



ANALYSIS OF LOCUTIONARY, ILLOCUTIONARY, AND PERLOCUTIONARY ACTS IN THE “TUMBLER TUKU” THREADS CASE

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the widespread use of language on social media, which serves not only as a means of conveying information but also as a vehicle for social action capable of shaping public opinion. The “Tumbler Tuku” case on the Threads platform exemplifies a digital communication phenomenon that elicited diverse responses from netizens due to differing interpretations of the utterances. This study aims to analyze the forms and functions of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts in posts and comments related to this case. The method used is a qualitative descriptive approach. The data consisted of utterances collected through observation and note-taking. These data were then analyzed based on speech act classification while considering the communicative context. The results indicate that locutionary speech acts are not entirely neutral, as they contain framing elements that can shape the audience’s initial perceptions. Illocutionary speech acts reveal differing communication strategies among speakers, such as expressions of disappointment, accusations, admissions, and commitments as efforts toward conflict resolution. Meanwhile, perlocutionary speech acts demonstrate diverse impacts, ranging from support and criticism to reflective evaluation, indicating that the meaning of utterances is dynamic and influenced by the audience’s perspective. Thus, this study confirms that language on social media plays a significant role in shaping meaning and public opinion.

Keywords: *speech acts; pragmatics; social media; threads; public opinion*

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as the primary instrument of human communication, enabling speakers to convey ideas, attitudes, experiences, and evaluations of events. In linguistic studies, this function of language is closely associated with pragmatics, a branch of linguistics that examines the meaning of utterances based on their contexts of use. From a pragmatic perspective, meaning is understood not merely as the literal interpretation of linguistic units but also as the result of the relationship between speakers, hearers, communicative intentions, and the social situations in which communication occurs. Pande (2020) argues that pragmatics focuses on the intentions underlying utterances, which are shaped by social context, time, place, atmosphere, educational background, and culture. Similarly, Zamzamy & Aziz (2024) emphasize that pragmatics helps

explain how the meaning of an utterance is determined by the communicative situation in which it is embedded.

The development of communication technology has expanded the use of language from face-to-face interaction to open, rapid, and participatory digital communication. [Melani & Utomo \(2022\)](#) state that technological advancements have enabled individuals to express themselves extensively through media connected to global networks. One platform that illustrates this phenomenon is Threads, a text-based social media application that allows users to share information, opinions, and responses quickly and in real time ([Abdullah et al., 2024](#)). Within such digital spaces, language functions not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a form of social action capable of shaping attitudes, directing judgments, and influencing public opinion. Therefore, utterances on social media should be understood as communicative practices with significant social consequences. This condition makes social media an important linguistic domain for systematic investigation, particularly regarding issues that rapidly attract collective public attention.

A major challenge in digital communication is that utterances can spread rapidly, generate diverse interpretations, and produce effects that are not always controllable by their original speakers. This phenomenon is evident in the viral “Tumbler Tuku” case on Threads. The controversy originated from a post by Anita Dewi concerning a lost item on a commuter train, which subsequently triggered both public sympathy and emotional reactions because it involved the name of KAI. News reports indicated that KAI had dismissed Argi, a passenger service officer who handled the recovered tumbler ([Kompas, 2025](#)). Additional reports reinforced the claim that the employee had allegedly been terminated because of the incident, thereby increasing public attention and intensifying online discussions ([Ulum, 2025](#)).

This issue demonstrates that social media utterances cannot be separated from the contexts of their production, dissemination, and reception. Posts, comments, and online responses not only convey information but also contain particular intentions and may generate emotional and social effects. Consequently, pragmatic analysis through the speech act approach provides an effective framework for understanding how language functions in digital communication contexts. Speech act theory enables researchers to identify the relationship between linguistic forms, communicative intentions, and the effects produced on interlocutors or broader audiences. In the context of viral incidents, this approach is particularly relevant because it explains how public opinion is constructed through interconnected utterances that respond to one another within digital spaces. More specifically, speech act theory offers analytical tools for distinguishing among locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Locutionary acts refer to the form and propositional content of utterances that are spoken or written, whereas illocutionary acts concern the intentions that speakers seek to accomplish through those utterances. Perlocutionary acts, in contrast, relate to the effects that utterances produce on their recipients. This distinction is particularly important in social media communication, where a post may be interpreted not only as an informational statement but also as an expression of attitude, an invitation, a criticism, a demand, or a trigger for collective action. Therefore, examining these three dimensions can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the functions of language in digital communication events.

