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Assertive, Expressive, and Directive Speech Acts in a Convert's Narrative on the Yuk Ngaji Youtube Podcast

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Abstract

This study examines assertive, expressive, and directive speech acts in the Yuk Ngaji podcast episode "Steven Wongso: Kasih Starter Kit Sebagai Mualaf dong Tadz," published on YouTube on March 28, 2025. It aims to identify the forms of illocutionary speech acts used by the speakers and analyze their pragmatic functions in fostering religious understanding, strengthening faith, and supporting a convert's religious identity formation. Using a descriptive qualitative method and a pragmatic approach based on Searle's speech act theory, data were collected through observation, recording, and note-taking of the podcast dialogue. The analysis identified 65 utterances, comprising 33 assertive, 20 expressive, and 12 directive utterances. Assertive acts function to convey conceptual information, explain stages and correct misconceptions, express personal beliefs, and state generalizations about social phenomena. Expressive acts convey comfort, existential anxiety, self-reflection, regret, appreciation, and admiration. Directive acts function to encourage openness toward Islam, redirect learning priorities, discourage delaying conversion, advise the development of a supportive social environment, and provide practical worship instructions. The findings indicate that the three speech act types work synergistically: assertives build understanding, expressives establish emotional connection, and directives guide action. Together, they enable Islamic messages to be understood intellectually, experienced emotionally, and translated into practice.

INTRODUCTION

Social media use in Indonesia continues to grow rapidly. In 2026, the number of social media user identities in the country reached approximately 180 million, with users spending an average of 21 hours and 50 minutes per week on social media (WeAreSocial, 2025). Among various social media platforms, YouTube ranked as the fourth most frequently accessed platform. Another report indicates that YouTube was also the most frequently watched video platform among Indonesian internet users, accounting for 49.3% of total viewership (Rendanianti, 2026; Zubaidi, 2024; Ruckwongpatr et al., 2025; Rahmat & Djuanda Nawawi, 2024). This high level of engagement can be attributed to YouTube's transformation from a mere video-

sharing platform into a digital communication space that facilitates various forms of information dissemination, education, and discussion. One of the content formats that has experienced significant growth on the platform is the podcast.

A podcast, derived from the terms playable on demand and broadcast, refers to a recorded discussion on a particular topic that can be accessed anytime and listened to repeatedly (Arismayanti et al., 2022: 67; Perayani & Rasna, 2022; Syafrina, 2022). This flexibility makes podcasts an effective medium for conveying values, experiences, and knowledge, including religious teachings, and has contributed to their growing popularity as a medium for Islamic da'wah (Aliwan et al., 2025; Fabriar et al., 2022; Pratama & Agustiningsih, 2023). Through a conversational and personal format, podcasts enable more natural, reflective, and persuasive verbal interactions, allowing religious messages to be communicated in a more contextual manner and more readily accepted by a wider audience.

In the context of Islamic da'wah, podcasts are frequently utilized to discuss spiritual experiences, the process of religious transformation (hijrah), and the dynamics of individual faith, including the experience of becoming a Muslim convert (mualaf). The convert experience is a phenomenon rich in emotional, psychological, and religious dimensions (Ahsanti, 2025; Choiry et al., 2025), making the manner of its delivery highly dependent on the linguistic strategies employed by the speakers. This is because language does not merely function as a vehicle for transmitting information, but also as a means of building understanding, providing reinforcement, and shaping the attitudes and beliefs of the audience (Altun, 2023; Mishra & Abraham, 2026; Setianti et al., 2025). Pragmatic inquiry, particularly speech act theory, provides a theoretically relevant framework for understanding how language is used in the context of religious communication (Usmani & Almashham, 2024; Hussan, 2024). According to speech act theory, every utterance not only carries a locutionary meaning but also possesses an illocutionary force that reflects the speaker's intent and purpose (Habermas, 1998; Searle, 1970; Huang, 2022). In religious dialogue, speech acts play a crucial role in constructing meaning, establishing authority, and influencing the attitudes and behaviors of the interlocutor.

