

Commissive and Directive Speech Acts in Arabic Tourism Promotion on TikTok

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ABSTRACT

Background: The rapid growth of the Middle Eastern tourist market demands advanced communication skills from tourism practitioners. However, current teaching materials for Arabic for Specific Purposes (ASP) in Tourism are often limited to conventional transactional offline scenarios, which are increasingly less relevant to modern digital promotion needs.

Purpose: This study explores the pragmatic functions of speech acts in Arabic tourism promotional discourse on TikTok and examines their pedagogical implications for developing adaptive, industry-relevant ASP materials.

Method: Employing Krippendorff's qualitative content analysis, this study analyzed 61 speech units extracted from five purposively selected travel-agency TikTok accounts with high engagement and explicit Arabic promotional content targeting Middle Eastern tourists. Out of 124 transcribed units 61 relevant commissive and directive units were analyzed. The data were gathered through documentation and coded based on Searle and Leech's pragmatic functional schemes, focusing specifically on persuasive strategies within digital discourse.

Results and Discussion: The findings reveal a clear predominance of commissive speech acts (77%) over directive speech acts (23%). This suggests that digital tourism marketing discourse tends to prioritize trust-building through promises and guarantees over direct instruction. Linguistically, this persuasion is realized through the efficient use of *ḥadbfu al-mubtada'* (subject omission) structures, the integration of digital technical lexicons, and the strategic code-switching into the *'ammīyyah* (colloquial) variety to foster emotional closeness.

Conclusions and Implications: This study highlights the necessity of updating current educational resources. It recommends reorienting the ASP Tourism curriculum toward a functional-pragmatic approach that integrates digital copywriting skills, technological literacy, and sociolinguistic flexibility, ultimately preparing competent tourism graduates for the digital era.

Keywords:

Arabic for Specific Purposes (ASP); Tourism; Speech Acts; TikTok; Teaching Materials.

ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: Pertumbuhan pesat pasar wisatawan Timur Tengah menuntut keterampilan komunikasi tingkat lanjut dari para praktisi pariwisata. Namun, bahan ajar Arabic for Specific Purposes (ASP) pariwisata saat ini sering kali terbatas pada skenario transaksional luring (*offline*) konvensional, yang semakin kurang relevan dengan kebutuhan promosi digital modern.

Tujuan: Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi fungsi pragmatis tindak tutur dalam diskursus promosi pariwisata berbahasa Arab di TikTok dan menguji implikasi pedagogisnya untuk pengembangan bahan ajar ASP yang adaptif dan relevan dengan industri.

Metode: Menggunakan analisis isi kualitatif Krippendorff, penelitian ini menganalisis 61 unit tuturan relevan (dari total 124 unit yang ditranskripsi) yang diekstraksi dari lima akun TikTok agen perjalanan yang dipilih secara bertujuan (*purposive*) dengan tingkat interaksi tinggi dan konten promosi eksplisit berbahasa Arab yang menargetkan wisatawan Timur Tengah. Data dikumpulkan melalui dokumentasi dan dikodekan berdasarkan skema fungsional pragmatis Searle dan Leech, dengan fokus khusus pada strategi persuasif dalam diskursus digital.

Hasil dan Pembahasan: Temuan mengungkap dominasi yang signifikan dari tindak tutur komisif (77%) dibandingkan dengan tindak tutur direktif (23%). Hal ini menunjukkan pergeseran strategis dalam pemasaran digital dari instruksi langsung ke upaya membangun kepercayaan konsumen melalui janji dan jaminan layanan. Secara linguistik, persuasi ini diwujudkan melalui penggunaan struktur *hadhfu al-mubtada'* (penghilangan subjek) yang efisien, integrasi leksikon teknis digital, dan alih kode strategis ke dalam varietas *'ammiyyah* (ragam kolokial/dialek Arab) untuk menumbuhkan kedekatan emosional.

Kesimpulan dan Implikasi: Penelitian ini menyoroti perlunya pembaruan sumber daya pendidikan saat ini. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan reorientasi kurikulum ASP pariwisata menuju pendekatan fungsional-pragmatis yang mengintegrasikan keterampilan *copywriting* digital, literasi teknologi, dan fleksibilitas sosiolinguistik, yang pada akhirnya mempersiapkan lulusan pariwisata yang kompeten untuk era digital.

Kata Kunci

Arabic for Specific Purposes (ASP); Pariwisata; Tindak Tutur; TikTok; Bahan Ajar.



