JoKAL
Journal of Korean Applied Linguistics
Journal homepage: https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/JoKAL

Expressive illocutionary speech acts in the Mukbang content of the Korean YouTuber Tzuyang (쯔양)

Febian Putra Pratama[1], Ashanti Widyana[1], and Jayanti Megasari[1]*

[1]Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia
*Corresponding author's e-mail address: febianputra25@upi.edu

ABSTRACT

Mukbang has developed into a popular form of digital communication in which creators use expressive language to convey emotions, attitudes, and reactions while interacting indirectly with audiences. This research examines expressive illocutionary speech acts in Tzuyang's *mukbang* content to address the lack of specific analysis of her feelings, attitudes, and communicative intentions. Using a descriptive qualitative design with a pragmatic approach, the study analyzes ten selected YouTube videos through observation and note-taking. The analysis identifies, classifies, and interprets utterances produced while Tzuyang eats based on their types, contexts, non-verbal aspects, and communicative intentions, then presents the findings descriptively. The study identifies gratitude, apology, complaint, and praise, demonstrating that expressive illocutionary acts naturally occur during everyday activities such as eating, facilitate audience interaction, and maintain a predominantly positive atmosphere that may create favorable impressions of the food and restaurant, although promotional intentions remain a possible pragmatic implication.

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received 31 Jul 2026
Revised 21 Sept 2026
Accepted 17 Oct 2026
Available online 29 Oct 2026

Keywords:
expressive illocutionary speech acts,
mukbang,
pragmatics,
Tzuyang,
YouTube

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a fundamental driving force of social life, enabling interactions among individuals both directly and indirectly. According to Maletzke, as cited in Reynata (2022), mass communication refers to any form of communication that disseminates information openly through technical media, reaches audiences indirectly, and employs a one-way communication process directed toward the general public. Meanwhile, according to Kustiawan et al. (2022) mass communication can generally be defined as a process through which one or more individuals convey messages via various mass media, including print, electronic, and digital platforms, with the aim of eliciting responses or feedback from the audience. This definition implies that the message is not intended for a particular group but rather for society as a whole. Therefore, one of the essential aspects of mass communication is the communicator's ability to organize and deliver messages systematically and effectively so that the intended audience can understand the conveyed information.

Although mass communication does not occur through direct interaction, it can still be effectively understood because it involves speech acts. This is because, according to Bühler, as cited in Lacsina (2023), mass communication produces texts or utterances specifically intended for audiences or interlocutors who are not physically present, serving the pragmatic function of influencing public opinion and behavior. Sumarsono and Pratama, as cited in Riadi (2023), explain that speech acts constitute one of the core areas of pragmatics. A speech act can be understood as the production of an utterance through which a speaker intends to convey a particular meaning so that it can be understood by the hearer. By producing an utterance, the speaker seeks to achieve a specific communicative purpose with the hearer. Speech act theory primarily examines the functions performed through language rather than merely its structural forms. In speech events, greater attention is therefore given to the intended meaning and function of an utterance. According to Austin, as cited in Leandro et al. (2022), speech acts are classified into three categories: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. A locutionary act refers to the act of producing a meaningful utterance, an illocutionary act refers to the speaker's intention in performing the utterance, and a perlocutionary act refers to the effect of the utterance on the hearer or the response it elicits. Among these three categories, illocutionary acts play a central role, as they connect the speaker's intended meaning with the resulting effects of the utterance.

According to Meliyawati, Saraswati, and Anisa (2023) illocutionary speech acts are employed not only to convey information but also to perform actions through utterances. Similarly, Hariati, Pulungan, and Husein (2020) explain that an illocutionary act refers to what a speaker does in the act of saying something. Based on these perspectives, it can be concluded that illocutionary speech acts function as a means of conveying information while simultaneously performing communicative actions, enabling the intended meaning to be understood by the hearer. According to Searle's classification, as cited in Rohmah, Eftiftanurani, and Utomo (2022), illocutionary speech acts are divided into five categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. This research will focus on expressive illocutionary speech acts. The expressive illocutionary act theory was selected because it provides a relevant framework for analyzing utterances that convey the speaker's psychological states, emotions, and attitudes. This framework enables utterances to be identified and categorized based on their intended expressive functions. Furthermore, expressive illocutionary acts provide a systematic basis for examining how psychological states are conveyed through language, particularly through expressions such as praise, gratitude, and complaints.The effective delivery of communication through speech acts can be facilitated by mass media. Along with technological advancements, new forms of mass media have emerged in the form of online and social media, developing in parallel with the rapid growth of the Internet worldwide. One such platform is YouTube, which has become one of the most widely used communication and information media across diverse segments of society around the world. As explained by Shariffadeen and Manaf, as cited in Lacsina (2023), YouTube is a popular social media platform that hosts videos from a wide variety of genres while enabling content

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/jokal.v6i2.104647
p- ISSN 2776-4486 e- ISSN 2776-4494

creators to interact with their audiences. Among the various types of content available on the platform, mukbang (먹방) has emerged as a unique phenomenon that has attracted global attention.