Among the various types of speech acts proposed by Searle (1979), three types most frequently appear in religious discourse: assertive, expressive, and directive speech acts. Assertive speech acts are used to state, explain, affirm, and assert a truth or experience. Expressive speech acts are used to convey the speaker's feelings, attitudes, or psychological states in response to a given situation. Directive speech acts, meanwhile, function to direct, advise, recommend, or encourage the interlocutor to perform a specific action. In the context of converts, these three types of speech acts carry strategic importance, as religious experiences are not merely recounted and expressed, but are also directed toward cultivating a stronger foundation of faith.

One particularly compelling phenomenon for examination is the dialogue in a YouTube podcast featuring Ustaz Felix, a nationally recognized Islamic preacher (da'i) who is himself a convert, and Steven Wongso, a new Muslim convert, on the Yuk Ngaji (2025) channel. Moderated by host Risco Aditama, Ustaz Felix serves not only as a narrator of personal experience but also as an authoritative figure who provides guidance, direction, and faith reinforcement to the new convert. Steven Wongso, in turn, represents the position of an interlocutor in the early stages of his Islamic journey, and his responses and utterances reflect the process of religious acceptance and commitment formation.

The verbal interaction between these two figures demonstrates language use that is rich in pragmatic meaning, particularly through assertive, expressive, and directive speech acts. This phenomenon merits further investigation, as it illustrates how

language functions as an instrument of faith reinforcement within the context of religious communication on social media (Zhang, 2025; Munibi, 2025; Jacoba, 2023).

Research on speech acts in digital da'wah media has been conducted extensively, with varying focuses and objects of study. The first cluster comprises studies focusing on directive speech acts in sermons, da'wah activities, and religious social media content. These studies were conducted by Wakidah & Nugroho (2023), Gunawan et al. (2025), Mundafa et al. (2025), and Wahyuni et al. (2026). All four studies demonstrate that directive speech acts dominate da'wah communication, manifesting in forms such as advising, inviting, prohibiting, commanding, and suggesting. Additionally, the study by Maheswari et al. (2026) shows that directive speech acts are employed persuasively in motivational podcasts. Nevertheless, these studies focus exclusively on one type of speech act, the directive, and therefore do not illuminate the interrelationship between directive speech acts and other types in constructing the full meaning of religious communication (Haq et al., 2025; Hermansyah et al., 2022).

The second cluster comprises studies examining expressive speech acts or combinations of multiple speech act types in the context of da'wah and religious podcasts. Karly & Asnawi (2023) investigate expressive speech acts in a convert-themed podcast, while Pratama & Setyawan (2023) examine directive and expressive speech acts in the religious gatherings of Gus Iqdam. Furthermore, Inayah & Setiawan (2025) analyze various forms of illocutionary speech acts in Gus Iqdam's sermons. The findings of these studies indicate that religious communication encompasses not only elements of invitation and advice, but also psychological expression, affirmation of belief, and strategies for building closeness with the audience. However, these studies remain focused on one-directional sermons or religious lectures and have yet to examine dialogic interactions involving the personal experiences of a convert within a podcast format.

Meanwhile, Hariyono & Istiqamah (2023) highlight the influence of religious leaders' speech acts on the self-esteem of congregation members in the new normal era. Their study demonstrates that speech acts carry psychological and social impact in building congregants' self-confidence. However, this study places greater emphasis on the effects of religious communication on its audience and has not yet revealed the pragmatic strategies involved in the formation of a convert's religious identity through verbal interaction in digital media.

Based on the foregoing, a research gap exists in that no study has specifically analyzed assertive, expressive, and directive speech acts simultaneously within the narrative of a convert's experience in a religious podcast on YouTube. Yet these three types of speech acts are deeply interrelated in building faith reinforcement, expressing spiritual experience, and directing Islamic values toward new converts. Accordingly, the novelty of this study lies in its object of analysis, the podcast dialogue between Ustaz Felix Siau and Steven Wongso on the YouTube channel, as well as in its analytical focus, which integrates assertive, expressive, and directive speech acts within the context of digital da'wah communication that is dialogic, personal, and persuasive.