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INTRODUCTION

The global tourism sector has positioned communication as a crucial factor in business success and tourist experience. Communication plays a role beyond simply conveying messages; it serves as a vital instrument in creating shared understanding between tourists and tourism operators. In the context of Indonesian tourism, this aspect is highly strategic given the growth of the Middle Eastern market, which requires proficiency in Arabic for specific tourism-related purposes. This is reinforced by a study by Rustandi et al. [1], which highlighted the significant representation of Arabic culture and language in public spaces in Indonesian tourist areas, such as Puncak Bogor. Similar findings by Misran [2] indicate that communicative competence among Arab tour guides is vital. This condition necessitates functional Arabic speaking competence for local tourism stakeholders, overall signaling the vital role of the Arabic language within the national tourism landscape.

This substantial market potential is not matched by adequate Arabic-language communication support, with Muslim tourists often encountering language barriers when seeking tourism information and services in Indonesia. This obstacle underscores the urgency of developing functional proficiency in Arabic, given its strategic role as a tour guide for Middle Eastern tourists, which has been identified as a significant opportunity in the modern era. Therefore, the required Arabic language competency should be framed within the ASP perspective,

emphasizing functional language skills aligned with tourism-service needs rather than general linguistic ability.[3] Furthermore, facing the challenges of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, Arabic learning must adapt to new opportunities.[4] Mastery of these functional language skills is central to the Arabic for Specific Purposes (ASP) framework. The main principle of ASP is to align learning and teaching materials with an analysis of specific workplace needs. Within this framework, needs analysis operates as a methodological tool, as emphasized by Rustamiaji et al.[5], to bridge the gap between students' current linguistic proficiency and the targeted proficiency in real-life professional situations.

Unfortunately, the development of ASP materials is often criticized for failing to align with field needs.[6] In practice, Arabic language learning still focuses heavily on *fushā*-based materials or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which tend to overly formal and restricted to scripted classroom patterns. The teaching materials used generally revolve around conventional transactional conversational situations, such as hotel reservations, airport check-in, or food ordering.[7] This situation indicates that the use of Arabic in more diverse contexts has not received sufficient attention in the curriculum. However, in the context of ASP Tourism, the scope of discourse extends beyond transactional communication to encompass creative promotion and digital persuasion, which play a crucial role in attracting tourists even before they arrive at a destination, aligning with the rise of digital marketing as a primary driver of contemporary tourism.[8],[9] If teaching materials focus solely on transactional situations, graduates are prepared for administrative roles, such as reception staff. They may not possess the competencies of tourism marketers capable of strategically constructing destination appeal and persuasive tourism narratives.

This situation creates a significant gap between actual communication needs and the material taught.[10] In the Arabic context, the needs analysis framework is further complicated by diglossia, in which the language variety taught in class (MSA) serves a different function from that used in everyday social communication. Harbi's findings[11] indicate that the functional differences between MSA and colloquial Arabic often create communication barriers and frustration for learners because classroom materials do not reflect real-life language use. To address this gap, an approach more relevant to actual communication contexts is needed. Nurmala and Supriadi [12] emphasize that language teaching for specific purposes must tailor its content to specific occupational fields, including appropriate structures, vocabulary, and discourse. Therefore, the application of ASP in tourism requires the integration of real-life communication examples that represent actual situations in the field.

In today's digital era, social media, including TikTok, provides a rich source of real-life communication and serves as a vehicle for interaction and the promotion of cross-cultural tourism. The use of social media platforms as learning resources for speaking, reading, and writing skills within the Arabic Language Education curriculum has shown pedagogical potential in Arabic language learning. This technological relevance is supported by Sarip et al.[13] and Ilmiani and Mioło [14], who found that implementing project-based learning and digital literacy significantly improved the effectiveness of Arabic language learning.

Specifically, as a short video-based platform, TikTok offers unique pedagogical potential for informal language learning.[15] Research by Rininggayuh [16] confirms TikTok's high effectiveness in improving speaking skills (*maharah kalam*) by providing visual and auditory contexts that stimulate active learner engagement. TikTok's affordances encourage virality and user creativity in producing multimodal content, enabling messages to be conveyed both directly and indirectly. Therefore, the discourse of Arabic tourism service advertisements on TikTok encompasses a range of pragmatic functions that are highly relevant to the development of communicative competence in ASP Tourism.