According to Kang et al. (2020), the term mukbang originates from the Korean words 먹는 (meogneun), meaning "eating," and 방송 (bangsong), meaning "broadcast." Similarly, Yoon (2023) defines mukbang as a live online audiovisual broadcast in which a content creator consumes a large quantity of food. In essence, the mukbang phenomenon extends beyond the simple act of eating in front of a camera; it represents a distinctive form of digital pragmatic interaction. Mukbang is no longer limited to content featuring large amounts of food or emphasizing eating sounds, as commonly seen in ASMR. As the genre has developed, it has also incorporated elements of food vlogging, in which creators share their experiences of enjoying different dishes while describing their flavors, textures, appearance, presentation, and the restaurants or dining environments where they are served. Thus, mukbang serves not only as a form of entertainment but also as a communicative space where creators can share information, opinions, personal reactions, and emotions with their audiences.. Furthermore, mukbang content possesses distinctive linguistic characteristics, as the language used is typically spontaneous, informal, and at times hyperbolic.Tzuyang is one of the pioneering *mukbang* content creators from South Korea, having made her debut in 2018. She currently has more than 13 million subscribers and has produced thousands videos of food vlogging and eating of large portions of food, including both traditional Korean dishes and international cuisines that are typically filmed on location at restaurants. As a food vlogger, Tzuyang uses language not only to describe the food she is eating but also to engage with her audience by expressing her feelings and attitudes. While enjoying a meal, she may express admiration for the taste of a dish, complain about an unpleasant situation, apologize for something she has done, or express gratitude toward those involved in producing her content. These varied utterances show that eating in food vlogging is not merely an activity centered on consuming food, but also involves a communicative process in which the creator expresses her feelings and reactions. Therefore, Tzuyang's utterances provide a relevant basis for examining expressive illocutionary speech acts.Previous studies have shown that expressive illocutionary speech acts occur in various forms and serve different pragmatic functions depending on the context of the utterance. Maharani (2021) found the occurrence of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts, as well as several types of expressive illocutionary speech acts. The expressive speech acts identified in the study functioned as praise, apology, congratulation, hope, complaint, criticism, and gratitude. Similarly, Arifin et al. (2026) identified seven categories of expressive speech acts, namely praise, blame, complaint, gratitude, criticism, congratulation, and admiration. Their findings indicated that praise was the most dominant type because the content on the YouTube channel primarily aimed to provide positive encouragement to its audience. The study also sought to identify the pragmatic functions of expressive speech acts in the context of educational content on personal development and learning.

This present study on expressive illocutionary speech acts in Tzuyang's *mukbang* content differs from previous studies in several respects. First, unlike earlier research, this study examines a Korean-speaking foreign food vlogger, Tzuyang, as its research subject. Second, it focuses specifically on the expressive illocutionary speech acts produced while the content creator is consuming food in *mukbang* videos. This study aims to identify the utterances produced by the speaker and the reactions expressed while enjoying the dishes. The collected data are classified according to the types of expressive illocutionary speech acts identified, and the frequency of each type is calculated. Based on research objectives, this study seeks to answer the following research questions, such as (1) what types of expressive illocutionary speech acts are produced by Tzuyang while consuming food in her *mukbang* videos, (2) which type of expressive illocutionary speech act occurs most frequently in Tzuyang's *mukbang* videos, and (3) what communicative intentions are conveyed through the expressive illocutionary speech act produced by Tzuyang in her *mukbang* videos.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/jokal.v6i2.104647x
p- ISSN 2776-4486 e- ISSN 2776-4494

2. METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design. According to Anggito and Setiawan (2018), qualitative research analyzes and interprets data without relying on statistical procedures. The study was grounded in a pragmatic approach, which examines language use and the interpretation of meaning within specific contexts. In particular, this study focused on expressive illocutionary speech acts. Searle (1974) classifies illocutionary acts into five categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. However, this study specifically examined expressive illocutionary speech acts (Rini et al., 2024).

The primary data for this study consist of ten mukbang videos uploaded to Tzuyang's YouTube channel between late 2023 and early 2025. The selected videos were those with the highest number of views in each month during the research period. This criterion was used to obtain highly viewed content that represents Tzuyang's most-watched videos during the selected timeframe. Limiting the dataset to ten videos also allowed the researcher to conduct a more in-depth qualitative analysis of the utterances, their contextual and non-verbal aspects, and the pragmatic functions of the expressive illocutionary speech acts.

Data were collected using the observation and note-taking technique. This technique involved observing Tzuyang's mukbang videos on YouTube, recording the relevant utterances, and classifying them according to the types of expressive illocutionary speech acts. It should be noted that the analysis was limited to the utterances produced while Tzuyang was consuming food, as the study specifically examined her interaction with the audience during the eating segments. Finally, each identified utterance was analyzed to determine its communicative intention and to identify the type of expressive illocutionary speech act it realized.

3. RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal a total of 183 expressive illocutionary speech acts identified in ten episodes of Tzuyang's mukbang videos. These speech acts were identified through an analysis of the speaker's utterances and the communicative actions performed through them. The identified data were then classified based on Searle's theory, as cited in Devi et al. (2025), which defines expressive illocutionary speech acts as a category of illocutionary acts that express the speaker's psychological state, including gratitude, praise, complaints, condolences, apologies, and other similar expressions. The findings indicate that four types of expressive illocutionary speech acts are realized in the analyzed data. The distribution of these findings is presented as follows:

Table 1.
Results of Types of Expressive Illocutionary Speech Acts

No.	Types of Expressive Illocutionary Speech Acts	Subcategory	Sub-subcategory	Target of Expression	Frequency
1	Gratitude	Wishing	-	Food, Audience and	4
		Thanking	-	Other people	13
2	Apologies	Direct Apology	-	Other Creature	1
3	Complaints	Self Oriented Complaint	-		11
		Regretting	-	Food and Situation	1
4	Praise	Complimenting	Appearance		28
			Taste	Food, Place, Other	98
			Scent	people, and	1
			Achievement	Situation	3
		Admiration	-		18
		Satisfaction	-		10
Total					188