This study therefore aims to identify the forms of assertive, expressive, and directive speech acts employed by the speakers, and to analyze the pragmatic functions of these speech acts in building understanding, strengthening faith, and facilitating the formation of a convert's religious identity. It is hoped that this study will contribute theoretically to the development of pragmatic inquiry, particularly the study of speech acts in digital religious discourse, as well as practically to the understanding

of effective linguistic strategies in da'wah and convert accompaniment through digital media.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method with a pragmatic analysis approach based on John R. Searle's (1979) speech act theory. This approach was used to identify, describe, and interpret the illocutionary force and pragmatic functions of utterances occurring naturally in the podcast dialogue. The analysis focused on three speech act categories, namely assertive, expressive, and directive, by considering the form of the utterances, the speakers' communicative intentions, and the interactional context. Thus, the study examined not only what the speakers said but also the communicative actions performed through their utterances.

Data Source and Data

The data source was the *Yuk Ngaji* YouTube podcast episode entitled "*Steven Wongso: Kasih Starter Kit Sebagai Mualaf dong Tadz,*" published on March 28, 2025. The episode was purposively selected because it presents a dialogic interaction among Steven Wongso as a new Muslim convert, Ustaz Felix Siau as an Islamic preacher with experience as a convert, and Risco Aditama as the moderator. The conversation discusses Steven's experiences after embracing Islam, his challenges in learning and practicing Islam, and the guidance provided during the discussion. The research data consisted of utterances demonstrating assertive, expressive, or directive illocutionary force. The unit of analysis was an individual utterance or sequence of utterances expressing one dominant illocutionary function that could be interpreted within its conversational context. *Back-channeling*, interrupted utterances, and segments unrelated to Islamic topics or the convert experience were excluded from the dataset.

Data Collection

Data were collected through the listening method using recording and note-taking techniques. The selected podcast episode was first reviewed in its entirety to understand the overall conversational context and was then transcribed using the *videotranscriber.ai* application. The resulting transcription was manually verified against the original video to correct transcription errors, particularly those involving non-standard terms and religious terminology. Relevant paralinguistic features, such as intonation, pauses, and laughter, as well as non-verbal gestures, were also recorded when necessary to support contextual interpretation. The utterances that met the research criteria were subsequently recorded according to speaker, conversational context, speech-act category, and timestamp before being coded for analysis.

Analytical Framework and Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis was based on Searle's (1979) classification of illocutionary speech acts. Assertives were identified when speakers stated, explained, affirmed, or expressed a proposition or belief; expressives when speakers expressed feelings, psychological states, attitudes, evaluations, regret, appreciation, or admiration; and directives when speakers requested, advised, recommended, invited, or encouraged the interlocutor or audience to perform or consider an action. The analysis distinguished between the form of an utterance and its pragmatic function; therefore, a declarative utterance was not automatically classified as an assertive when its contextual function indicated an indirect directive. Ambiguous utterances were classified according to their dominant illocutionary force by considering the speaker's intention, situational context, preceding and following utterances, and the interlocutor's response. The analysis proceeded through data reduction, speech-act

identification and classification, contextual interpretation, pragmatic-function grouping, and conclusion drawing. The coding system used A for assertive, E for expressive, and D for directive; the number following the letter represented the function, while the number after the slash indicated the sequential data number. For example, A1/12 refers to data number 12 classified as an assertive with the first function.

Data Validity

Data validity was maintained through persistent observation and repeated cross-checking of the transcript against the original podcast video. The researcher repeatedly reviewed the relevant segments to verify the accuracy of the transcription and to ensure that the interpretation of each utterance remained consistent with its conversational context. Particular attention was given to utterances whose speech-act category could not be determined solely from their grammatical structure. In such cases, the speaker's intention, the preceding and following discourse, and the interactional context were considered before assigning the speech-act category. This procedure was used to reduce the possibility of misclassification and to strengthen the credibility of the pragmatic interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the *Yuk Ngaji* podcast episode “*Steven Wongso: Kasih Starter Kit Sebagai Mualaf dong Tadz*”, published on March 28, 2025, identified 65 utterances containing illocutionary speech acts based on Searle’s (1979) classification. The data consisted of 33 assertive, 20 expressive, and 12 directive speech acts produced by Steven Wongso, Ustaz Felix Siauww, and Risco Aditama. Each utterance was analyzed based on its illocutionary force, conversational context, and pragmatic function.