Based on this background, this study was formulated to answer two main questions: (1) What are the forms of commissive and directive speech acts in Arabic-language tourism advertisements on TikTok? and (2) What are the implications of the results of this analysis for the development of ASP Tourism materials aligned with real communication needs in the tourism sector?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The teaching of Arabic for Specific Purposes (ASP) within the tourism sector requires a paradigm shift from traditional language instruction to a more functional, pragmatic approach. According to the foundational concepts of specific-purpose language education, the curriculum must directly reflect the communicative needs of the target profession.[17] In the modern tourism industry, these needs are increasingly driven by digital marketing and social media engagement. Tankovic et al.[18] emphasize that effective communication skills in tourism go beyond basic information exchange; they encompass the ability to persuade, build trust, and manage tourist expectations. However, as Tuan et al.[19] note in their study of transnational hospitality, there is often a disconnect between the genre and pragmatic competence taught in classrooms and the actual discourse strategies employed in real-world tourism settings. These findings justify the need to ground ASP Tourism materials in authentic persuasive discourse rather than only institutional service routines.

To analyze the pragmatic functions within digital tourism advertisement discourses, this study is grounded in the Speech Act Theory framework developed by Searle.[20] This theory views language not merely as a system of words, but as a functional action aimed at creating specific effects on the interlocutor. Searle classifies illocutionary acts into five universal categories: assertives, declarations, commissives, expressives, and directives. In the context of ASP Tourism, which involves both transactional and relational dimensions, speech acts are strategic tools. They do not merely convey descriptions of tourist destinations; they actively direct consumer actions and establish institutional commitment. Consequently, directives and commissives are particularly relevant for this study.

In more detail, Leech's pragmatic framework [21] allows for a more detailed explanation of the social functions of these two types of speech acts. Within this framework, directives encompass a spectrum of persuasive actions such as ordering, inviting, advising, and suggesting. These are essential for prompting tourists to make bookings or visit locations. Meanwhile, commissives include offering, promising, and guaranteeing service quality, which serve as a form of service provider commitment. In digital marketing, securing audience trust through commissives is often a crucial prerequisite before directing them toward a purchasing decision.[22]

To accurately analyze how these pragmatic functions are realized in the Arabic context, an understanding of Arabic diglossia is essential. Diglossia refers to the coexistence of a highly codified formal variety (Modern Standard Arabic or *fushā*) and various colloquial dialects (*'ammiyyah*). In digital domains, diglossic code switching represents the strategic alteration between these high and low varieties to serve specific sociolinguistic functions such as presenting cultural distinctiveness and building social closeness. Thus, the integration of *'ammiyyah* into promotional narratives functions as a deliberate pragmatic strategy to foster emotional engagement and transcend the functional limitations of formal Arabic.[23]

This shift toward *'ammiyyah* further reflects a broader pattern of sociolinguistic accommodation. Grounded in communication accommodation theory, individuals adjust their communicative behavior to converge with their interlocutors. Within promotional contexts, this convergence involves incorporating dialect elements of the audience to establish rapport and signal social affiliation. By accommodating these linguistic preferences, tourism practitioners cultivate the interpersonal trust and emotional resonance essential for effective persuasion.[24]

Finally, these pragmatic and sociolinguistic choices are inherently shaped by the multimodal nature of digital discourse. Platforms like TikTok prioritize interactive and concise communication where language, visuals, and gestures synergize to construct brand identity. In this environment, colloquialism serves as emotional capital to facilitate trust and inclusivity through the conversationalization of marketing. Consequently, the informal and abbreviated nature of Arabic promotional content on TikTok is a calculated adaptation to the engagement driven ecosystem of the platform.[25]

Previous studies have highlighted the significance of pragmatic analysis in promotional discourse. For instance, Rababah [26] examined speech acts in Jordanian advertising, revealing how linguistic features and rhetorical devices are strategically employed to achieve persuasive functions. Similarly, Taulia and Pujiono [27] analyzed the communication of hospitality at Lake Toba, demonstrating how specific speech acts shape the tourist experience. Baharizky et al.[28] explored speech acts in educational advertising as a medium for teaching persuasive texts. Furthermore, Dewi et al.[29] and Izyra and Sartini [30] emphasized the role of illocutionary acts and cross-cultural pragmatics in hospitality and tourism promotion, while Rohmadi et al.[31] confirmed the shift in persuasive directive speech from printed to digital media advertising. Taken together, these studies confirm the persuasive relevance of speech acts in promotional discourse, but they do not yet sufficiently address Arabic tourism promotion on short-video platforms such as TikTok.

