader to the speaker/writer. A data that included in this type is when Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove (Covid-19 Technical Lead) explained 5 factors that encourage Covid-19 to transmit faster being a data that include in representative type. The WHO keeps track of the opportunity for Covid-19 cases that are still increasing, the health system in several hospitals that treat Covid-19 patients is still growing, and the death rate due to Covid-19 in several countries is still in a high scale. The government's various efforts to provide adequate health facilities to deal with this pandemic do not guarantee that the public can use these facilities completely due to several factors,

one of which is prioritizing patients with a history of severe illness. Thus, there are many pros and cons that have happened to the community regarding this Covid-19 case. Therefore, the WHO made the following caption.

Data: RA01

This data is being the representative type because it refers to a **claim** by mentioning 5 points which are set as factors to increase the Covid-19 virus briefly. In the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary definition, the claim statement is to convey an utterance or writing based on facts and truth without considering the beliefs of others in the sentence. The statement "5 factors that are driving #COVID-19 transmission at the moment   " has indicated that WHO is informing the facts, followed by these 5 factor points as reinforcement and explanation of the caption. This fact has undoubtedly been traced by the WHO professionally as a universal health organization, so it can be concluded that the WHO 'believed' the pandemic situation and then shared the data through the caption above. In other words, in this position, the WHO created the caption based on the surrounding world's conditions, which leads to the caption in a representative type (make the words fit the world).

Directive Act (DA)

The directive type categorized an utterance/writing which means 'command' to the interlocutor such as ordering, suggesting, prohibiting, inviting, asking thus the listener/reader responds by doing something. Searle (1969) mentioned that the type of directive is about interpreting a request of the speaker/writer while conveying a statement. One example of this type has been found in one of the WHO captions. The WHO gives several tips for managing ventilation properly and is highly

recommended to reduce the chance of exposure to the Covid-19 virus. The WHO mentioned that ventilation settings are essential in air exchange to maintain the air quality in a room.

Data: DA01

(December 22th, 2021)

The data above is categorized into a directive type because it refers to a **suggestion** based on Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary definition, which is sentence that mentioning an idea, possible plan, or action for other people to consider in the form of information. Through this statement, several tips for managing ventilation properly are highly recommended to reduce the possibility of being exposed to the Covid-19 virus, which is indicated by several verbs such as "open", "create", and "place" which drive the reader to do an activity. Through this caption, the WHO 'wanted' to change the situation, where a complicated situation due to the pandemic into a case that is easy to handle by provoking readers on how to use proper and good ventilation. In addition, this caption also has the words' strength to change a situation that refers to directive types (make the world fit the word).

Expressive Act (EA)

Expressive is a type of speech act that refers to the feelings of the speaker/writer through speech/writing. This type consists of the utterance/writing that shows good or bad expressions from the speaker/writer such as praising, apologizing, regretting, congratulating or even criticizing. Searle (1969) stated that speech or writing included in this category is the feeling of the speaker/writer trying to explain the situation that felt by others. One example of this category is the WHO caption that criticizes the

government's assumptions about vaccines an absolute right for definite protection from the virus, which leads the public to the wrong statement that they can return to normal activities due to the vaccine's safety. With this situation, the WHO again explained that the vaccine content could protect the body's immunity from viruses by around 70-90%, and nothing will ever be able to protect up to 100% as the caption below:

Data: EA01

(July 10th, 2021)

This caption is included in the characteristics of the expressive type because it appears in the statement, "We'd ask governments to be careful at this moment, not to lose the gains that we've made", which the WHO disagrees with the governments, which has set a normal status when vaccination is not optimal, and there are still many patients due to this pandemic. When this condition occurred, the WHO 'feel' this situation was not only based on scope data but also questioned the government's role in making decisions that had fatal consequences. When 'feeling' this situation, the WHO reiterates to readers to keep themselves from transmitting Covid-19 even after vaccinating through the caption above. In other words, this caption is included in the expressive category because it adapts specific sentences to the current state of the world (make the words fit the world).