The selected episode presents a dialogic interaction between Steven Wongso as a new Muslim convert, Ustaz Felix Siauww as an Islamic preacher with experience as a convert, and Risco Aditama as the host. The conversation discusses Steven’s experiences after embracing Islam, his challenges in learning and practicing Islam, and the religious guidance provided during the discussion. This conversational setting generates various speech-act functions through which the speakers convey religious information, express psychological and emotional responses, and provide advice or direction related to the process of embracing and practicing Islam.

The distribution below indicates that assertive speech acts are the most frequently occurring category, followed by expressive and directive speech acts. The dominance of assertive acts reflects the informational and explanatory nature of the conversation, particularly when the speakers discuss Islamic concepts, religious experiences, and the process of learning Islam. Expressive acts primarily reveal the speakers’ feelings, attitudes, and personal reflections, while directive acts function to provide advice, encouragement, and practical guidance. The detailed findings and discussion of each speech-act category are presented in the following sections.

Table 1. Distribution of Speech Acts and Their Pragmatic Functions

Speech Act Type	Code	Pragmatic Function	Amount of Data
Assertive	A1	Conveying conceptual information	14
	A2	Explaining stages and correcting misconceptions	7
	A3	Expressing personal belief	4
	A4	Stating social generalizations	8
Total Assertive			33

Expressive	E1	Expressing comfort and absence of regret	4
	E2	Expressing existential anxiety and self-reflection	8
	E3	Expressing temporal regret	1
	E4	Offering praise and appreciation	5
	E5	Expressing admiration	2
Total Expressive			20
Directive	D1	Inviting openness toward Islam	1
	D2	Directing a change in learning priorities	6
	D3	Directing against postponement of conversion	2
	D4	Advising cultivation of a supportive social environment	2
	D5	Providing practical worship instructions	1
Total Directive			12
Total			65

Source: Researcher's analysis of the transcript of the Yuk Ngaji YouTube podcast episode "Steven Wongso: Kasih Starter Kit Sebagai Mualaf dong Tadz", published March 28, 2025.

Assertive Speech Acts

Assertive speech acts are utterances used by a speaker to state, inform, explain, acknowledge, or affirm a proposition that the speaker believes to be true. In the context of religious communication, assertive speech acts play an important role as a means of conveying knowledge, spiritual experience, and belief, with the aim of building the interlocutor's understanding both intellectually and emotionally. Based on the analysis of the *Yuk Ngaji* podcast transcription featuring Ustaz Felix Siau, Steven Wongso, and Risco Aditama, assertive speech acts are dominantly employed to establish a foundation of theological understanding. Assertive speech acts in this podcast are classified into four primary functions.

Conveying Conceptual Information

The first function is conveying conceptual information. This function is used by the speaker to provide a fundamental understanding of the essence of Islamic teachings, so that the interlocutor may gain a correct perspective. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data A1/12

"Islam is not just ritual, but a way of life." (00:36:01)

This utterance was delivered by Ustaz Felix Siau in response to Steven's statement about his reasons for choosing Islam. Illocutionarily, this utterance functions as an informative statement that asserts the nature of Islam as a comprehensive worldview, rather than merely a set of worship rituals. The pragmatic function of this utterance is to correct a misconception commonly held in society, that religion is purely ritualistic in nature. As such, this utterance does not merely contain factual information, but also carries educational and conceptual corrective value directed at the interlocutor and the podcast audience at large.

Explaining Stages and Correcting Misconceptions

The second function is explaining stage divisions and correcting misconceptions. This function is employed by a speaker with religious authority to elaborate on steps,

rationalize stages, and correct misconceptions regarding the process of learning Islam. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data A2/15

"What Steven has already resolved before entering Islam is the 'why', that part is done. Only the 'what' and 'how' are not yet resolved. Well, for the 'what' and 'how', it is better to enter Islam first, then learn Surah Al-Fatihah, tajweed, and the procedures for prayer after converting." (00:06:27)

The utterance above is Ustaz Felix's explanation of the ideal stages of learning Islam. Through this utterance, Ustaz Felix provides a spiritual roadmap for a new convert. The assertive function here explains the division of stages involved in becoming a Muslim convert. The primary matter a convert must address is 'why enter Islam?', a question relating to the aspect of faith. Once this fundamental question has been answered, the next step is to address the questions of 'what is Islam?' and 'how is Islam practiced?' These questions of *what* and *how* relate to the technical aspects of practicing Islam, such as the procedures for worship and the like.

