



SPEECH ACTS IN STUDENTS PODCAST: PRAGMATIC INSIGHTS FOR EFL TEACHING

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan tindak tutur dalam podcast yang diproduksi mahasiswa untuk melihat bagaimana pembelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) mengembangkan kompetensi pragmatik dalam komunikasi autentik. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh adanya kesenjangan antara pembelajaran di kelas dan kemampuan mahasiswa menggunakan bahasa Inggris secara tepat dalam konteks nyata. Tujuannya adalah mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis tindak tutur yang digunakan, menganalisis fungsi komunikatifnya, dan menyoroti implikasi pedagogisnya. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan analisis wacana. Data berupa dua podcast yang diproduksi oleh mahasiswa Ilmu Komunikasi semester dua di IISIP YAPIS Biak, Papua. Rekaman ditranskripsi, dipilah ke dalam tuturan-tuturan, dan dikodekan berdasarkan lima kategori tindak tutur menurut Searle. Untuk mendukung interpretasi, frekuensi dan persentase dihitung secara deskriptif untuk menunjukkan dominasi relatif setiap jenis tindak tutur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tindak tutur representatif, direktif, dan ekspresif paling banyak digunakan, sementara komisif jarang muncul dan deklaratif tidak ditemukan. Mahasiswa menggunakan tindak tutur secara strategis untuk membuka dan menutup interaksi, mengarahkan pertanyaan, mengelaborasi ide, dan membangun hubungan baik. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa produksi podcast memberikan wadah bermakna untuk melatih kompetensi pragmatik, memungkinkan mahasiswa menyeimbangkan formalitas dan informalitas, mempertahankan interaksi, serta mengembangkan kesadaran interpersonal. Temuan ini mengisyaratkan bahwa integrasi podcast dalam pembelajaran bahasa dapat memperkaya praktik komunikatif dan menjembatani pembelajaran di kelas dengan penggunaan bahasa Inggris secara autentik.

Abstract

This study examined the use of speech acts in student-produced podcasts to explore how English as a Foreign Language learners developed pragmatic competence in authentic communication. The research was motivated by the gap between classroom instruction and students' ability to use English appropriately in real contexts. The objective was to identify the types of speech acts employed, analyze their communicative functions, and highlight pedagogical implications. A qualitative descriptive approach with discourse analysis was applied. Data consisted of two podcasts produced by second-semester Communication Science students at IISIP YAPIS Biak, Papua. The recordings were transcribed, segmented into utterances, and coded according to Searle's five categories of speech acts. To support interpretation, frequencies and percentages were calculated descriptively to show the relative dominance of each type. The findings revealed that representatives, directives, and expressives were most frequently used, while commissives were rare and declarations were absent. Students used speech acts strategically to open and close interactions, guide questioning, elaborate on ideas, and build rapport. The study concluded that podcast production provided a meaningful platform for practicing pragmatic competence, allowing students to balance formality and informality, sustain interaction, and develop interpersonal awareness. The findings implied that integrating podcasts into language learning can enrich communicative practice and bridge classroom learning with authentic use of English.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital media over the past decade has significantly transformed language learning practices, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Whereas earlier instruction in many EFL contexts often emphasized mechanical drills such as isolated grammar and vocabulary exercises, more recent approaches have increasingly shifted toward authentic, technology-mediated tasks that encourage learners to use language in meaningful contexts. This development aligns with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), both of which emphasize language as a tool for communication rather than a mere system of rules. Recent studies confirm that integrating digital media into instruction enhances learner engagement, motivation, and performance while providing interactive and context-rich learning environments (Nguyen & Pham, 2024; Zhang & Chen, 2025; Saifullah, 2023).