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/jokal.v6i2.104647
p- ISSN 2776-4486 e- ISSN 2776-4494

The analysis of expressive illocutionary speech acts in the Gratitude category identified 17 data, consisting of 13 data of Thanking and 4 data of Wishing. The higher frequency of Thanking indicates that Tzuyang more frequently expresses gratitude directly in response to the benefits, support, and positive experiences she encounters during her mukbang activities. These expressions are directed toward Food and Audience. Gratitude toward Food reflects her appreciation for the meals served and the experience of enjoying them, while gratitude toward the Audience reflects her appreciation for viewers' attention and support. Meanwhile, the Wishing subcategory, with 4 data, shows that gratitude is not limited to direct expressions of thanks but may also be conveyed through positive wishes. Overall, the findings indicate that gratitude functions not only as a means of expressing Tzuyang's personal feelings but also as a way of maintaining positive interactions with the audience and expressing appreciation for the food she enjoys.

The Apologies category was the least frequently identified, with only 1 data. The datum was classified as Direct Apology and was directed toward Others. Its limited occurrence indicates that Tzuyang rarely expresses apologies in the analyzed mukbang content. The utterance appeared in a particular situation that prompted her to express an apology directly as an emotional response to an action she was about to perform. Although only one datum was found, the expression demonstrates how an apology may arise spontaneously when a specific situation evokes feelings of discomfort or concern in the speaker.

The Complaint category consisted of 12 data, including 11 data of Self-oriented Complaint and 1 datum of Regretting. The predominance of Self-oriented Complaint indicates that Tzuyang tends to express complaints by focusing on her own condition, particularly when she feels overwhelmed, struggles to consume the food, or doubts her ability to finish it. In contrast, the Regretting datum reflects a sense of regret toward a decision that had already been made, such as regretting ordering a dish that she later felt unable to finish. The targets of expression in this category were Food and Situation. Food was targeted when the complaint concerned the quantity, condition, or difficulty of the dishes, while Situation referred to the circumstances experienced during the mukbang. Overall, these findings suggest that Tzuyang's complaints are not primarily intended to blame others but rather to express her difficulties, concerns, and emotional responses when facing challenging eating situations.

The Praise category was the most dominant category, with a total of 158 data, comprising 130 data of Complimenting, 18 data of Admiration, and 10 data of Satisfaction. The high frequency of Praise indicates that positive evaluations are a prominent part of Tzuyang's communication during her mukbang activities. Among the three subcategories, Complimenting was the most frequent and was further divided into Taste (98 data), Appearance (28 data), Achievement (3 data), and Scent (1 datum). The dominance of Taste suggests that the flavor and quality of food are the primary aspects evaluated positively by Tzuyang, which is consistent with the nature of mukbang content. Appearance was the second most frequent focus, indicating that Tzuyang also responds positively to the visual presentation of food, often before or while tasting it. Meanwhile, Achievement and Scent occurred less frequently, suggesting that these aspects were less central to her expressions of praise.

In addition, Admiration accounted for 18 data and was used to express Tzuyang's sense of awe or appreciation toward something she found remarkable, unexpected, or impressive. Satisfaction, with 10 data, reflected her feelings of pleasure and fulfillment when the dining experience met her expectations. The targets of expression in the Praise category covered Food, Place, Other People, and Situation, demonstrating that Tzuyang's positive expressions extended beyond the food itself. She also expressed appreciation toward the places she visited, the people involved in her interactions, and situations that contributed to her overall mukbang experience. Taken together, the findings show that Praise plays an important role in conveying Tzuyang's positive evaluations and emotional responses while sharing her dining experiences with the audience.

3.1. Gratitude

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/jokal.v6i2.104647x
p- ISSN 2776-4486 e- ISSN 2776-4494

(V1) T1: 맛있겠다! **잘 먹겠습니다**
Masigettda! Jal meokgesseumnida.
That looks so delicious! I'll enjoy my meal!

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it after the restaurant staff have served the food at the dining table. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of gratitude. The utterance is realized in the form of a declarative sentence. It expresses the speaker's appreciation toward the individuals who prepared and served the meal while also conveying gratitude before beginning to eat. Through this utterance, the speaker communicates her intention to enjoy the meal that has been served. In Korean, the expression **잘 먹겠습니다** (I'll enjoy my meal!) is commonly used before eating as a polite expression of gratitude and appreciation for the meal.

(V1) T20 : 아무튼 오늘도 잘 먹었습니다~!
Amuteun oneuldo jal meogeotseumnida~!
Anyway, I really enjoyed my meal today!

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it after finishing her meal while briefly explaining what happened at the restaurant where she dined. As she utters the expression, she brings her palms together and then waves both hands toward the camera. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of gratitude. The utterance is realized in the form of a declarative sentence. The expression **아무튼** (anyway) functions as a discourse marker that pragmatically signals the closing of the topic, indicating the speaker's intention to conclude the eating session or food review. The expression **오늘도** (today as well) suggests that expressing gratitude after a meal is a habitual practice for the speaker rather than a one-time occurrence. Finally, **잘 먹었습니다** (I really enjoyed the meal" or "Thank you for the meal") constitutes the core of the expressive speech act, as it conveys the speaker's appreciation and gratitude for the meal she has just finished. This expression is also commonly used in Korean as a polite closing remark after completing a meal.