Expressing Personal Belief

The third function is expressing personal belief. This function is employed by the speaker to state a commitment and rational justification for the life choice made. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data A3/25

"I felt, oh, if I want to seek a religion, then to me this is the most logical one. That is why I chose Islam." (00:34:31)

The utterance above expresses Steven Wongso's personal conviction. It is categorized as assertive because it contains a statement regarding the truth of a proposition he believes, namely his positioning of Islam as the most logically sound religion according to his cognitive reasoning. Through this function, the speaker provides a rational justification for Islam as a logical religion, rather than a mere emotional outburst.

Stating Social Generalizations

The fourth function is stating generalizations related to social phenomena. This function is used to map or identify patterns of religious behavior commonly occurring in society, serving as a basis for opening up discussion. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data A4/27

"Muslims typically focus on memorizing the Qur'an first, learning the prayer procedures first. But the 'why' is absent. Why should I be a Muslim?" (00:07:00)

The utterance above is a generalization delivered by the host regarding the common pattern of Islamic learning in society. Risco critically articulates a general pattern concerning a gap in Islamic religious education, one that frequently neglects the essential aspect of *why*. Islamic religious education in general currently tends to prioritize jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and religious law (*syariat*) over addressing the fundamental question that builds the foundation of faith, namely: 'why should I be a Muslim?' Although it is a generalization, this utterance is not intended to discredit Islam, but rather to identify a gap that needs to be addressed going forward.

Expressive Speech Acts

Expressive speech acts are utterances that function to express the speaker's psychological state, inner condition, feelings, attitudes, or personal evaluation

toward a situation or experience. Expressive speech acts are oriented toward the disclosure of the speaker's inner state. Forms of expressive speech acts include expressions of gratitude, admiration, regret, praise, joy, acknowledgment of difficulty, and encouragement. Based on the analysis of the *Yuk Ngaji* podcast transcription featuring Ustaz Felix Siau, Steven Wongso, and Risco Aditama, expressive speech acts are realized in the following five functions.

Expressing Comfort and Absence of Regret

The first function is expressing an evaluation of comfort and an absence of regret. This function is used to express the positive emotional state felt by the speaker after making a crucial decision in life, namely becoming a Muslim convert. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data E1/1

"I have absolutely no regrets about converting to Islam." (00:02:10)

This utterance was delivered by Steven Wongso when the host asked about his feelings after only five days of embracing Islam. Steven's utterance above represents an expression of a stable, satisfied, and joyful inner state. Through this utterance, Steven validates his emotional steadiness to the interlocutor who had inquired about his psychological state five days after reciting the *shahadah* and entering Islam. This utterance carries a strong perlocutionary effect, as a sincere personal confession from a public figure has the potential to encourage other listeners to consider or strengthen their own conviction in embracing Islam.

Expressing Existential Anxiety and Self-Reflection

The second function is expressing existential anxiety and self-reflection. This function is used to articulate an inner state characterized by emptiness, confusion, or a crisis of meaning experienced in the past. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data E2/10

"I felt like life was just looping, Ustaz. And I felt like there was no reason, no reason for me to live." (00:19:25)

The utterance above depicts Steven's acknowledgment of the existential condition he experienced prior to embracing Islam. The repeated use of the word *"felt"* (*ngerasa*) indicates that this utterance is oriented toward the disclosure of an inner state, rather than merely stating facts. The utterance expresses the existential restlessness Steven experienced before becoming a convert. Prior to embracing Islam, he felt that his life was simply *looping*, that it consisted of repetitive routines without purpose, direction, or meaning (*reason*).

Expressing Temporal Regret

The third function is expressing temporal regret. This function is used to convey a sense of regret that a spiritual goodness or beauty was only discovered at the present moment. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data E3/13

"There is some regret, though. Why didn't I convert earlier?" (00:02:22)

The utterance above represents a uniquely paradoxical form of regret. Steven regrets not having embraced Islam sooner, not the decision to convert itself. This expression of regret actually functions to reinforce Steven's conviction in his choice. By expressing regret over having converted late, Steven indirectly conveys to the

audience that Islam is something so deeply valuable that the sooner one comes to know it, the better.