Despite these insights, functional linguistic analysis at the pragmatic/illocutionary level has not been a primary focus in ASP Tourism studies, particularly concerning the Arabic language and digital media like TikTok. Existing literature on Islamic tourism applications [6] and ASP course design [32] often remains trapped in rigid conversational scenarios, neglecting the dynamic, persuasive discourse of digital promotion. ASP experts advocate for specialized curricula tailored to actual functional communication needs, which involve complex interactions such as offering and persuasion in digital spaces.[33] This study fills this specific gap by focusing explicitly on ASP Tourism rather than pure linguistics. The novelty of this research lies in its applied analysis of commissive and directive speech acts in Arabic-language TikTok tourism advertisements, aiming to extract authentic, functional language patterns that can directly inform and update ASP teaching materials for the digital era.

METHOD

Research design

This research employs a qualitative approach using content analysis, following the framework developed by Krippendorff.[34] This method was chosen because it allows researchers to systematically and contextually identify, classify, and interpret communication functions within discourse, particularly in media texts and digital advertisements. Content analysis is relevant to this research because the study examines the functions of speech acts as persuasive strategies in tourism promotion discourse. This study is primarily qualitative-descriptive, although simple frequency counts are used to support pattern identification.

Population and samples

The subject of this research is Arabic-language tourism service advertisements published on the TikTok platform. TikTok was selected as a data source because it represents authentic, dynamic, and multimodal digital tourism communication practices in which language is explicitly used to promote services. Promotional content on TikTok combines spoken language, visual text, and captions, providing rich data for pragmatic analysis, particularly in examining the implementation of commissive and directive speech acts. The accounts used as data sources were purposively selected based on explicit criteria including Arabic-language promotional content, tourism-service orientation, Middle Eastern audience targeting, and relatively high interaction

rates.[35] These accounts represent travel agencies or tourism promotion accounts that consistently target Arabic-speaking audiences, particularly Middle Eastern tourists, and exhibit relatively high levels of audience interaction. This high level of interaction indicates that the promotional discourse has significant reach and potential influence. Furthermore, the selected accounts explicitly display a variety of commissive and directive speech acts, such as service offers, guarantees, invitations to visit, and transactional commands, making them relevant for analysis as representations of persuasive communication practices in digital tourism.

Instruments

In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the primary instrument (human instrument) responsible for directly observing, filtering, and interpreting the pragmatic functions within the digital content. To support the data collection process and ensure systematic analysis, the researcher utilized documentation guidelines and a pragmatic coding matrix. The research data consists of Arabic utterances or discourse units that implement the functions of commissive and directive speech acts, in both *fushā* and *'ammiyyah* styles. The unit of analysis was a single utterance representing a single dominant communicative intent. In cases of multifunctional utterances, the dominant illocutionary force was determined based on contextual prominence and promotional intent.

Procedures

Data were collected through repeated viewing of selected videos, followed by the recording and transcription of all relevant verbal and textual elements. The data were analyzed until theoretical saturation was reached, at which point no new and significant variations in the function of speech acts were identified until no new functional patterns of commissive and directive speech acts emerged from the analyzed corpus. Data analysis was conducted using Krippendorff's content analysis, which involves segmenting the data into coding units, coding according to functional schemes, and grouping categories. The speech act coding scheme was adapted from Searle's illocutionary taxonomy [20] and developed pragmatically to identify commissive and directive functional strategies in tourism promotional discourse. To enhance analytical trustworthiness, coding criteria were operationalized through a pragmatic matrix and repeatedly checked against contextual meaning. This study did not use a second coder, which is acknowledged as a limitation. The final stage of analysis involved interpreting the dominance and usage patterns of the identified speech acts and relating them to communication needs in the tourism industry. The findings of this study were used to formulate pedagogical implications for developing Arabic for Specific Purposes (ASP) Tourism teaching materials grounded in real-life communication practices and communicative needs in the field.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study examines Arabic-language tourism promotional discourse from five videos, each extracted from one of the five selected travel agency and influencer accounts on TikTok: @indo.gate, @me.travel25, @almurtahel, @otlaat, and @khs_travel. Of the 124 transcribed speech data units, this study focused on 61 units containing commissive and directive speech acts. Data reduction was carried out to eliminate purely informative (assertive) utterances, allowing analysis to focus on the pragmatic power of speech acts in influencing consumer decisions. This aligns with Searle's view [20], which emphasizes that illocutionary speech acts are the primary means of achieving communicative goals, not merely of describing facts.