Commissive Act (CA)

This illocutionary act is included in two main theories from Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). According to Searle (1969), this type focuses on someone's utterance/writing concerning an act that will be shown in the future such as promising, offering, refusing, swearing, or threatening in communication.One of the

WHO captions has fallen into the commissive type is the WHO offers information about the link between the Covid-19 virus and polio cases. The WHO Polio Eradication Coordinator for External Relations, Sona Bari, said the Covid-19 pandemic impacted polio immunization. This case is deliberately mentioned so that readers remain vigilant about the dangers of this virus even though everyone is currently struggling to stop the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Data: CA01

(December 06th, 2021)

According to the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, the offering statement is that someone asks someone else what to do or what is being wanted. Thus when they get a response, that person will provide what people want or do what is said. Three questions related to polio and Covid-19 are intended to offer information that readers should explore. The question does not expect an answer from the reader, nor does it measure the reader's knowledge about the relationship between Covid-19 and Polio cases. In other words, the WHO 'intends' to share information so that the situation of Polio cases remains in a state of alert even during a pandemic. In addition, this caption also means 'make the world fit the words', which WHO aims to make readers aware of the polio virus dangers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Declarative Act (DA)

Declarative is a type of illocutionary act that focuses on someone's utterance/writing regarding an authority in making a decision or agreement such as declaring, announcing, deciding, or even determining new ideas for the surrounding environment. Through this classification, one of the data was fall in to this type, which is the WHO repeatedly enforces vaccination justice for everyone worldwide. Because of the many problems during the pandemic, fraudulent distribution of vaccines is the most critical problem and impacts many people. Due to this problem, the WHO found that poverty is bad for stabilizing health, then build the caption as below.
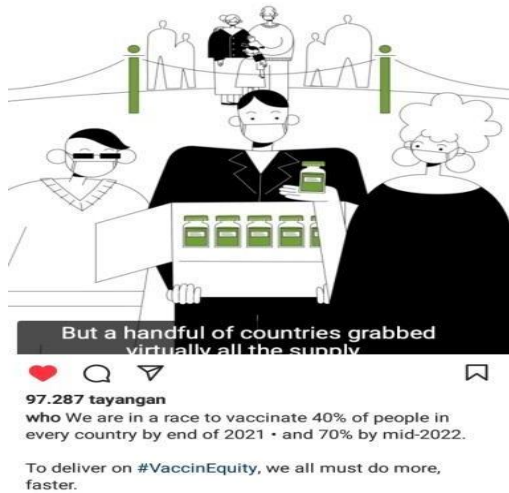
Data: DA01

(December 12th, 2021)

The declaration statement refers to information conveyed unequivocally, publicly, and officially (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary). This can be seen in the sentence "It's UHCDDay!" as one of the official pieces of information commemorating Universal Health Coverage day. In addition, the statement "WHO calls on governments, donors and leaders to prioritize #HealthEquity" also refers to the WHO declaration calling attention to all the essential roles of formally prioritizing the health system, which WHO has this authority as the universal organization that oversees the world health system. Thus, this caption describes the author's status that can 'cause' new situations. In more detail, this caption has influenced the readers' mindset about the health system, so it is included in the category of the declarative type (words change the world).

Declarative & Directive Act (DDA)

One example of the WHO caption that refers to two types is the WHO statement about vaccination targets for 2021-2022. Besides declaring the target, the WHO also asks readers to vaccinate as soon as possible at the same time. Because the vaccine has been found for about a year since the Covid-19 virus emerged and spread in several countries, however, vaccine doses are limited and require more time to reproduce. With this situation, the WHO has

planned to vaccinate evenly worldwide as soon as possible. Through the Covax program, the WHO distributes vaccines to all people, young and old, poor and rich, even near or far distances, who certainly need it. This can be seen in the WHO caption as follows.

Data: DDA01

(August 08th, 2021)

The caption above is identified as having two types of illocutionary acts according to Searle's (1969) theory. The first type is the declarative type, in which the WHO **determines** the target of the vaccination program. Then the statement "We are in a race to vaccinate 40% of people in every country by end of 2021 and 70% by mid-2022" also falls into this type. As a world health organization, the WHO has the capability to define future vaccinations. Through these provisions, readers can feel the movements and activities of the WHO in improving the vaccination system through the COVAX program. This caption is also included in the directive category because the WHO orders the reader to vaccinate as soon as possible through the COVAX program in the second sentence, "To deliver on #VaccinEquity, we all must do more, faster". Through this statement, readers are asked to vaccinate so that vaccination targets in every country are fulfilled and can prevent an increase in death due to the pandemic. In short, through this information, the WHO 'want' the situation; the pandemic situation is getting better because many people have been vaccinated to reduce the chance of contracting the Covid-19 virus and form Herd Immunity simultaneously. Through Searle's theory (1969), it can be explained that this caption can **cause** and **want** certain situations; **causing** readers to vaccinate through the COVAX program and **wanting** readers to vaccinate as soon as possible. Even though the

declarative type dominates, the directive type also emphasizes meaning to the reader with the current pandemic situation.