Previous studies have demonstrated that speech act theory has been widely employed to analyze various forms of communication in media and public texts. [Maharani & Utomo \(2020\)](#), for instance, investigated locutionary acts on Fiersa Besari’s

Twitter account and found that the utterances primarily functioned to express personal emotions, such as gratitude, sadness, and complaints. [Waskito et al. \(2024\)](#) examined locutionary acts in Anies Baswedan's TikTok live broadcasts and revealed that declarative, interrogative, and imperative forms were strategically utilized in public communication through social media. Furthermore, [Widayanti \(2019\)](#) identified various forms of speech acts in films, each serving specific communicative functions, while [Zamzamy & Aziz \(2024\)](#) highlighted the importance of pragmatic analysis in uncovering implied meanings in communication.

The overview of previous studies indicates that speech act research has been applied to a wide range of communicative contexts, including Twitter accounts, TikTok live broadcasts, films, and news media. For instance, [Rohmah et al. \(2025\)](#) demonstrated that news discourse can employ illocutionary acts to express opinions on public issues. However, most existing studies have focused on media platforms that do not fully represent the simultaneous, open, and participatory interactions characteristic of contemporary social media users. Furthermore, previous research has tended to examine utterances as relatively independent linguistic products rather than as components of rapidly evolving digital conversations involving multiple participants. In fact, the nature of social media enables utterances to generate responses, emotional reactions, and large-scale public opinion formation ([Kesi, 2024](#)).

Based on this research gap, the present study, entitled "*An Analysis of Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Perlocutionary Speech Acts in Posts Related to the 'Tumbler Tuku' Case on Threads*," aims to analyze the forms and functions of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts found in posts and users' responses related to the case. The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive analysis of the three types of speech acts within the context of real-time interactions on the Threads platform, using the "Tumbler Tuku" case as a representation of a contemporary digital communication phenomenon. The scope of the research is limited to utterances appearing in posts and interactions related to the case, with particular attention given to linguistic forms, communicative intentions, and their effects on public responses. This study is expected to contribute to the growing field of digital pragmatics while promoting greater awareness of responsible and effective language use in social media environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that examines language use in relation to communicative context. [Kridalaksana \(1982\)](#) defines pragmatics as the study of the appropriateness of language use in particular situations, emphasizing that the meaning of an utterance is determined not only by linguistic structure but also by the context in which it occurs. Although this perspective remains relevant, it can be enriched by contemporary approaches that place greater emphasis on the dynamic and interactional dimensions of meaning construction. In contemporary linguistic studies, pragmatic meaning is understood as context-dependent meaning that is oriented toward both the speaker's intention and the hearer's interpretation ([Munthe et al., 2025](#)). This perspective suggests that meaning-making is not a static process but rather involves the negotiation of meaning among communicative participants. Similarly, [Bala \(2022\)](#) argues that the meaning of an utterance is influenced by external factors such as social background, interpersonal relationships, and the communicative goals pursued by speakers. Furthermore, [Sukmawati \(2023\)](#) emphasizes that pragmatics concerns not only situational context but

also the ways in which communicative purposes and the backgrounds of speakers and listeners shape the production and interpretation of language. Consequently, meaning in pragmatics is not fixed or singular; instead, it is contextually constructed and dependent upon the dynamics of interaction. This view is consistent with that of [Melani and Utomo \(2022\)](#), who argue that pragmatics functions as a bridge between the linguistic system and its use in actual communicative practices. Therefore, pragmatic analysis is increasingly relevant for investigating communication phenomena on social media platforms, where context, intention, and diverse user responses play crucial roles in meaning construction.