In frequency terms, commissive speech acts predominated at 77% (47 data points), whereas directive speech acts accounted for only 23% (14 data points). This frequency disparity indicates that current tourism communication patterns on digital social media are more oriented toward building trust through service promises than simply transactional instructions. This dominance is

Directive	Ordering	سافر مع بوابة اندونيسيا احجز التذكرة التاريخ: ابدأ رحلتك من ٢٠٢/١٢/١ ٥ احجز الآن عبر واتساب	اكتب لنا في التعليقات اندونيسيا	احجز رحلتك مع سفريات الخميس عبر تطبيق Q8Holiday
	Inviting	استكشف اندونيسيا عش تجربة الرفاهية المطلقة	للحجز والاستفسار	رحلتك تبدأ من هنا... خلك مع الخميس يا الجنتل
	Suggesting	العروض ساربه إلى /١٢/٢٠٢٥ .١	العرض ساري حتى : ٢٠ ديسمبر ٢٠٢٥	راحت عليك اربع اشياء

Marketing strategies in the tourism industry, particularly on digital platforms like TikTok, rely not only on compelling visuals but also on the power of verbal narratives. A well-crafted narrative is essential for building positive perceptions and converting tourist interest into purchasing decisions, as highlighted by a model of tourism advertising effects.[35] Because tourism products are intangible, consumers often face uncertainty. This is where speech acts emerge as strategic instruments: commissives are used to build trust through promises of quality, while directives serve as catalysts for decision-making. Therefore, the dominant finding of commissive speech acts (77%) and directives (23%) in this study is not merely a statistic but rather a reflection of travel agencies' efforts to overcome consumer psychological barriers. This strategy aligns with the findings of Addo et al.[22] and Nurjaya et al.[36], which demonstrate that in digital marketing, securing audience trust through electronic word of mouth and engagement is crucial before directing them toward a purchasing decision.

Commissive Speech Acts: Offering, Promising, and Guaranteeing Strategies

In the dynamics of digital transactions, where physical face-to-face interaction is absent, the ability to build credibility is a prerequisite for persuasion. Commissive speech acts serve as linguistic instruments that bridge tourists' doubts with assurances from the service. The in-depth analysis mainly centers on V3 and V5, while the offering function is additionally illustrated through V1 because of its strong representativeness.



Picture 1: Visual Realization of Commissive Speech Acts

Source: Data Documentation V1, V3, and V5 (2025)

The first function, offering, is realized massively by V3 and V1 through the use of the *ismiyah* sentence structure that experiences *hadhf* (omission) in its subject or *mubtada'* component. As found in the V3 data, utterances such as “International flight tickets” (تذاكر الطيران الدولي) and “4-5 star hotels” (فنادق ٤-٥ نجوم) appear as independent noun phrases. A similar pattern is also dominant in V1 with the utterances “Car with driver” (سيارة مع سائق) and “Internet card” (شرائح انترنت). In mass media advertising, the omission strategy reflects a communicative effort to present information concisely, in which readers infer unspoken elements from textual structural cues and consistent situational context.[26] Pragmatically, this strategy functions as an emphasis (*tankid*) that directly presents the service object, creating an effect of instant availability and helping to capture the attention of TikTok audiences, who tend to scan information.

In addition to syntactic analysis, a more in-depth morphological analysis of V3 and V1 reveals a strong preference for *maṣdar* (verbal nouns) over *fi'il* (verbs) in packaging offers. Utterances such as “Welcome” (استقبال) or “Tour” (جولات سياحية) are forms of *maṣdar*. The strategy of choosing phrase structure (noun vs. verb) in advertising influences persuasive intensity and the representation of meaning in digital media, demonstrating the realization of different communication functions in contemporary pragmatic contexts. The use of the noun form conveys the impression that the service is “definitely there” and always available, rather than just a fleeting promise. This word choice psychologically reinforces the travel agency's image of professionalism and stability among potential travelers.

The second function moves to the level of promises. According to Searle [20], the fundamental difference between assertive statements and commissive promises lies in the direction of conformity. In promises, the direction of conformity is “the world conforms to the word,” in which the speaker (the agent) commits to changing the world's reality to conform to their statement. This is indicated by a shift in sentence structure toward the use of the verb (*fi'il mudhari*) with the nun affix (a marker of *ḍamir nahnu*). Although both V3 and V5 focus more on nouns, V5 specifically uses the utterance “We provide for you” (نوفر لك), and V3 uses “We have” (يوجد لدينا). The use of the plural pronoun “we” in critical discourse analysis is interpreted as a solid corporate voice. Furthermore, this reinforces the illocutionary force of commissiveness, as defined by Searle [20], in which the speaker (the agent) consciously commits himself to future actions to meet customer expectations. When an account states, “We provide the best prices,” the verb functions as a verbal contract binding the institution to meet the promised price standards. Another prominent grammatical aspect of the promise function in V5 is the use of the particle lam as a benefactive marker (*lam at-ta'alluq*) combined with the second-person pronoun *ḍamir mukhathab*, as in the phrase “We provide for you” (نوفر لك). The addition of linguistic elements that explicitly direct the message to a specific audience is a pragmatic strategy to strengthen the speaker's involvement and commitment. In persuasive advertising, this type of personalization increases the