(V6) T25 : 여기까지만 먹으려고 하는데 **쾌히** 촬영을 **허락해 주신** '로손' **너무 감사드립니다!** 진짜 하나같이 다 너무 맛있었어요
Yeogikkajiman meogeuryeogo haneunde, kwaehi chwalyeongeul heorakhae jusin 'Roseon' neomu gamsadeurimnida! Jinjja hanagati da neomu masisseosseoyo.
I was only planning to eat this much here, but I would like to sincerely thank Lawson for kindly allowing me to film here. Everything was absolutely delicious!

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it while chewing the dessert she eats at the end of the meal. At the same time, she rubs her palms together and slightly bows her upper body. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of gratitude. The utterance is realized in the form of a declarative sentence. This classification is supported by the speaker's explicit use of the expression **감사드립니다** (I would like to express my sincere gratitude), which conveys her appreciation for Lawson's permission to film at the location. The utterance is also produced using **honorific language**, a linguistic feature employed in Korean to show respect toward the hearer. In this context, Tzuyang respectfully expresses her gratitude to the representatives of Lawson, reflecting the social deference conveyed through the honorific form. Furthermore, the expression **쾌히 ... 허락해 주신** (who kindly granted permission) further strengthens the expressive force of the utterance by emphasizing the speaker's appreciation for Lawson's willingness and generosity in allowing the filming to take place.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/jokal.v6i2.104647
p- ISSN 2776-4486 e- ISSN 2776-4494

Based on the analysis, in the Gratitude category were identified, comprising Wishing and Thanking. Among these subcategories, Thanking was the most dominant, indicating Tzuyang's tendency to express gratitude explicitly and directly throughout her content. Wishing generally occurred before meals, particularly through the expression 잘 먹겠습니다 (jal meokgesseumnida), which is conventionally used in Korean to express appreciation before eating and is directed toward the food or meal to be consumed. In contrast, Thanking predominantly occurred after meals, serving to express appreciation for the food that had been served as well as to conclude the dining segment or video.

In addition to being directed toward the food and the audience, one instance of Thanking was directed toward other people, particularly when Tzuyang expressed her appreciation to individuals who had assisted in the production of the content. The use of honorific expressions in such utterances conveys not only gratitude but also respect toward the addressees. Thus, the Gratitude category in Tzuyang's content serves multiple communicative functions: expressing appreciation for the food, acknowledging the audience, and recognizing the contributions of others involved in the content production. Furthermore, the recurring use of gratitude expressions before and after meals establishes a consistent interactional pattern that contributes to the maintenance of positive relationships between Tzuyang and the parties involved..

3.2. Apologies

(V5) T6 : 미안해 다음은 너야. 꽃새우가 원래 이렇게까지 안 크거든요? 이게 진짜 크고 통통해요~!

Mianhae. Daeumeun neoya. Kkotsaeuga wonrae ireokekkaji an keugeodeunyo? Ige jinjja keugo tongtonghaeyo~!

Sorry, you're next. Spot prawns usually aren't this big. This one is incredibly large and plump!

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it after being startled when a live shrimp suddenly jumps out of the tray. She then removes its head before eating it and subsequently comments on its taste. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of apology. The utterance is realized in the form of a declarative sentence. According to Searle's Speech Act Theory, an apology is performed when the speaker acknowledges responsibility for an action that may be perceived as causing harm or violating social or moral expectations. Although the apology is ostensibly directed toward the shrimp, which is biologically incapable of responding, the utterance pragmatically functions as an apology addressed to the audience. The speaker demonstrates an awareness that her action may be perceived as cruel or unsettling by viewers. Consequently, the apology serves to maintain the speaker's positive public image and mitigate potential negative evaluations from the audience. Furthermore, Tzuyang employs **informal language (*banmal*)** because the utterance is addressed to the shrimp rather than to a human hearer. Within the context of the interaction, the utterance is categorized as an expression of apology because the speaker expresses a sense of guilt about having to kill the live shrimp before consuming it.

The use of Apologies in this context indicates Tzuyang's awareness and emotional response to the action she is about to perform toward the object of consumption. This is reflected in the utterance "미안해, 다음은 너야" (mianhae, daeumeun neoya), which employs informal language or banmal (반말). The informal character of the utterance is evident in 미안해, an informal form of "sorry," and 너야, which literally refers to "you" and, in this context, indicates that the shrimp is the next one to be eaten.

The use of banmal suggests that Tzuyang addresses the shrimp as though it were an intimate interlocutor with whom she shares a close and informal relationship. This creates an interesting pragmatic dynamic, as the apology is directed toward a non-human entity. The use of 미안해 can

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/jokal.v6i2.104647x
p- ISSN 2776-4486 e- ISSN 2776-4494

therefore be interpreted as a form of personification, through which the shrimp is metaphorically positioned as an entity capable of receiving and responding to an apology. Within the context of mukbang, this linguistic strategy highlights Tzuyang's expressive and spontaneous manner of interacting with the food she consumes, while simultaneously conveying an emotional response to the act of eating it.

Thus, the Apologies category in this dataset functions not merely as a literal expression of regret, but also reflects Tzuyang's spontaneous expression of emotion in response to her actions during the mukbang session. The deliberate use of banmal further reinforces the impression of a personal and intimate interaction between Tzuyang and the object of her utterance. Although this category is represented by only one datum, the utterance demonstrates that apologetic expressions may arise spontaneously when a speaker perceives a need to acknowledge or emotionally respond to an action, even when the addressee is a non-human entity.

3.3. Complaints

(V2) T2 : 이거 못 먹어, 어떻게 먹어 말도 안 되게 많은데? 나 이거 성공 못 할 것 같아…

Igeo mot meogeo, eotteoke meogeo? Maldo an doege maneunde? Na igeo seonggong mot hal geot gata...