Offering Praise and Appreciation

The fourth function is offering praise and appreciation. This function aims to recognize the capacity, learning process, or achievements of the interlocutor in order to strengthen their self-confidence. In this context, Ustaz Felix expresses appreciation toward Steven as a new convert in the process of learning. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data E4/17

"A convert, if he makes good use of his time, will learn quickly. Like you. You actually learn quickly." (00:11:51)

This utterance by Ustaz Felix functions as personal appreciation directed toward Steven. Ustaz Felix first delivers a general statement about the potential of converts, then directly applies it to Steven with the remark *"Like you. You actually learn quickly."* This makes the praise feel more meaningful and convincing. The appreciation functions to build Steven's *self-efficacy*, his belief in his own capabilities, which is an important factor in sustaining long-term motivation for religious learning.

Expressing Admiration

The fifth function is expressing admiration. This function is used to express a spontaneous positive emotional response toward the experience or achievement of the interlocutor, and in the context of the podcast involves more than one speaker in an interactional manner. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data E5/19—20

"Yesterday, in this very room, together with you, something remarkable happened." (00:01:52)

"Masha Allah, Masha Allah, Masha Allah." (00:01:58)

The first utterance above was delivered by the host as an opening to the discussion regarding Steven's story of having embraced Islam only five days prior. This utterance is an expression of the host's admiration for the event that had just taken place, namely the ceremony of Steven's *shahadah*, which was led directly by Ustaz Felix. This utterance functions as a marker that the event was a special and memorable moment. In response, Ustaz Felix expressed *"Masha Allah"* three times. The repetition of this phrase serves as an expression of admiration and also reflects how deeply Ustaz Felix himself was moved by the event he had just experienced alongside Steven. Both utterances affirm to the audience that the moment was one worthy of great appreciation.

Directive Speech Acts

Directive speech acts are utterances produced by a speaker with the intent of causing the interlocutor or audience to perform a specific action. Directive speech acts carry the illocutionary force of commanding, requesting, recommending, prohibiting, advising, and inviting. This type of speech act is oriented toward bringing about a change in the interlocutor's behavior or actions. In the context of Islamic da'wah, directive speech acts carry strategic importance as an instrument for directing values and shaping the religious conduct of the audience. In the conversation among the three speakers in the *Yuk Ngaji* podcast, directive speech acts are delivered persuasively through recommendations, practical solutions, and implicit

instructions, with the aim of minimizing any impression of being preachy or condescending. These speech acts are realized in the following five functions.

Inviting Openness toward Islam

The first function is inviting openness toward Islam. This function is used to appeal to the spiritual awareness of listeners to take or consider a specific action, in this case, opening themselves to the possibility of embracing Islam, while doing so in a non-coercive manner. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data D1/1

"Honestly, I am not inviting ... people to convert. But if there is an inclination to convert, please do not reject it." (00:04:12)

The utterance above was delivered by Steven. Although Steven employs a strategy of disavowing intent at the outset (*"I am not inviting"*), the following clause (*"please do not reject it"*) carries a strong directive illocutionary force. This utterance is a form of indirect speech act that is politely persuasive, inviting members of the audience who are seeking truth not to close themselves off from divine guidance (*hidayah*). As such, this utterance functions as a persuasive invitation without appearing coercive, making it more effective in reaching listeners who are in the process of spiritual seeking.

Directing a Change in Learning Priorities

The second function is directing a change in learning priorities. This directive function takes the form of a recommendation to alter the sequence of actions in learning about religion, prioritizing substance over the complexity of formalities. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data D2/4

"Don't worry about the 'what' and 'how' just yet. Worry first about the 'why'. Why? Why? Why? Always like that." (00:42:23)

The utterance above was delivered by Ustaz Felix as a summary of a lengthy discussion about the importance of motivational grounding in religious practice. The repetition of the word *"why"* serves as a form of emphasis by the speaker, that is Ustaz Felix, in providing instruction or direction for converts to prioritize the formation of a foundation of intention and faith (*why*) before being burdened with the technical aspects of worship (*what* and *how*). This instruction functions to provide a clear learning hierarchy to new converts and the general audience alike: to prioritize the question of *why* as a foundation before addressing the questions of *what* and *how*.