message's appeal and encourages an action response from the audience.[28] By inserting "for you," the speaker in V5 transforms the company general promise into a personal commitment to each reader of the advertisement, a highly effective strategy for fostering emotional engagement.

The guaranteed function represents the strongest form of commitment in the analyzed commissive data, especially in V3 and V5. Both accounts consistently use the *na'at - man'ut* structure (adjective phrase) as a linguistic strategy to guarantee service quality. In V3, the key phrase "Official/Trusted Agent" (وكلاء معتمدون) is found. The lexicon "*mu'tamad*" (accredited/official) in the context of tourism promotion serves as a marker of institutional legitimacy, strengthening audience trust in the service provider. Furthermore, V3 also embodies the guarantee through the phrase "Lowest price" (أقل الأسعار), which uses the superlative form to emphasize a claim of competitive advantage. In the study of advertising speech acts, the use of superlative structures is understood as a persuasive strategy to project superiority and to emphasize the speaker's commitment to the quality or value offered.[28] This type of claim functions as an implicit commissive that binds consumer expectations regarding the promised service.

On the other hand, V5 strengthens the guaranteed function by addressing cultural and religious sensitivities in the Middle Eastern market. The phrase "Halal food" (أكل حلال) in V5 functions not only as a service description but also as a commissive speech act that guarantees the spiritual comfort of Muslim tourists, as emphasized in a study of religion-based tourism.[6] This finding confirms that the assurance strategy in digital tourism promotion extends beyond the physical quality of accommodations to encompass emotional and religious comfort. Furthermore, V5 conveys social assurance through the phrase "They love Arabs" (يحبون العرب), which helps build a sense of social security among tourists. This statement extends the meaning of assurance beyond the technical service dimension to social acceptance, which plays a crucial role in building tourists' initial trust in the destination being promoted.

Further analysis of V5 reveals a pattern of intense use of positive evaluative vocabulary. Phrases like "Excellent service" (خدمة ممتازة) and "Unforgettable memories" (ذكريات لا تنسى) are promises of a quality experience. The use of these adjectives serves as quality markers that bind consumer expectations. Interestingly, in the V3 and V5 data, there is almost no use of hedging words (such as "maybe," "inshallah," or "try") that indicate hesitation. This absence of uncertainty markers strengthens their bargaining position as a confident and reliable service provider.

Lastly, explicit price transparency is particularly evident in data V4 (e.g., "Hotels under 200 riyals" / الفنادق أقل من ٢٠٠ ريال) is a key element of their assurance strategy. The use of specific numbers serves to set clear expectations and avoid ambiguity. In business communication, clarity of pricing information and transparency in digital interactions are regarded as the highest forms of honesty, significantly enhancing consumer trust and purchase intention.[36] Therefore, the transparent V4 strategy is highly effective in building initial trust, as every figure presented is perceived as a promise the agency must keep. This transparency reduces consumers' information search costs and accelerates decision-making.

Directive Speech Acts: Commanding, Inviting, and Suggesting Strategies

Although directive speech acts accounted for only 23% of the data, a focused analysis of samples V1 (@indo.gate), V2 (@me.travel25), and V4 (@otlaat) revealed a broad spectrum of persuasive strategies, ranging from firm transactional commands to imaginative appeals to emotional suggestions. These three sources were selected because each represents a distinct directive style, providing a comprehensive picture of how travel agencies move their audiences to action.[27]



Picture 2: Visualization of Directive Speech Act Realization

Source: Data Documentation V1, V2, and V4 (2025)

The first strategy is assertive and transactional, which is very dominant in sample V1. In the V1 data, direct imperative verbs such as "Order a ticket" (احجز التذكرة) and "Travel" (سافر) were observed. More specifically, V1 used the technical command "Order now via WhatsApp" (احجز الآن عبر واتساب), which explicitly directs the audience to the transaction channel. In the study of digital advertising pragmatics, the imperative form is understood as a directive strategy that functions as a call to action, namely, encouraging the audience to take immediate action without the intermediary of lengthy discourse.[31] This imperative form represents the basic function of directives in Searle's taxonomy, namely the speaker's attempt to encourage the interlocutor to do something. In this context, the use of direct commands reflects a hard-selling strategy that emphasizes clear instructions and urgency to expedite potential tourists' decision-making.