I can't eat all of this. How am I supposed to finish it? There's just way too much food! I don't think I'll be able to finish it.

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it while mixing the noodle toppings to distribute them evenly. She then lifts a portion of the noodles with her chopsticks to examine the unusually large serving size. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of complaint. The utterance is realized through a combination of declarative and interrogative sentence forms. This classification is supported by the speaker's expression of feeling overwhelmed and surprised by the excessive portion of food. Although the utterance appears to describe the amount of food as a factual observation, it pragmatically conveys the speaker's psychological burden. Furthermore, the utterance reflects the speaker's uncertainty and fear of failing to complete the eating challenge. Within the context of *mukbang* content, this expression also serves to create a sense of dramatic tension, encouraging the audience to empathize with the challenge faced by the speaker.

(V4) T4 : 앗 뜨거워~

Att tteugeoweo~

Oops, it's hot!

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it immediately after taking a bite of noodles. After swallowing the noodles, she exhales through her mouth as a physical reaction to the heat. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of complaint. The utterance is realized in the form of a declarative sentence. Although brief, it indirectly informs the audience that the food is excessively hot. Expressions such as **"Oops"** or **"It's hot"** function as spontaneous verbal responses to physical discomfort. From a pragmatic perspective, this represents one of the most basic forms of expressive speech acts, as it is produced instinctively before the speaker has time to formulate a deliberate response. Considering the context, the utterance is categorized as an expression of complaint because it reflects the speaker's discomfort after accidentally eating food that was too hot.

(V5) T5: 진짜 무서워요. 가마이쒀!!

Jinjja museowoyo. Gamaisseo!!

I'm really scared. Stay still!

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/jokal.v6i2.104647
p- ISSN 2776-4486 e- ISSN 2776-4494

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it upon seeing the live shrimp moving and repeatedly jumping. She also expresses her surprise by clenching both fists, recoiling backward, and displaying a startled reaction. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of complaint. The utterance is realized through a combination of declarative and exclamatory sentence forms. This classification is supported by the speaker's expression of her internal psychological state, namely fear of the moving shrimp she is confronting. Furthermore, the utterance is categorized as an expression of complaint because it conveys the speaker's dissatisfaction with a situation that complicates her intended action. Specifically, the speaker complains that the shrimp's continuous movement makes it difficult to prepare and consume it.

(V9) T15: 와... '이비가짬뽕'에서 주신 옷에 **대참사가 났어요. 어떡해…**
Wa... 'Ibiga Jjambbong'-eseo jusin ose daechamsaga nasseoyo. Eotteokhae...
Oh no... I've made a complete mess of the shirt that Ibiga Jjamppong gave me. What should I do?

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it while eating beef ribs. As she is eating, the meat accidentally slips off the bone and falls into a bowl of *jjampong* broth, causing the soup to splash onto the shirt she is wearing. While producing the utterance, she gently pulls at her shirt and looks for the stains left by the splashed broth. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of complaint. The utterance is realized in the form of a declarative sentence. This classification is supported by the speaker's statement that a **대참사** (a complete disaster) has occurred to her clothing. From a pragmatic perspective, this expression represents a complaint about an unpleasant situation experienced by the speaker. Although she does not explicitly blame herself for the incident, the utterance conveys her dissatisfaction and distress regarding the unexpected event. Furthermore, the expression **어떡해…** (What should I do?) reinforces the complaint by expressing the speaker's confusion, anxiety, and surprise in response to the unfortunate incident.

(V10) T2: 하나 **떨어졌다! 어떡해...** 내 스팸... **떨어졌어…**
Hana tteoreojyeotda! Eotteokhae... Nae seupaem... tteoreojyeosseo...
One fell! Oh no... My Spam... it fell...

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it after a piece of Spam accidentally falls from the serving plate onto the floor when it is knocked by her arm. As the incident occurs, she immediately covers her mouth with both hands and points toward the piece of Spam on the floor while producing the utterance. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of complaint. The utterance is realized in the form of a declarative sentence. This classification is supported by the speaker's expression of dissatisfaction with the accidental loss of a piece of food, which she perceives as an unfortunate incident. Although the expression **하나 떨어졌다!** (One fell!) is grammatically an assertive utterance because it states a fact, within its emotional context it functions as a marker of an undesirable event. This interpretation is further reinforced by the subsequent utterances, which express the speaker's panic and disappointment over the unexpected loss of the food.

Based on the analysis, expressive illocutionary acts in the Complaint category were identified in two subcategories: Self-oriented Complaint and Regretting. The predominance of Self-oriented Complaint indicates that Tzuyang frequently uses complaints to express her personal difficulties and reactions when encountering various situations during her mukbang sessions. These utterances generally convey feelings of difficulty, being overwhelmed, and uncertainty about her ability to deal with certain situations. Rather than being directed at the restaurant, the food, or

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/jokal.v6i2.104647x
p- ISSN 2776-4486 e- ISSN 2776-4494

other parties, these complaints primarily reflect Tzuyang's immediate reactions to the situations she experiences. For example, her complaints may arise from physical discomfort, such as feeling overheated, or from unexpected incidents, such as something falling during the meal. Thus, the complaints are more closely related to her personal experiences and spontaneous reactions to the circumstances around her than to dissatisfaction with the food or the restaurant itself.

In contrast, Regretting represents an expression of remorse concerning an action that had already been taken. In this study, regret occurs when Tzuyang expresses remorse after ordering a particular menu item and realizing that she may be unable to finish it. Thus, while Self-oriented Complaint primarily emphasizes the speaker's immediate personal difficulties and reactions to ongoing situations, Regretting focuses on an emotional response toward a past decision and its perceived consequences.