Speech Acts

Speech acts constitute a central concept in pragmatics, viewing language as a form of action. In his seminal work *How to Do Things with Words*, [Austin \(1962\)](#) argues that utterances do not merely convey information but also perform specific actions. This perspective highlights the communicative functions of language and its relationship to speakers' intentions. [Searle \(1969\)](#) further developed this concept by emphasizing the close relationship between speech acts and the communicative goals that speakers seek to achieve. [Widayanti \(2019\)](#) asserts that speakers communicate not only linguistic messages through speech acts but also convey attitudes, evaluations, and intentions. Thus, speech acts can be understood as communicative actions that represent the speaker's intentions, attitudes, and objectives within a particular context.

Types of Speech Acts

Locutionary Acts

Locutionary acts refer to speech acts that focus on the literal meaning or the explicit content expressed in an utterance. [Austin \(1962\)](#) describes locutionary acts as *the act of saying something*, namely the act of conveying information directly and explicitly. [Sari et al. \(2022\)](#) explain that locutionary acts are primarily informative in nature and do not necessarily require a particular response from the hearer. Therefore, the analysis of locutionary acts serves as a foundation for understanding explicit meaning before proceeding to the examination of illocutionary and perlocutionary dimensions.

Illocutionary Acts

Illocutionary acts are concerned with the speaker's intention or the illocutionary force that an utterance is intended to convey. [Searle \(1969\)](#) classifies illocutionary acts into several categories, namely assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. [Melani and Utomo \(2022\)](#) emphasize that illocutionary acts are highly dependent on the communicative context, including who the speaker is and to whom the utterance is addressed. [Safitri and Maharani \(2024\)](#) further argue that illocutionary acts may function to express feelings, make requests, offer promises, or convey statements. Therefore, the analysis of illocutionary acts is employed to uncover the implicit intentions embedded in utterances.

Perlocutionary Acts

Perlocutionary acts refer to the effects or impacts that utterances have on hearers. [Oktavia \(2019\)](#) states that perlocutionary acts possess persuasive force capable of influencing the attitudes, actions, and emotions of recipients. [Ziraluo \(2020\)](#) further explains that such effects can be observed through the responses that emerge after an

utterance has been delivered. Consequently, the analysis of perlocutionary acts is essential for understanding how utterances shape reactions and public opinion in communication, particularly within social media environments.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze speech acts in social media communication. The data consist of utterances containing locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts found in posts and comments related to the “Tumbler Tuku” case on the Threads platform. The data sources include the original post, clarification posts, and users’ comments associated with the case under investigation. Data were collected between November 21 and November 27, 2025. A total of ten data units were analyzed, comprising five primary posts and five user comments. The data were selected purposively based on relevance criteria, namely utterances that were directly related to the event under study and contained indications of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts.

Data collection was conducted using the observation method (*metode simak*) and note-taking technique (*teknik catat*). The observation method involved carefully examining language use in posts and comments, while the note-taking technique was employed to record utterances relevant to the research focus. The primary research instrument was the researcher, who acted as a human instrument, and the study was supported by a framework for classifying speech acts that served as an analytical guide. The data collection procedure consisted of several stages. The initial stage involved determining the research topic and focus, namely the “Tumbler Tuku” case. This was followed by the identification and selection of relevant posts and comments. The collected data were then categorized according to the types of speech acts identified. The final stage involved documenting the classified data for further analysis.

Data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis. The analysis involved classifying the data into categories of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts and subsequently interpreting their meanings and functions based on the contexts in which they occurred. The findings are presented in a systematic descriptive form to illustrate patterns of speech act usage in shaping meaning and generating public responses on social media.

DISCUSSION

The case analyzed in this study concerns the loss of personal property belonging to a social media user, which was publicized on the Threads platform and subsequently became the subject of widespread discussion among netizens. The initial post, which contained a chronology of the incident and allegations of staff negligence, prompted clarifications from the parties involved and generated diverse responses from other users. These interactions produced various forms of utterances that reflect the dynamics of digital communication, including the provision of information, the expression of attitudes, and responses to previous utterances. The research data consist of excerpts from posts and comments analyzed based on speech act classifications, namely locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts.