Analysis of V1 data also reveals the integration of technology within the command structure. The phrase "via WhatsApp" (عبر واتساب) transforms a traditional command into a digital technical instruction. This demonstrates the adaptation of Arabic to the platform ecosystem, bridging language with technology.[3] The verb *ihji* (احجز) now closely pairs with the technical noun application, creating a new collocation in the tourism register. This indicates that digital technical proficiency is a prerequisite for responding to directive speech acts in the modern era, in line with the findings of Abbas et al.[37] regarding TikTok's technological affordances.

The second pattern demonstrates a shift in speech function toward imaginative and persuasive invitations, as seen in the V2 sample. Unlike V1, which uses direct commands to encourage transactions, V2 chooses a softer imperative form through the use of the *wazan istafala*, as in the phrase "Explore Indonesia" (استكشف اندونيسيا). In the context of tourism advertising language, lexical choices such as *istakshafa* (استكشف) function not only as instructions but also as invitations that build curiosity and exploratory experiences. Compared to the verb *zur* (زُر / visit), which tends to be oriented towards physical movement, the word "explore" implies the tourist's active involvement in the process of discovery. This indicates that V2 employs a softer selling promotional strategy. This shift from commands to invitations aligns with Leech's view of the social purpose of speech, in which agency is no longer simply "commanding" but rather "inviting," thereby reducing pressure on the interlocutor. In addition, V2 also uses the phrase "Experience luxury" (عيش تجربة الرفاهية). The use of the verb "live/feel" (عيش) invites the audience to do a mental simulation and imagine themselves enjoying the holiday. This is a highly effective soft-selling strategy on social media, where audiences prefer to be inspired rather than ordered. V2's approach is in line with the concept of experiential marketing, where what is sold is not a product (ticket/hotel), but rather a sensation and a transformative life experience, and is in line with Rininggayuh's view [16] on the role of visuals and narratives in stimulating learner/audience engagement.

The third strategy reflects the suggestion function, implemented using a distinct psychological approach by V4 (@otlaat). The most interesting finding in V4 is the use of the dialectal expression (*ammiyyah*) “*rabat ‘alaik*” (راحت عليك) roughly meaning “you’ll miss out”. This phrase is a popular idiom not found in standard MSA structures. The use of this idiom creates a powerful fear of missing out among young audiences. Pragmatically, this is advice within Leech’s framework [16], packaged as a social warning: “If you don’t take this package, you will be the one to lose.” The emotional thrust of this idiom goes far beyond ordinary formal advice.

Furthermore, V4 employs socially interactive commands, such as “Write to us in the comments column” (اكتب لنا في التعليقات). This is a directive oriented toward engagement. V4 not only encourages purchasing but also audience interaction, including asking questions and participating in discussions. This strategy is also compatible with TikTok’s engagement-driven interaction model, in which content visibility is influenced by user interactions such as comments, likes, and shares.[38] By encouraging comments, V4 fosters community and closeness rather than a cold, transactional relationship between seller and buyer.

A sociolinguistic analysis of V4 also demonstrates the importance of considering linguistic variation. This is evident in the use of diction such as “وينرسللك” (*wa-binarsillak*), which uses the prefix *bi-* as a dialect marker, as well as the idiom “*rabat ‘alaik*”. Harbi [11] notes that the phenomenon of diglossia on social media enables the use of low varieties to foster a sense of familiarity. The use of casual language and dialect idioms in V4 serves to shorten social distance. By using the *‘ammiyyah* language, the travel agency positions itself not as a rigid corporation, but as a “friend” offering sincere recommendations.

Overall, the analysis of V1, V2, and V4 shows that directive speech acts in digital tourism are not singular. V1 teaches efficiency through explicit transactional commands, V2 teaches the power of imagination through experiential appeals, and V4 teaches emotional closeness through spoken language and psychological effects. This diversity of strategies underscores that, to succeed on platforms such as TikTok, travel agencies must be able to play multiple roles: assertive sales people, imaginative invitees, and intimate friends.