Directive, Representative & Declarative Act (DRDA)

Aside from finding two types in a caption, this study also found three types in a caption from the WHO Instagram account. These three types were identified based on the WHO statement regarding Omicron cases which have spread to 77 countries. Reportedly, Omicron is spreading through low rate than the previous variant. The WHO is concerned about people taking omicron as a small thing. Even if omicron does cause a less severe illness, the large number of cases could once again overwhelm a health system that is not prepared as it was when the Covid-19 virus first came. Therefore, to prevent the spread of Omicron with the recent successful measures, the WHO emphasizes that this variant is not only about vaccines, using masks, social distancing, ventilation, or hand hygiene, but making all efforts consistently.

Data: (DRDA01)

(December 15th, 2021)

The caption above has three illocutionary acts based on Searle's (1969) theory component; directive, representative, and declarative. First, the WHO caption is included in the directive type through the last sentence, "Do it all. Do it consistently. Do it well", which leads to **order** to the reader. In that position, the caption above illustrates that WHO 'wants' the situation to improve, leading to directive characteristics. Apart from referring to an order, the caption above also demands the reader's involvement in implementing the health protocol to include the characteristics of a directive type (make the world fit the word). Second, this caption is also

included in the representative category through the statement "#Omicron is spreading at a rate we have not seen with any previous variant." which leads to a **description** statement. This is also supported by the use of to be is in the sentence, which identifies an explanation of the Omicron variant. In addition, by making this statement, the WHO has 'believed' the pandemic situation is increasing significantly with the emergence of this new variant. The reason is that this Omicron variant has been reported to have spread in approximately 77 countries with a higher rate of a spread than the previous variant. In short, this WHO caption is made based on social conditions in general through reliable research that characterizes representative types (make the words fit the world).

And the third is the declarative type. In addition to the two types above, declarative types also meet the standards to be categorized in this caption. This can be seen in the sentence "I need to be very clear: vaccines alone will not get any country out of this crisis." which refers to the **declaration** statement. In other words, the WHO 'causes' a situation that triggers readers to be more vigilant even though they have been vaccinated, which is a virus with a faster spreading rate, so WHO dictates this so that readers remain vigilant and carry out health protocols to the fullest. In this position, the caption above has an important role to change the surrounding situation for the better, which leads to the characteristics of the declarative type (words change the world). To conclude, this caption meets the standards to be divided into three types; directive, representative, and declarative, which reflect **orders**, **descriptions**, and **declarations** according to their respective uses. With these types, this caption becomes a complete and clear statement and does not create a vague meaning. These types play a role in clarifying WHO objectives to the reader, **ordering** readers to continue to follow health protocols even after vaccination, **describing** the Omicron variant, which has the fastest transmission rate compared to the previous variant, and **declaring** that vaccination does not protect 100% from viruses, especially this Omicron variant.

In this discussion, it is important to delve deeper into why certain types of illocutionary acts were more prevalent than others. For instance, exploring why WHO favored representative and directive acts over expressive ones can provide insights into their communication goals during the pandemic. Representative acts, which were the most frequent, serve to convey factual information and updates about the Covid-19 situation. WHO might have favored these acts due to the urgent need to provide accurate and current information to the public. During the pandemic, clear and reliable information was crucial for guiding public action and reducing confusion. The predominance of representative acts indicates that WHO prioritized delivering valid data and recommendations, facilitating better understanding and appropriate responses from the public. Directive acts were also notably prevalent, reflecting WHO's focus on influencing public behavior. Directives were used to encourage adherence to health guidelines, such as social distancing, mask-wearing, and vaccination.