Directing Against Postponement of Conversion

The third function is directing against the postponement of the conversion process. This function emphasizes the urgency of action and encourages the interlocutor to act promptly without delay. In the context of this podcast, this type of direction pertains to the encouragement of prospective converts not to wait until they feel technically ready before reciting the *shahadah*. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data D3/8—9

"If you are serious, it's better to just dive in first." (00:06:10)

"Recite the shahadah first, then fill in the rest later." (00:06:18)

The first utterance above was put forward by Steven Wongso, while the second was offered by Ustaz Felix. Together, these utterances carry a directive force in the form

of firm yet casually expressed direction. The use of the word "*better*" (*mending*) marks this utterance as a recommendation advocating for a specific course of action, while the word "*just*" (*langsung*), repeated twice, reinforces the sense of urgency, to act promptly in embracing Islam. This direction functions to counter the tendency commonly experienced by prospective converts of delaying the decision to recite the *shahadah* on the grounds of not yet feeling ready or not yet having sufficient religious knowledge.

Advising the Cultivation of a Supportive Social Environment

The fourth function is advising the cultivation of a supportive social environment. This function relates to directing the audience to actively seek out and build a social circle (*circle*) that supports the development of faith. This function thus reflects the speaker's awareness that the process of Islamic growth is not determined solely by individual factors, but is also greatly influenced by the social environment. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data D4/11

"If you don't yet have a circle that is deeply engaged with Islam, come join us here more often." (01:03:48)

This utterance was delivered near the end of the podcast when Risco offered practical advice to the listeners. The phrase "*come join us here more often*" carries a directive force in the form of directing listeners to join the Yuk Ngaji community, on the grounds that a person's spiritual growth requires the support of a conducive environment. This concept is consistent with the *hadith* of the Prophet regarding the influence of one's social companions on the quality of one's religious life, lending this recommendation a strong normative foundation within the Islamic tradition.

Providing Practical Worship Instructions

The fifth function is providing practical instructions for the performance of worship. This function offers specific and immediately applicable technical guidance for the performance of daily acts of worship. Practical instructions are presented in the form of concrete guidance aimed at facilitating new converts in fulfilling their religious obligations. This function is evidenced in the following data.

Data D5/12

"As for the qunut prayer, you don't need to memorize it, you just need to follow the imam. Just raise your hands, and that's it." (00:29:49)

This utterance was delivered by Ustaz Felix when Steven expressed his reluctance to go to the mosque because he had not yet memorized the *qunut* supplication. Illocutionarily, this utterance carries a directive force in the form of a practical solution that resolves the obstacle faced by the interlocutor. The function of this utterance is to simplify the technical requirements that are perceived as a burden by the convert. The words "*just*" (*cukup*) and "*that's it*" (*beres*) indicate that the speaker is simplifying the interlocutor's perception of the complexity of worship, thereby removing the psychological barrier experienced by the interlocutor in performing acts of worship.

Integrated Pragmatic Pattern of Speech Acts

The findings show that assertive, expressive, and directive speech acts work together in constructing the communicative character of the podcast. The 33 assertive utterances mainly provide explanations, information, and personal beliefs that contribute to the speakers' discussion of Islamic knowledge and the convert experience. The 20 expressive utterances add an emotional dimension by conveying feelings, attitudes, and personal reflections, while the 12 directive utterances provide

advice, encouragement, and practical guidance. These findings suggest that religious communication in the podcast is developed not only through the transmission of information but also through emotional engagement and guidance.

The relationship among the three speech-act categories can therefore be understood as a complementary understanding–emotion–action pattern. Assertive utterances help establish the ideas being discussed, expressive utterances make the religious experience more personal, and directive utterances connect the discussion with practical responses or guidance. However, these functions do not necessarily occur in a fixed sequence. Their relationship emerges from the interactional context of the dialogue, in which explanation, personal experience, and guidance may occur interchangeably.