Locutionary Acts

Table 1
Locutionary Speech Act Data

Data	Utterance Excerpt	Speaker	Function
1	On Monday, after leaving work, I took the commuter line from Tanah Abang Station to Rangkas Bitung at approximately 7:00 p.m. I got off at Rawa Buntu Station at around 7:40 p.m. After alighting from the train, I realized that I had left my cooler bag in the luggage rack of the commuter line train.	Anita	Chronology of the incident
2	My TUKU tumbler was lost due to the negligence and lack of responsibility of PT KAI officers.	Anita	Information about the loss
3	At around 8:00 or 9:00 p.m., I was on duty at the gate while passengers were disembarking from the train. The area was crowded at that time.	Argi	Situational explanation

Locutionary acts refer to the act of saying something with a particular meaning, namely utterances whose meanings correspond literally to the linguistic elements used (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). In Indonesian pragmatic studies, locutionary acts are understood as the linguistic expression that links a topic with a comment, such as the relationship between subject and predicate or explanatory elements at the syntactic level (Agustina & Simarmata, 2022). Based on this understanding, the analysis of locutionary acts in this study focuses on the form and content of messages conveyed literally by speakers without initially considering their pragmatic intentions or communicative effects.

Data 1 illustrates how Anita constructs the initial narrative through a structured presentation of the chronology of events. The use of explicit temporal markers, such as “around 7:00 p.m.” and “approximately 7:40 p.m.,” accompanied by details regarding the travel route and situational conditions at the station, reflects the speaker’s attempt to present information that appears factual and verifiable. Astri (2020), in her study of speech acts on Instagram, found that locutionary utterances in digital spaces are often presented in considerable detail to enhance audience trust in the authenticity of the reported event. Such a pattern is common in digital communication, where the absence of face-to-face contextual cues encourages speakers to strengthen message credibility through detailed factual information.

In Data 2, although the utterance remains locutionary in structure because it conveys concrete information regarding the loss of property, Anita introduces an evaluative element through the phrase “the irresponsibility of PT KAI staff.” This demonstrates that, within social media communication, locutionary acts may already contain elements of framing or opinion. Consequently, the boundary between locutionary acts what is literally said and illocutionary acts the speaker’s intended meaning or purpose becomes blurred. In other words, an utterance that appears informative may simultaneously contain interpretive content capable of guiding audiences toward a negative evaluation of a particular party’s actions.

Data 2 also presents an intriguing phenomenon from the perspective of locutionary analysis. Although the utterance structurally remains a locutionary act because it communicates concrete information about the missing item, the inclusion of the evaluative phrase “the irresponsibility of PT KAI staff” indicates the presence of interpretive content from the earliest stage of the utterance. Yule (1996) argues that utterances are never entirely free from the speaker’s evaluative perspective; therefore, the boundary between locutionary acts as carriers of literal meaning and illocutionary acts as representations of communicative intention often becomes indistinct in social media interactions. Consequently, Anita’s utterance in Data 2 implicitly directs readers to frame the incident because of another party’s negligence, revealing that what appears to be a descriptive statement actually contains a concealed persuasive function. Meanwhile, Data 3 shows Argi’s utterance functioning as a form of situational contextualization. His explanation regarding the crowded passenger conditions and station gate activities literally describes factual circumstances and therefore remains within the realm of locutionary acts. Nevertheless, as Levinson (1983) argues, pragmatic meaning is not always explicitly encoded in sentence structure but may emerge implicitly through contextual interpretation. Accordingly, Argi’s utterance also functions as a strategy of self-defense against accusations directed at him by framing the incident within external circumstances that mitigate individual responsibility. Overall, the analysis of these three data excerpts demonstrates that locutionary acts in digital communication contexts are not always neutral or purely informative. Agustina and Simarmata (2022) argue that locutionary acts serve not only to convey propositions but also to shape interlocutors’ understanding of a particular event. Therefore, the analysis of locutionary acts should not be limited to their literal content but should also consider the social context, evaluative elements, and communicative strategies embedded in the delivery of the message.