The targets of expression in the Complaint category include Food and Situation. However, the findings indicate that these targets do not necessarily represent direct complaints toward the food or the restaurant. The Food target refers to situations in which the food becomes the context or trigger of Tzuyang's reaction, such as when its quantity or portion creates difficulty for her. Meanwhile, the Situation target refers more broadly to the circumstances and unexpected events she experiences throughout the mukbang session, including physical discomfort or minor incidents that occur during eating. Overall, the use of Complaint in Tzuyang's content does not primarily serve to assign blame to others. Rather, these utterances function as a way for Tzuyang to express her immediate personal reactions, physical discomfort, difficulties, feelings of being overwhelmed, uncertainty, and regret in response to the situations she experiences during the mukbang.

3.4. Praise

(V1) T2: 완전 내가 좋아하는 김밥 진짜 완전 고소해요.
Wanjeon naega joahaneun gimbap. Jinjja wanjeon gosohaeyo.
This is exactly the kind of gimbap I like. It's incredibly nutty and savory!

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it while eating a piece of *gimbap*. She utters these words after tasting it and being pleasantly surprised by its flavor. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of praise. The utterance is realized in the form of a declarative sentence. This classification is supported by the speaker's expression of satisfaction and appreciation for the quality of the food. Rather than merely conveying factual information, the utterance reflects the speaker's positive emotional evaluation of the food. This expressive force is reinforced by the repeated use of the intensifier 완전 (absolutely), which emphasizes both the speaker's strong preference for this type of *gimbap* and her evaluation of its rich, nutty flavor. In addition, the intensifier 진짜 (really) further strengthens the sincerity and intensity of the speaker's positive evaluation, conveying to the audience that her admiration for the *gimbap* is both genuine and emphatic.

(V3) T7: 어우 맛있어. 보리밥은 맛없을 수가 없지 않나?
Eou, masisseo. Boribabeun maseopseul suga eopji anna?
Wow, it's delicious. Barley rice can't possibly taste bad, can it?

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it after seeing the bowl of *boribap* (barley rice) and immediately mixing its ingredients together. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of praise. The utterance is realized primarily in the form of a declarative sentence, followed by a rhetorical interrogative. This classification is supported by the speaker's expression of psychological satisfaction and enjoyment while consuming the food. The interjection 어우 (wow)

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/jokal.v6i2.104647
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functions as a spontaneous emotional marker, reinforcing the sincerity of the speaker's praise. Furthermore, although the subsequent utterance is grammatically formulated as an interrogative sentence, it pragmatically serves to reinforce the preceding expression of praise rather than to seek information. Through this rhetorical question, the speaker implicitly invites the audience to share her positive evaluation and agree that the dish is indeed worthy of such praise.

(V5) T18: 진짜 캐비아 같아...! 캐비아보다 맛있어.
Jinjja kaebia gata...! Kaebiaboda masisseo.
It really tastes like caviar! It's even more delicious than caviar.

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it after tasting the Dokdo shrimp roe, after which she immediately takes another bite. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of praise. The utterance is realized in the form of declarative sentences. This classification is supported by the speaker's comparison of the food to **caviar**, a premium delicacy widely associated with luxury and exceptional quality. By stating 진짜 캐비아 같아 (It really tastes like caviar), the speaker validates the outstanding quality of the food through a favorable comparison. Furthermore, the utterance 캐비아보다 맛있어 (It's even more delicious than caviar) places the praised food above the luxury standard represented by caviar, thereby intensifying the force of the praise. From a pragmatic perspective, this constitutes a form of **superlative praise**, in which the speaker not only describes the food as delicious but also positions it at the highest level of a value hierarchy by presenting it as superior to an already prestigious benchmark.

(V6) T15: 편의점 음식이 이렇게 맛있을 일인가?
Pyeonuijeom eumsigi ireoke masisseul iringa?
Can convenience store food really be this delicious?

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it while stirring the food in front of her and simultaneously giving a thumbs-up gesture. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of praise. The utterance is realized in the form of an interrogative sentence. This classification is supported by the speaker's use of a positively skeptical rhetorical question. From a pragmatic perspective, the speaker is not genuinely seeking an answer but rather expressing the highest level of praise by emphasizing that the convenience store food far exceeds her prior expectations. The speaker initially assumes that convenience store food is generally ordinary in quality. However, upon discovering that it is exceptionally delicious, her sense of surprise further intensifies the force of the praise. The accompanying thumbs-up gesture also reinforces the speaker's positive evaluation, providing nonverbal support for the expressive meaning of the utterance.

(V6) T18: 와, 우리나라 요거트보다 맛있어, 진짜로!
Wa, urinara yogeoteuboda masisseo, jinjjaro!
Wow, it's even more delicious than the yogurt back home seriously!

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it after tasting the yogurt while gently stirring it in its container. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of praise. The utterance is realized in the form of a declarative sentence. This classification is supported by the speaker's comparison of the yogurt she is eating with the standard of yogurt from her home country, South Korea. Because the yogurt exceeds that personal standard, the utterance represents a form of **superlative praise**, expressing the speaker's exceptionally high evaluation of the food. The praise

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/jokal.v6i2.104647x
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is further reinforced by the interjection **와** (*wa*, "wow"), which functions as a marker of positive surprise, and the expression **진짜로** (*jinjjaro*, "seriously"), which serves as a sincerity marker. Through these expressions, the speaker explicitly emphasizes that her praise is genuine rather than a mere polite remark.