Among these innovations, podcasting has gained increasing attention in EFL pedagogy. A podcast, in the context of language learning, is commonly defined as a digital audio recording that can be accessed online or offline and used either as authentic input material or as a student-generated product. Unlike traditional listening exercises, podcasts expose learners to natural speech, varied accents, and culturally embedded content while simultaneously providing opportunities to produce spoken output such as interviews, discussions, or storytelling (Pratama & Kurnia, 2020; Hasan & Tan, 2023; Nurmukhamedov & Sharakhimov, 2023). As an audio-based medium, podcasts therefore provide not only authentic listening experiences but also opportunities for learners to articulate ideas and communicate to wider audiences. Evidence shows that podcast projects contribute positively to learners' linguistic development, motivation, and classroom engagement (Alharbi, 2023; Lee & Park, 2025; Novita Sari, Budiyo, & Purba, 2024). Moreover, podcasts foster self-directed learning and strengthen pragmatic competence by requiring students to practice language flexibly and contextually (Nguyen & Pham, 2024; Zhang & Chen, 2025). These findings highlight the state of the art: podcasting is not merely a supplementary tool but a promising strategy to bridge classroom learning with authentic communicative practice.

Despite these advantages, pragmatic competence remains a persistent challenge for EFL learners. Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to use language appropriately in social and cultural contexts and determines learners' success in communication (Nguyen & Pham, 2024). Studies have shown that while learners may master grammar and vocabulary, they often struggle to apply this knowledge pragmatically, particularly in selecting speech acts suitable for specific communicative situations (Rahman & Yusuf, 2024; Zhang & Chen, 2025; Retnowaty, 2016). Previous research has largely focused on classroom discourse, textbooks, or standardized pragmatics tests, with limited exploration of digital discourse. Very few studies have examined student-generated podcasts as sites of pragmatic performance, particularly among non-English majors (Santoso & Dewi, 2025; Noer Aida, Basya, & Mahbub, 2022).

Although the role of podcasts in language pedagogy has received increasing attention in recent years, empirical investigations of how non-English-major students, particularly those enrolled in Communication Science programs, develop and demonstrate speech acts through podcast production remain very limited. Previous studies in EFL pragmatics have largely concentrated on English majors or on classroom interactions such as textbook dialogues and teacher–student exchanges (Rahman & Yusuf, 2024; Zhang & Chen, 2025; Rizkiyah, 2022; Zulianti & Nurchurifiani, 2021). As a result, learner-generated digital media such as podcasts, which provide naturally occurring and publicly accessible discourse, have not been sufficiently explored as a setting for authentic pragmatic performance. This gap is important because students of Communication Science are professionally oriented toward fields such as journalism, public relations, and media broadcasting, where successful communication requires not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to perform a wide range of speech acts such as requesting, persuading, expressing stance, and building rapport in diverse sociocultural contexts. Recent surveys of EFL programs in Indonesian higher education also show that explicit instruction in pragmatic competence is still rare and often limited to English departments (Nguyen & Pham, 2024; Sutisno & Sailuddin, 2023). Without robust empirical evidence on how Communication Science students actually use speech acts in podcast projects, educators lack the data needed to design podcast-based instruction that can deliberately foster pragmatic flexibility and better prepare students for real-world professional communication.

Building on the research gap described above, the present study is designed to provide an in-depth analysis of how Communication Science students demonstrate their pragmatic competence when creating English podcasts. By examining the speech acts they produce in authentic, learner-generated media, this research seeks to reveal not only the kinds of utterances students employ but also the communicative purposes these utterances serve. Such analysis is expected to offer evidence-based insights that can guide English language educators in integrating podcast projects as a strategy for developing learners' pragmatic skills.

This study therefore aims to investigate the types and functions of speech acts produced by Communication Science students in their English podcasts. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. Identify the dominant categories of speech acts used in student-generated podcasts;
2. Examine how these speech acts are employed to achieve communicative goals such as opening, questioning, elaborating, and closing; and
3. Explore the pedagogical implications of podcast production for fostering pragmatic competence in EFL learning.