Pedagogical Implications for ASP Tourism Material Development

These research findings highlight the pressing need for curriculum reform in Arabic for Specific Purposes (ASP) Tourism. Historically, this field has remained somewhat stagnant, relying too heavily on outdated textbooks. Previous research by Batmang et al.[7], confirms that the tourism Arabic syllabus in vocational institutions (such as the case study at the NHI Bandung Tourism Polytechnic) is still dominated by rigid transactional scenarios, such as hotel check-in procedures, welcoming guests at the airport, and food reservations. However, the current reality of the digital tourism industry demands the mastery of much more complex discourse dynamics oriented towards marketing persuasion. This gap between classroom teaching and industry reality mirrors broader criticisms of language curricula that have yet to adapt to the evolving digital ecosystem or the pragmatic demands of the modern workforce.[19] To bridge this gap, a targeted needs analysis is essential to ensure ASP materials move beyond pure theory and truly equip students with practical, on-the-ground skills.[17] Consequently, the scope of teaching must expand from basic service competencies to mastering strategic and persuasive digital promotional discourse utilizing digital tools.[8]

In today’s tourism industry, graduates need to do more than provide physical service; they must be able to drive interest through convincing digital communication strategies, supported by digital literacy for edu-tourism.[39] This is supported by evidence showing that specialized foreign-language digital content, such as halal culinary promotion, significantly boosts consumer trust and travel intent.[13] This underscores how vital cross-linguistic digital copywriting is for modern

destination marketing. However, in practice, Indonesia's tourism promotion to the Middle Eastern market is still constrained by the limited availability of locally produced Arabic digital promotional content.[39] Because of this skill gap, the strategic role of promotion is often left to foreign native-speaking influencers. Therefore, in line with Rustandi et al.'s findings [1] on the importance of Arabic cultural representation, Indonesian students must be empowered to create their own promotional narratives. The goal is to enable them to become competitive creators of discourse, rather than just passive content consumers.

From the perspective of student needs in the digital era, pure linguistic competence is no longer sufficient. Students need mastery of digital copywriting skills to design advertising narratives that are both informative and emotional. The dominance of commissive speech acts (promises and guarantees) in promotional discourse demonstrates the importance of training in sentence construction that builds credibility and audience trust, rather than relying solely on instructive directives. Furthermore, interactions in digital spaces, especially in comment sections, require sociolinguistic flexibility in the form of code-switching between standard language (*fuṣḥā*) and dialectal varieties (*'ammiyyah*) to build emotional closeness, as found in digital promotional communication practices, as well as demands for direct services in the field. The ability to respond to comments appropriately and persuasively is also a crucial factor in shaping the tourist experience and destination image.[18]

To address these needs, the strategy for developing teaching materials must adopt an approach grounded in language practice within real-world contexts. Utilizing authentic discourse directly from social media platforms has proven highly effective in accelerating the mastery of specialized vocabulary and enhancing students' sociolinguistic sensitivity through genuine cultural exposure.[15] Educators should no longer rely solely on the artificial dialogues found in textbooks; instead, they should integrate real-world social media content as a primary learning resource. Even grammar instruction (*nahwu*) needs to be contextualized with its pragmatic functions in advertising discourse. For instance, the topic of *ḥadhfū al-mubtada'* (subject ellipsis) should not be taught merely as a structural variation, but as a rhetorical strategy for message efficiency within limited video durations. Consequently, learning outcomes for ASP Tourism will shift from basic text comprehension toward the ability to produce creative, persuasive promotional content that is relevant to the technology-based tourism ecosystem.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study confirms that Arabic-language tourism discourse on TikTok is dominated by commissive speech acts (77%), which function to build trust through promises of quality and service guarantees, surpassing directive speech acts (23%), which function as transactional instructions. This dominance marks a shift in marketing strategy from hard-selling to trust-building. Linguistically, this is realized through the efficient structure of *ḥadhfū al-mubtada'* and the use of *ḍamīr nahwu* to demonstrate corporate professionalism. At the same time, directive speech acts utilize a variety of commands, invitations, and suggestions that integrate digital technical lexicons and *'ammiyyah* language to build emotional closeness.

These findings provide a clear scientific justification for the necessity of updating ASP materials by bridging the gap between rigid textbook scenarios and the fluid demands of digital marketing. However, these conclusions should be interpreted in light of certain limitations, particularly the reliance on a single coder and a relatively small sample size focused on a single digital platform, which may restrict the generalizability of the results. This study recommends a reorientation of the ASP Tourism curriculum toward a functional-pragmatic approach that hones digital copywriting skills and sociolinguistic flexibility. Further exploration of audience responses in comment sections could provide deeper insights into the sociolinguistic success of these digital promotional strategies.

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