(V6) T21: 왜 이렇게 맛있는 거야? 이게 뭐야?
Wae ireoke masinneun geoya? Ige mwoya?
Why is this so delicious? What is this?

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it immediately after swallowing a bite of food. While speaking, she gives a thumbs-up gesture and immediately takes another bite of the dessert. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of praise. The utterance is realized in the form of interrogative sentences. This classification is supported by the fact that, from a pragmatic perspective, the questions are not intended to elicit logical answers but rather to express the speaker's admiration. The rhetorical question **왜 이렇게 맛있는 거야?** (Why is this so delicious?) functions as a hyperbolic expression indicating that the food far exceeds the speaker's expectations. Her apparent bewilderment implicitly conveys that the food is exceptionally delicious. Likewise, the expression **이게 뭐야?** (What is this?) does not literally ask for the identity of the food. Instead, within this context, it functions as a common Korean idiomatic expression used to convey that the food is so extraordinarily delicious that it seems almost unbelievable. The accompanying thumbs-up gesture and the speaker's immediate decision to take another bite further reinforce the sincerity and intensity of her positive evaluation.

(V7) T5: 맛있는데? 완전 예쁘다. 와, 이게 제일 맛있게 익은 거 같은데? 그냥 한번 최고야…
Masinneunde? Wanjeon yeppeuda. Wa, ige jeil masitge igeun geo gateunde? Geunyang hanbeon choegoya...
This is delicious. It's absolutely beautiful. Wow, I think this one is cooked perfectly. It's simply the best.

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it while grilling the meat and cutting it into two pieces. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of praise. The utterance is realized through a combination of interrogative and declarative sentences. This classification is supported by the speaker's explicit positive evaluations of multiple aspects of the dish. The expressions **맛있는데?** (This is delicious!) and **그냥 한번 최고야** (It's simply the best.) directly praise the taste of the food. In addition, **완전 예쁘다** (It's absolutely beautiful.) expresses admiration for the visual appearance of the dish, while **제일 맛있게 익은 거 같은데?** (I think this one is cooked perfectly.) praises the quality of its preparation by highlighting what the speaker perceives as an ideal level of doneness. Collectively, these evaluations demonstrate that the speaker's praise extends beyond the taste of the food to include its presentation and preparation, thereby intensifying the expressive force of the utterance.

(V7) T8: 이게 **일반 소고기랑** 뭐가 다르냐면 **육즙이 느껴지**는 게 원래 약간 **'촵' 이 정도면 얘는... 퐉** 이런 느낌?
Ige ilban sogogirang mwoga dareunyamyeon, yukjeubi neukkyeojineun ge wonrae yakgan chop i jeongdomyeon, yaeneun... pwak ireon neukkim?
What makes this different from ordinary beef is that the juices are incredible. Normally, they're just like 'chop,' but this one is more like 'pwak!

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/jokal.v6i2.104647
p- ISSN 2776-4486 e- ISSN 2776-4494

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it after swallowing a piece of beef. She then elaborates on its taste while holding another piece of meat with her chopsticks in her right hand and making a throwing gesture toward her mouth with her left hand. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of praise. The utterance is realized through a combination of declarative and interrogative sentences. This classification is supported by the speaker's comparison between the beef she is eating and ordinary beef (*ilban sogogi*). By emphasizing that the meat releases a much richer amount of meat juice, the speaker implicitly positions its quality far above that of conventional beef. In particular, the utterance praises the abundance and richness of the **육즙** (meat juices), highlighting the exceptional texture experienced while chewing. A distinctive feature of this utterance is the use of contrasting onomatopoeic expressions, **"촙"** (*chop*) and **"퐉"** (*pwak*). The former represents the relatively mild release of meat juices from ordinary beef, whereas the latter depicts a much more forceful burst of juiciness. From a pragmatic perspective, this hyperbolic use of sound symbolism intensifies the speaker's admiration and emphasizes the extraordinary quality and deliciousness of the meat.

> **(V10) T7: 와 새우 진짜 맛있겠다! 새우 비주얼 무엇? 새우 비주얼이 끝장내는데...?**
> *Wa saeu jinjja masitgetda! Saeu bijueol mueot? Saeu bijueori kkeutjangnaeneunde...?*
> Wow, those shrimp look really delicious! The presentation of the shrimp is amazing. The shrimp look absolutely incredible.

The context of this utterance is that it is produced immediately after the grilled shrimp ordered by Tzuyang is served. As she picks up the plate of shrimp, she holds it up toward the camera and utters the expressions. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of praise. The utterance is realized through a combination of interrogative and declarative sentences. This classification is supported by the speaker's admiration for the visual appeal of the dish even before tasting it. The positive evaluation is further reinforced by the interjection **와** (Wow) and the expression **맛있겠다** (It looks delicious), both of which convey the speaker's strong appreciation and anticipation of the food's quality. Furthermore, the utterance contains Korean colloquial expressions commonly used to express admiration, such as **비주얼 무엇?** (literally "What's with the presentation?"), a rhetorical expression meaning that the food looks exceptionally impressive, and **끝장내다** (*kkeutjangnaeda*), an idiomatic expression meaning "absolutely amazing" or "outstanding." From a pragmatic perspective, these colloquial expressions intensify the speaker's admiration by emphasizing the extraordinary visual presentation of the dish before it is even tasted.

> **(V10) T11:** 진짜 이거 짱이다. 감성 보이시나요? 세숫대야 감성? 좋다!
> *Jinjja igeo jjangida. Gamseong boisinayo? Sesutdaeya gamseong? Jota!*
> This is seriously awesome. Can you see the vibe? That washbasin-style aesthetic? I love it!