In light of these objectives, the present study seeks to contribute both theoretical and practical insights to the field of EFL pragmatics. By documenting how Communication Science students employ speech acts in authentic podcast projects, the research extends existing scholarship beyond traditional classroom discourse and highlights the pedagogical potential of learner-generated media. The findings are expected to inform more effective teaching strategies that integrate digital platforms into English instruction, thereby fostering learners' pragmatic competence, communicative confidence, and readiness for professional contexts.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design with discourse analysis as the primary approach. The design was selected because it allows for a systematic investigation of how language functions in authentic communicative contexts, particularly in the use of speech acts. The data consisted of two English podcasts produced by second-semester undergraduate students majoring in

Communication Science at IISIP YAPIS Biak, Papua, during the 2025 academic year. A total of 12 students participated, organized into two groups. Each podcast lasted 10–12 minutes and discussed cultural and social themes relevant to the students' context. Both audio recordings and verbatim transcripts served as the primary data sources. The podcasts were collected as part of an English broadcasting course assignment. The recordings were transcribed carefully, with attention to accuracy and inclusion of relevant nonverbal features (e.g., pauses, laughter, overlapping speech) when they contributed to pragmatic interpretation. Each transcript was segmented into utterances, defined as units performing a single communicative function. The main instrument was a coding framework based on Searle's (1976) taxonomy of speech acts, which classifies utterances into five categories: representatives, directives, expressives, commissives, and declarations. A coding sheet was developed to record and quantify the occurrence of each category. Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis with descriptive quantification. Each utterance was coded into one of the five speech act categories. Frequencies and percentages were calculated to identify dominant categories. In addition, contextual analysis was conducted to determine how speech acts functioned in discourse (e.g., openings, questioning, elaboration, closings). To ensure reliability, two coders analyzed the transcripts independently, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached. Representative excerpts were included in the findings to illustrate patterns. Participation was voluntary, and all students gave informed consent for their podcasts to be used for research purposes. Anonymity was preserved through the use of pseudonyms, and the study followed institutional ethical guidelines for research involving human participants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design using discourse analysis to examine speech acts in student-generated podcasts. The data consisted of two podcasts produced by second-semester Communication Science students at IISIP YAPIS Biak, Papua. Each podcast lasted 10–12 minutes, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed for speech act categories based on Searle's (1976) taxonomy.

Types of speech acts are most frequently used in student podcasts

In this study, the first step involved segmenting each transcript into utterances. Every utterance was coded according to five categories of speech acts: representatives, directives, expressives, commissives, and declarations. Frequency counts were tabulated to reveal dominant patterns. The analysis produced a total of 182 utterances across the two podcast transcripts. Each utterance was categorized into one of Searle's (1979) five speech act types: representatives, directives, expressives, commissives, and declarations. Table 1 presents the distribution of speech act categories in both podcasts.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Speech Act Types in Student Podcasts

Speech Act Type	Group 1 Podcast	Group 2 Podcast	Total	Percentage (%)
Representatives	46	41	87	47.8%
Directives	31	27	58	31.9%
Expressives	13	15	28	15.4%
Commissives	2	2	4	2.2%
Declarations	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	92	85	177	100%

Distribution of Speech Acts

The results indicate that representatives were the most frequently employed speech act (47.8%). These acts consisted primarily of assertions, explanations, and descriptions. For instance, utterances such as *“Education for me is something to build your quality”* and *“I started my business in 2021”* functioned to provide factual or evaluative information. The second most common category was directives (31.9%), which reflects the interview-based format of the podcasts. Typical examples included requests for elaboration, such as *“What makes you interested in education?”* and *“Could you please introduce yourself first?”*. Directives played a central role in maintaining interaction and prompting the guest's responses. Expressives accounted for 15.4% of the data. These were often realized through politeness markers and positive evaluation, e.g., *“Thank you so much for being here today”* or *“That's amazing, really, for your journey and career”*. Their presence highlights the interpersonal dimension of the podcasts, where speakers reinforced rapport and emotional engagement.

Commissives were rarely observed (2.2%). Occasional statements of intent or hope, such as *“We can do it together in the future”*, were coded as commissives, but overall this type was minimally present. Finally, declarations were entirely absent, which is unsurprising given the informal, interview-based nature of the discourse.