In a global health crisis, preventive actions and compliance with health guidelines are critical for controlling the spread of the virus. The frequent use of directives suggests that WHO aimed to guide and motivate the public to follow recommended measures. Conversely, expressive acts, which convey emotional support and solidarity, appeared less frequently. This may reflect WHO's greater emphasis on delivering factual information and practical instructions rather than focusing on emotional aspects. While emotional support is important, especially in a crisis, WHO's primary focus seems to be on aspects that directly affect public behavior and the effectiveness of health responses. This analysis indicates that WHO's communication priorities during the pandemic centered on providing clear information and actionable instructions to ensure compliance and minimize risks. By prioritizing representative and directive acts, WHO directed their efforts towards conveying critical information and guiding public adherence to health measures. The less frequent use of expressive acts suggests that, although important, emotional support was considered secondary to the urgent need to inform and direct the public.

This research makes a significant contribution to the field of linguistics, particularly in the analysis of illocutionary acts on social media. By exploring illocutionary acts in Instagram captions related to Covid-19, the study not only enriches the theory of speech acts but also expands the understanding of how communication on social media influences the dissemination of information and the formation

of public attitudes. In the context of a pandemic, where effective communication is crucial, this research is relevant as it demonstrates how language can be used to influence and direct public behavior. The primary contribution of this study lies in the development of speech act theory within the digital environment. Through a detailed analysis of illocutionary acts in Instagram captions, the research introduces a new dimension to understanding the function of language on digital platforms.

Additionally, this research provides valuable insights for practitioners, such as social media managers for government or health organizations, in crafting more effective messages for public campaigns. By understanding which types of illocutionary acts are most impactful, social media messages can be optimized to enhance awareness and drive behavioral change. The implications of this research are extensive. In the context of education, the findings can enrich teaching materials on pragmatics and discourse analysis, particularly regarding the use of language on social media. The research also offers valuable guidance for policymakers in designing more effective public communication strategies during health crises. With a better understanding of how different illocutionary acts influence public perception and response, communication policies can be tailored to be more responsive to public needs. Therefore, this study not only provides theoretical contributions but also offers practical guidance for those involved in public communication and language education, while paving the way for further in-depth research in this field.

IV. CONCLUSION

The primary objectives of this study were to analyze how the WHO utilizes illocutionary acts in its Instagram captions related to Covid-19, and to assess how these acts influence public perceptions and behaviors. Specifically, the study aimed to identify the types of illocutionary acts used, their frequency, and their strategic role in health communication during the pandemic. With these objectives in mind, the findings reveal that WHO's communication strategy prominently features representative and directive acts. This aligns with the goal of delivering clear, actionable information and guiding public compliance with health guidelines. The prevalence of representative acts underscores the emphasis on providing accurate updates and

factual information, while the frequent use of directive acts highlights the focus on influencing public behavior. Conversely, the less frequent use of expressive acts suggests that emotional support, although important, was secondary to the primary objectives of informing and directing the public during the crisis.

In conclusion, while this study provides valuable insights into the use of illocutionary acts in WHO's Instagram captions during the Covid-19 pandemic, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study's focus on Instagram captions from a single source (WHO) may limit the generalizability of the findings to other health organizations or social media platforms. Additionally, the analysis is constrained by the selected time frame and thematic focus, which may not capture the full range of communication strategies employed throughout the pandemic. Future research could address these limitations by expanding the scope to include captions from various health organizations and across different social media platforms. This would offer a more comprehensive view of health communication strategies. Furthermore, investigating additional time frames and thematic areas could provide a deeper understanding of how communication strategies evolved in response to different phases of the pandemic. By addressing these gaps, future studies can build on the current research to offer broader and more nuanced insights into effective health communication in crisis contexts.

In summary, this study not only enhances our understanding of the strategic use of illocutionary acts in health communication but also highlights the critical role of social media in shaping public responses during crises. By revealing how WHO's Instagram captions were crafted to inform, direct, and guide public behavior, the research underscores the importance of effective communication strategies in managing global health challenges. The findings emphasize the need for health organizations to harness social media's potential to deliver clear and actionable messages, particularly in times of crisis. This study contributes to the broader field of public health communication by demonstrating how nuanced linguistic strategies can influence public understanding and compliance, thereby providing valuable insights for both practitioners and researchers aiming to optimize digital communication in health contexts.

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