The context of this utterance is that Tzuyang produces it while holding up the bowl of food toward the camera. The data indicate that this utterance constitutes an expressive illocutionary speech act that pragmatically functions as an expression of praise. The utterance is realized through a combination of declarative and interrogative sentences. This classification is supported by the speaker's explicit expression of admiration for the dish and its presentation. The use of the Korean slang expression **짱** (*jjang*) conveys that something is "the best," "excellent," or "top-notch," thereby emphasizing the speaker's highly positive evaluation. Furthermore, the rhetorical questions **감성 보이시나요? 세숫대야 감성?** (Can you see the vibe? The washbasin-style aesthetic?) praise the authenticity and distinctive style of the food's presentation. In Korean, the expression **세숫대야 감성** refers to a unique or vintage serving style in which food is presented in a large

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/jokal.v6i2.104647x
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basin-like bowl, creating a casual, nostalgic, and locally authentic atmosphere. From a pragmatic perspective, these expressions demonstrate that the speaker's praise extends beyond the food itself to include the dining atmosphere and the aesthetic value of its presentation.

Overall, the findings indicate that Praise is expressed by Tzuyang through Complimenting, Admiration, and Satisfaction to convey positive evaluations and emotional responses throughout her mukbang activities. Complimenting is primarily associated with evaluations of Taste, Appearance, Scent, and Achievement, with taste being the most prominent aspect. This suggests that evaluating the taste of food is an important part of Tzuyang's interaction during mukbang, as she frequently expresses her immediate reactions after tasting the dishes. Meanwhile, Admiration reflects her sense of amazement toward things she considers impressive or remarkable, while Satisfaction expresses her pleasure and fulfillment when her dining experience meets her expectations.

The targets of expression in the Praise category include Food, Place, Other People, and Situation. Although Food is closely associated with the main focus of mukbang, Tzuyang's positive expressions also extend to the places she visits, people she encounters, and situations she experiences. This indicates that her expressions of Praise are not limited to evaluating food but also reflect her broader experiences throughout the mukbang activities.

Thus, Praise functions not only as a means of expressing positive evaluations but also as a way for Tzuyang to communicate her emotional experiences and maintain engaging interactions with the audience. Through compliments, admiration, and expressions of satisfaction, Tzuyang shares how she perceives and responds to the food and various experiences encountered during the mukbang. The frequent use of Praise therefore reflects the close relationship between expressive speech acts and the communicative nature of mukbang content.Based on the findings presented in this study, expressive illocutionary speech acts can naturally occur even during everyday activities such as eating. These findings are consistent with previous studies, which have shown that expressive illocutionary speech acts occur in various forms and serve different pragmatic functions depending on the context of the utterance (Maharani, 2021; Al Arifin et al., 2026). This similarity is reflected in the occurrence of four categories of expressive illocutionary speech acts: gratitude, apology, complaint, and praise, with praise emerging as the most dominant category. These expressions are realized through various utterances and spontaneous reactions produced while the speaker enjoys the food. Therefore, each utterance must be interpreted within its context to accurately identify its pragmatic function. For example, several interrogative sentences function not as genuine requests for information but as expressions of admiration toward the food. Furthermore, the speaker employs diverse linguistic forms, including honorific expressions to convey gratitude and respect, informal speech (*banmal*) and Korean slang to create a casual and engaging style, as well as onomatopoeic expressions to describe food and convey sensory experiences and emotional reactions. Therefore, these findings not only support previous research but also demonstrate that expressive illocutionary speech acts are realized through various linguistic forms within the context of Korean mukbang content.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings presented above, it can be concluded that numerous expressive illocutionary speech acts were identified across the ten most-viewed mukbang videos by Tzuyang published between late 2023 and early 2025. After classifying the data, four categories of expressive illocutionary speech acts were identified: gratitude, apology, complaint, and praise. Among these categories, expressions of praise occurred most frequently during the dining experience. These expressions primarily praised the taste, appearance, dining atmosphere, and quantity of the food consumed by Tzuyang. The study also found that Tzuyang expressed praise both directly and indirectly, with indirect praise often realized through interrogative sentences that pragmatically functioned as expressions of admiration. Furthermore, the linguistic forms employed by Tzuyang were highly diverse, ranging from honorific and formal language to informal speech (*banmal*) and Korean slang. In addition, the study identified the use of onomatopoeic expressions as a distinctive

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/jokal.v6i2.104647
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strategy for describing food and conveying the speaker's sensory experiences during the dining experience.

Despite the findings presented in this study, the researcher acknowledges that this study has several limitations. One of the main challenges encountered during the research process was determining the most appropriate video content to serve as the data source. In addition, the researcher experienced difficulties during the data analysis, particularly in distinguishing whether certain utterances were directed toward the audience or toward other individuals appearing in the videos. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to expand the scope of the research by examining a wider range of video content rather than focusing solely on utterances produced while enjoying food. Such an approach would allow researchers to explore different contexts and activities, as well as expressive illocutionary speech acts produced by other content creators, thereby providing a broader understanding of the variation in expressive speech acts. Future research may also develop a more in-depth analysis of the use of honorific language, formal and informal speech (*banmal*), Korean slang, and onomatopoeic expressions from a pragmatic perspective. Finally, it is hoped that this study will contribute to the advancement of pragmatic studies, particularly research on expressive illocutionary speech acts. Furthermore, the findings are expected to serve as a useful reference for future studies, especially those concerning speech acts in the Korean language.

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