Overall, the dominance of representatives and directives suggests that the primary function of student podcasts is informational and interactional: students aim to elicit knowledge from their guests and present it to their audience. The notable presence of expressives demonstrates that maintaining politeness and interpersonal connection was also important, though secondary to the delivery of information. The rarity of commissives and the absence of declarations reflect the non-institutional and non-authoritative context of the podcasts, where speakers were not in a position to enact binding commitments or institutional changes. These findings align with Searle’s (1979) classification of speech acts in educational discourse, where representatives are typically dominant.

Students’ Use of Speech Acts to Achieve Communicative Purposes in Podcasts

A contextual analysis was conducted to examine how different types of speech acts were employed to accomplish communicative goals in the podcasts. The findings reveal that students strategically used speech acts to manage discourse structure and interpersonal relations, particularly in the roles of interviewer and interviewee. The analysis identified six recurring communicative functions: opening, introducing, questioning, elaborating, closing, and expressing stance. Table 2 summarizes the dominant speech act categories used for each function.

Table 2. Functions of Speech Acts in Student Podcasts

Communicative Function	Dominant Speech Act(s)	Illustrative Example (Transcript)
Opening & Greeting	Expressives, Representatives	“Hello everyone, how are you doing? I hope you are in good health.”
Introducing Self/Guest	Representatives, Directives	“She is the head of the Faculty of Administrative Science.” / “Could you

		please introduce yourself first?”
Questioning	Directives	“What makes you interested in education?”
Elaborating/Explaining	Representatives	“Education for me is something to build your quality.”
Expressing Stance/Emotion	Expressives	“That’s amazing, really, for your journey and career.”
Closing the Session	Expressives, Representatives	“Thank you so much for being here with us today.” / “Maybe that’s all from us.”

Functional Distribution of Speech Acts

Openings were commonly realized through expressives (“Hello, nice to meet you”) combined with representatives (“Today I am with an important guest”). These speech acts established rapport, created a welcoming atmosphere, and contextualized the interaction. Introductions involved both representatives (describing the guest’s role and background) and directives (asking guests to introduce themselves). This dual strategy enabled students to position themselves as respectful hosts while granting space for guests to present their identities. Questioning was dominated by directives, which structured the flow of the podcast. Questions such as “*What made you want to become a lecturer?*” served to elicit elaboration and sustain the interview dynamic. Elaboration was typically expressed through representatives, as guests explained their experiences, backgrounds, or opinions. Statements like “*I started my business in 2021*” illustrate how speakers used representatives to share information and construct narrative coherence. Expressing stance and emotion was realized through expressives, including gratitude (“*Thank you so much for your story*”), admiration (“*That’s inspiring*”), or agreement (“*Yes, exactly*”). These acts helped maintain interpersonal alignment and reinforced positive interaction. Closings combined expressives and representatives to signal the end of the session, e.g., “*Thank you for being here with us*” and “*That’s all for today’s podcast.*” Such acts marked completion while preserving politeness and

solidarity. The results show that students used speech acts not in isolation but as tools for achieving specific communicative purposes. Directives played a pivotal role in constructing the interviewer's role, as they allowed students to guide the conversation. Representatives dominated in elaboration and information-sharing, particularly for interviewees presenting knowledge or personal experiences. Expressives were strategically employed to sustain rapport and convey stance, ensuring that the podcast maintained a conversational and supportive tone. These findings highlight that student podcasts operate as goal-oriented, semi-formal discourse: speech acts are deployed to balance informational content with interpersonal engagement.

Pedagogical Implications of Students' Use of Speech Acts in Podcast Production

After coding, these findings were then interpreted in relation to EFL pedagogy, emphasizing how podcasts can be leveraged to enhance pragmatic competence. In this study, following the coding and comparative analysis of the two podcast transcripts, three key pedagogical observations emerged: (1) the balance between formality and informality in student discourse, (2) the effectiveness of directives in sustaining interaction, and (3) the strategic use of expressives in building rapport. These findings were then interpreted in relation to their potential contributions to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy.