Table 2
Illocutionary Speech Act Data

Data	Utterance Excerpt	Speaker	Type	Function
1	“Due to the negligence of PT KAI officers.”	Anita	Expressive & Assertive	Disappointment and accusation
2	“This was my mistake, as I failed to check it beforehand. I will take responsibility by replacing the item, Sir.”	Argi	Commissive & Expressive	Admission and commitment

In the context of social media communication, the combination of expressive and assertive illocutionary acts has the potential to shape public opinion, as emotionally charged utterances that simultaneously claim factual validity are more likely to attract attention and sympathy from a broad audience. In Data 2, Argi states, “This was my mistake because I did not check it beforehand. I will take responsibility by replacing the item, sir.” This utterance can be classified as both a commissive and an expressive speech act. Speakers use commissive speech acts to express intentions, promises, or commitments to perform future actions (Setyawan et al., 2023). The commissive dimension is evident in the clause “I will take responsibility by replacing the item,” which explicitly communicates a commitment to future action. Meanwhile, the expressive dimension is reflected in the admission of fault at the beginning of the statement,

indicating the speaker's regret regarding the negligence that occurred. The combination of these two illocutionary types suggests that Argi seeks not only to resolve the issue pragmatically but also to strategically manage his public image by presenting himself as responsible and cooperative. This communicative strategy is commonly referred to as *face-saving*, namely an effort by speakers to preserve their self-image and reputation while simultaneously reducing the social tension generated by previous accusations. Overall, the comparison between Anita's and Argi's illocutionary strategies demonstrates that the choice of speech act types is not neutral but rather reflects different communicative purposes and interests. Anita uses a mix of expressive and assertive acts to make her personal experience seem real and change how people see her, while Argi uses a mix of commissive and expressive acts to rebuild trust and address the social effects of the ongoing conflict. This finding confirms that within digital communication environments, illocutionary speech acts function not only as expressions of individual intentions but also as instruments for constructing social relationships and negotiating meaning among the parties involved.

Perlocutionary Acts

Table 3
Perlocutionary Speech Act Dat

Data	Utterance Excerpt	Speaker	Perlocutionary Effect
1	“Remarkable. Over a tumbler worth IDR 300,000, you have succeeded in jeopardizing the livelihood of a KAI officer who was not at fault. Stay strong, Mr. @argi_bdsyh. God willing, you will receive something better in return, and karma will come back to the person who slandered you.”	@nittaristiana	Support of Argi
2	“There are wiser ways to report a lost item, namely by not making unverified claims go viral on social media. The matter should have been resolved privately with PT KAI. This woman had already posted a thread with the provocative title, ‘MY TUKU TUMBLER WAS LOST DUE TO THE NEGLIGENCE OF PT KAI EMPLOYEES.’ How did she know that it was lost because of a PT KAI employee? That is my question. She did not even have evidence, yet she was so certain that Mr. Argi had stolen it. That alone could constitute defamation. However, PT KAI was also at fault in this situation.”	@mandalawangi	Criticism of Anita

Data	Utterance Excerpt	Speaker	Perlocutionary Effect
3	Anita was still at fault due to her carelessness. KA also often issues reminders such as, 'Please take care of your belongings and ensure they do not change hands,' and such matters are beyond PT KAI's responsibility. The worker or staff member had already tried to return the item. He explained that accessing CCTV footage and similar evidence required an official letter. Would it have been so difficult to assist the officer in proving what happened? One should feel sympathy for him, as he had to handle the matter on his own. Moreover, he had already intended to replace the tumbler. The issue should have been resolved at that point. Why was it posted online instead? She could potentially be charged under the Electronic Information and Transactions Law."	@strabvuck	Negative evaluation
4	"No, I do not know him personally at all." However, if he is indeed not the perpetrator, the case should be investigated thoroughly, especially since CCTV footage is available. Based on the evidence, the indication appears forceful: in the first photograph, while the item was still in the officer's possession, the tumbler was present, but suddenly it was no longer there. It would be a different matter if, in the initial photograph, the tumbler had already been missing, in which case another passenger could have taken it."	@aghniyagin a	Encouragement of objectivity
5	"It is understandable to feel disappointed when a tumbler goes missing. However, in my view, PT KAI had already done its best. Therefore, describing the situation as "the officer's lack of responsibility" seems rather harsh. What specific form of responsibility was anticipated from the officer? Was he expected to	@divateguh	Reflective evaluation

Data	Utterance Excerpt	Speaker	Perlocutionary Effect
	replace the tumbler?"		