This pattern indicates that the pragmatic character of digital *da'wah* in the podcast is shaped by the interaction of different illocutionary functions. Unlike a conventional one-way sermon, the podcast allows religious knowledge, personal experience, emotional expression, and practical advice to appear within an interactive conversation. Thus, the findings extend the application of Searle's speech-act framework to a contemporary digital religious context by showing how different speech-act functions operate together in a convert-centered dialogue. Nevertheless, since the data are limited to one podcast episode, this finding should be understood as a contextual pattern rather than a general model of digital *da'wah*.

Integrated Pragmatic Functions in Digital Da'wah

The findings demonstrate that assertive, expressive, and directive speech acts function as an interconnected communicative system in digital *da'wah* rather than as isolated linguistic categories. The predominance of assertive acts is consistent with Dipta et al. (2024), who found that assertive speech acts were the most frequent category in Yasmin Mogahed's dakwah videos, primarily functioning to state, report, and explain religious ideas. This similarity suggests that religious communication in digital environments continues to rely substantially on explanatory and knowledge-oriented utterances. However, the present study extends this finding by demonstrating that assertive acts are embedded within a dialogic interaction involving a convert, religious communicator, and moderator, allowing information to be connected directly with personal religious experience. This distinction strengthens the novelty of the present study, which identifies an integrated pragmatic pattern rather than focusing on a single speech-act category.

The expressive dimension of the findings further indicates that emotional disclosure constitutes an important component of digital religious communication. The presence of expressions of comfort, anxiety, regret, appreciation, and admiration complements recent research demonstrating that religious speech acts can simultaneously communicate beliefs and reveal speakers' psychological orientations. Dipta et al. (2024) similarly identified expressive acts as part of the pragmatic repertoire in contemporary Islamic video discourse. The present study contributes further by demonstrating how expressive acts connect the convert's personal experience with the broader communicative purpose of strengthening emotional engagement.

The directive findings are also consistent with Mohd Noor Be (2023), whose analysis of contemporary Islamic sermons identified advice, commands, requests, and recommendations as important directive strategies in religious communication. Similarly, Alwan (2025) demonstrates that directive acts in religious discourse perform contextual and rhetorical functions beyond literal commands, including guidance and behavioral orientation. In contrast, the present findings show that directives in the podcast are frequently preceded or supported by explanations and personal experiences, producing a complementary relationship between

understanding, emotion, and action. This pattern is also comparable with Rangkuti et al. (2025), who identified assertive, directive, and expressive acts in Islamic lectures as mechanisms for communicating religious values and encouraging practical responses.

Theoretically, the study extends the application of Searle's speech-act framework to dialogic, convert-centered digital da'wah, showing how different illocutionary functions operate together within a single communicative encounter. Practically, the findings suggest that digital religious communicators can combine explanation, emotional engagement, and practical guidance when addressing audiences undergoing religious learning or transformation. The principal limitation is the reliance on one YouTube podcast episode, meaning that the identified pattern should be interpreted contextually rather than generalized to all digital da'wah. Future research should compare multiple podcast episodes, speakers, platforms, and audience responses to determine whether the integrated understanding-emotion-action pattern is consistently reproduced across digital religious communication.

CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis demonstrate that all three types of speech acts are present in a diverse and functional manner within the context of dialogic digital da'wah communication. Based on the analysis, a dataset of 65 utterances was identified, consisting of 33 assertive, 20 expressive, and 12 directive utterances. Assertive speech acts manifest in four functions: conveying conceptual information, explaining stage divisions and correcting misconceptions, expressing personal belief, and stating social generalizations. Expressive speech acts manifest in five functions: expressing comfort and absence of regret, expressing existential anxiety and self-reflection, expressing temporal regret, offering praise and appreciation, and expressing admiration. Directive speech acts manifest in five functions: inviting openness toward Islam, directing a change in learning priorities, directing against postponement of conversion, advising cultivation of a supportive social environment, and providing practical worship instructions.

The three types of speech acts do not operate in isolation, but rather complement one another: assertive acts build understanding, expressive acts foster emotional connection, and directive acts guide action. Their synergy reflects the distinctive quality of the dialogic and personal podcast format as a space for da'wah that engages not only the intellect, but also the feelings and behavior of the audience. This study implies that an effective digital da'wah communication strategy must integrate all three speech act dimensions in a balanced manner, so that the message of Islam is not only understood intellectually, but also felt emotionally and enacted in real-world behavior by the audience.

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