Balance of Formality and Informality

The data revealed that students moved flexibly between formal and informal registers. Formal representatives were common when introducing guests or providing background information. For example, one interviewer stated, "*She is the head of the Faculty of Administrative Science*" (Group 1), while another introduced the guest with, "*Hello, my name is Natasha Wijaya, usually called Tasha. I'm a businesswoman who is now pursuing education as a lecturer*" (Group 2). Such utterances positioned the speakers within an academic context.

At the same time, students frequently used informal markers, especially interjections and casual fillers. Examples include "*oh my God*" (Group 1), "*yeah, yeah*" (Group 1), and "*okay, miss*" (Group 2). These features added a conversational tone, softening the formality of the setting and making the exchange sound more authentic. The coexistence of formal and informal styles suggests that podcasting

provides a safe space for learners to experiment with shifting registers depending on the communicative situation.

Effectiveness of Directives in Sustaining Interaction

Directives were the backbone of the podcast interactions, especially through questions that structured the dialogue. In Group 1, questions such as “*What makes you interested in education?*”, “*Can you tell me about your educational background?*”, and “*What is your opinion about character education?*” elicited detailed elaborations from the guest. Similarly, in Group 2, interviewers asked, “*Could you please introduce yourself first?*”, “*When did you start getting into business and how did that all begin?*”, and “*Do you think AI is more of a threat or a cool opportunity in education?*”

These questions not only kept the conversation moving but also allowed the interviewees to share extended narratives. The reliance on directives illustrates that students were aware of their role in turn management. For pedagogy, this finding highlights that podcasts can train learners in initiating, sustaining, and steering interaction, skills often difficult to develop in classroom drills.

Expressives and Building Rapport

Expressives were used to maintain a supportive and respectful atmosphere throughout the podcasts. In Group 1, the host frequently expressed gratitude and admiration with phrases such as “*Thank you so much for being here today with us*”, “*That’s a very interesting story*”, and “*I’m so very, very excited to be here like, oh my God*”. In Group 2, similar strategies appeared, for example: “*That’s amazing, really, for your journey and career*”, “*Okay, your mom, so amazing*”, and “*Thank you so much, thanks a lot, Miss*”.

These utterances softened the potentially face-threatening nature of directives, such as when questions might otherwise feel demanding. They also reinforced solidarity and interpersonal connection, showing appreciation for the guest’s contributions. Pedagogically, this pattern indicates that podcasting can help students practice politeness strategies, stance-taking, and empathy in English, which are crucial for communicative effectiveness. To present these findings more clearly, Table 3 summarizes the relationship between speech act patterns and their pedagogical implications.

Table 3. Pedagogical Implications of Speech Act Use in Student Podcasts

Speech Act Pattern	Examples from Data	Pedagogical Implication
Formality–Informality Balance	“She is the head of the Faculty of Administrative Science” / “Hello, my name is Natasha Wijaya...” / “oh my God” / “yeah, yeah”	Practice register-shifting between formal academic and casual conversational contexts
Directives for Interaction	“What makes you interested in education?” / “Can you tell me about your educational background?” / “Do you think AI is more of a threat or a cool opportunity in education?”	Develop questioning skills, turn-taking, and sustaining extended dialogue
Expressives for Rapport	“Thank you so much for being here today” / “That’s amazing, really” / “Your story is very inspiring” / “Thanks a lot, Miss”	Train learners in politeness, appreciation, and building positive interpersonal relations

The data show that students did not only focus on producing grammatically correct sentences but also used speech acts to manage interaction and relationships. Formal and informal language balanced the academic tone with conversational warmth, directives ensured the continuity of dialogue, and expressives strengthened solidarity. Together, these patterns demonstrate that podcasting offers learners a meaningful and authentic environment to practice pragmatic competence, interpersonal awareness, and communicative confidence in English.