Perlocutionary acts are speech acts that generate particular effects or impacts on hearers as a consequence of the speaker's utterance. They are often described as *the act of affecting someone*, referring to utterances that have the potential to influence the feelings, thoughts, or actions of interlocutors depending on the communicative context in which they occur (Meliyawati et al., 2023). Based on the analyzed data, the perlocutionary effects generated by netizens' utterances regarding the tumbler incident are highly diverse. Each example reflects a different type of response, ranging from support and criticism to negative evaluations, calls for objectivity, and reflective assessments. This finding demonstrates that the meaning of an utterance is not fixed but is negotiated by audiences according to their perspectives, values, and personal backgrounds.

In Data 1, the support expressed by @nittaristiana toward Argi illustrates how some audience members openly demonstrate empathy and solidarity. Yule (1996) explains that perlocutionary effects do not always take the form of concrete actions; they may also involve shifts in emotions, attitudes, or allegiances among recipients of an utterance. This response generated an affective reaction that strengthened Argi's position as a recipient of public support while illustrating how empathy in online communication can become a powerful force in shaping collective public opinion.

In Data 2, the criticism expressed by @mandalawangi reflects the emergence of ethical awareness regarding social media use. Austin (1962) argues that every utterance not only conveys information but also performs an action that carries social consequences for those involved. The speaker emphasizes the importance of fact verification before making information viral and points out the potential for defamation. The perlocutionary effect here demonstrates that netizens may respond with critical evaluations of the original speaker's actions rather than focusing solely on the event itself. This finding confirms that perlocutionary effects can extend beyond immediate reactions to encompass broader normative and ethical reflections that influence online social behavior.

Data 3 illustrates a phenomenon in which the perlocutionary effect diverges from the speaker's intended purpose. Anita's utterance, which was originally intended to express a complaint, instead elicited negative evaluations from @strabvuck. Searle (1969) explains that perlocutionary effects are external to the speaker and remain beyond the speaker's control; rather, audiences determine the ultimate meaning and response to an utterance based on their own moral judgments and social norms. In this case, netizens highlighted Anita's negligence while simultaneously emphasizing PT KAI's procedures and responsibilities, resulting in an effect that contradicted the speaker's original intention. This finding confirms that perlocutionary effects do not always correspond to the speaker's intended meaning but are strongly influenced by how audiences interpret utterances within a broader social context.

Data 4 and Data 5, on the other hand, show more moderate and thoughtful ways of responding. Through the Cooperative Principle, Grice (1975) argues that in effective communication, rational audiences tend to process utterances critically and proportionally according to the context in which they occur. Users such as @aghniyagina advocated for an evidence-based resolution by emphasizing objectivity and verification through CCTV

footage, whereas @divateguh offered a reflective evaluation of PT KAI's responsibility in the incident. These findings indicate that perlocutionary effects are not homogeneous; some audience members are capable of restraining immediate emotional reactions and instead promoting rational analysis of the situation.

Therefore, perlocutionary speech acts within the context of social media produce complex effects. Utterances can shape public opinion, trigger conflict, and simultaneously encourage social and normative reflection. This analysis demonstrates that perlocutionary effects are multidimensional, influenced by the audience's background, values, and perspectives, and capable of extending the meaning of communication beyond the speaker's original intention.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the use of speech acts in social media interactions related to the Tumbler Tuku case functions not only as a means of conveying information but also as a mechanism for constructing meaning, expressing communicative intentions, and influencing public responses. Locutionary acts represent the literal content of utterances concerning the event under discussion, whereas illocutionary acts reveal the speaker's communicative purposes, such as clarification, self-defense, or evaluation. The diverse reactions of netizens reflect perlocutionary acts, which contribute to shaping the dynamics of opinion within the digital sphere. Accordingly, this study demonstrates that the interpretation of utterances on social media is highly dependent upon context and audience interpretation. These findings emphasize the necessity of a pragmatic approach in understanding digital communication. Meaning comes from the content of an utterance, how it is delivered, the speaker's intentions, and its effects on audiences.

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