Discussions

This study examined how students used speech acts in podcast production, focusing on frequency (RQ1), communicative functions (RQ2), and pedagogical implications (RQ3). Across the three questions, the findings consistently point to podcasts as an authentic environment for practicing pragmatic competence in English. For RQ1, representatives were the most dominant speech acts, followed by directives and expressives, with commissives rare and declarations absent. This pattern suggests that podcasts are primarily used for information sharing and questioning, while still maintaining interpersonal connections through expressives. These findings are in line with Santoso and Dewi (2025), who also found that representatives and directives were

most frequently produced in EFL classroom settings. Similarly, Koçak and Alagözlü (2021) reported that learner-produced podcasts improved speaking skills precisely because they encouraged students to share information and ask questions in extended interactions. For RQ2, the analysis highlighted that students deployed speech acts strategically to achieve communicative goals such as opening, introducing, questioning, elaborating, expressing stance, and closing. The dominance of directives in sustaining interaction demonstrated that learners were aware of their role in managing turn-taking and eliciting elaborated responses. Expressives mitigated the potentially face-threatening nature of directives, creating supportive and collaborative interaction. These results align with Rahman and Yusuf's (2024) finding that explicit practice of speech acts helps students manage discourse more effectively. Chaves-Yuste and de-la Peña (2023) further support this, noting that integrating podcasts into EFL classes fosters both linguistic accuracy and interactional fluency, as learners practice authentic communicative exchanges. For RQ3, three pedagogical implications emerged. First, the balance between formal and informal speech in the podcasts shows that learners practiced shifting registers depending on context, an essential aspect of pragmatic competence. Second, the prominence of directives underscores the value of podcasts in fostering skills such as questioning, turn-taking, and sustaining interaction. Third, the frequent use of expressives demonstrates that podcasts help learners practice politeness, empathy, and stance-taking, thereby enhancing interpersonal awareness. These findings resonate with Nguyen and Pham's (2024) systematic review, which emphasized that pragmatic competence involves both managing meaning and maintaining social appropriateness. The results also connect with the European Scientific Journal (2022), which found that blended learning models provide opportunities for developing pragmatic competence by exposing learners to varied contexts that blend formal and informal registers. Taken together, the results affirm that podcasts are an effective pedagogical tool for developing pragmatic competence in EFL classrooms. Prior studies support this conclusion: Alharbi (2023) showed that podcasts create socially relevant and motivating interventions for learners; Lee and Park (2025) demonstrated that learner-generated podcasts foster self-directed learning and reflective practice; and Zhang and Chen (2025) argued that technology integration, including podcasting, strengthens learners' pragmatic development. In addition, Brown and Li (2024)

highlighted the potential of generative AI to expand podcast-based tasks, which may further enhance learner creativity and engagement. In sum, this study shows that student podcasts combine transactional goals (sharing and explaining information) with interactional goals (building rapport and sustaining dialogue), both of which are fundamental for pragmatic competence. By engaging with podcasts, learners not only practice language but also develop confidence in authentic communication, bridging classroom learning with real-world discourse.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the use of speech acts in student-produced podcasts, focusing on the types most frequently employed (RQ1), their communicative functions (RQ2), and their pedagogical implications (RQ3). The findings revealed that representatives, directives, and expressives dominated the interactions, while commissives were rarely used and declarations were absent, reflecting the interview-style nature of the podcasts where information exchange, questioning, and rapport-building were prioritized. Students employed speech acts strategically across different stages of communication which is openings and closings combined representatives and expressives, questioning was structured through directives, and elaborations were expressed through representatives, showing their ability to manage discourse flow and relational tone. Pedagogically, the results demonstrate that podcasts are not only a tool for speaking practice but also a meaningful platform for enhancing pragmatic competence, as learners practiced balancing formality and informality, sustaining interaction through effective questioning, and fostering rapport through expressives. In this way, podcasts provide opportunities for authentic discourse, register-shifting, and metapragmatic awareness, ultimately helping students build both confidence and communicative competence that bridge classroom learning with real-world use of English.

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