

Illocutionary Speech Acts in Editorial Discourse: A Pragmatic Analysis of Language Dissemination

Sheela Anne C. Maraan¹, April V. Juane², Clara Vanessa C. De Castro³, Minsoware S. Bacolod⁴

¹New Era Senior High School, Dasmariñas, City, Cavite, Region-IV-A, Philippines-1300

²Wenceslao Trinidad Memorial National High School, Philippines-1300

^{3,4}School of Arts and Sciences, National University Philippines, National Capital Region, Philippines-1300

Corresponding Author: sheelaanne.maraan@deped.gov.ph,

Abstract—This study investigated the illocutionary speech acts present in the editorial "Everyday Heroes," published in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* on August 30, 2021. The editorial served as a tribute to unsung heroes who demonstrated extraordinary acts of kindness and bravery during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research categorized these speech acts into assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative categories. Assertive speech acts affirmed the heroic actions of individuals, emphasizing their contributions to society. Directive speech acts encouraged readers to recognize and appreciate the efforts of these everyday heroes. Commissive speech acts committed to celebrating and honoring these individuals who have made significant impacts during the pandemic. Expressive speech acts expressed gratitude and admiration towards the featured heroes, while declarative speech acts underscored the importance of recognizing and supporting individuals who embody acts of kindness and bravery. The study also examined the dissemination process of editorials to readers, evaluating how these illocutionary points are effectively conveyed. The editorial was disseminated through both digital platforms and traditional printed formats, ensuring broad accessibility and impact. Digital platforms such as websites, online news portals, and social media facilitate instant global access, while printed formats like newspapers and magazines cater to readers who prefer tangible mediums. This dual approach contributed to the editorial's reach and influence, shaping public opinion and discourse on social issues. This research enhanced understanding of how illocutionary speech acts function within editorial discourse and the role of dissemination in shaping public perception and engagement.

Keywords—Illocutionary speech acts, editorial discourse, pragmatics, dissemination.

I. INTRODUCTION

Illocutionary speech acts are pivotal in editorial discourse, serving as powerful tools for shaping public opinion and disseminating ideologies through language (Poudel, 2020). Recent studies have focused on the pragmatic analysis of illocutionary acts in editorials, emphasizing their strategic deployment to influence reader perceptions and construct persuasive arguments, (Amalia et al., 2021).

Austin (1962) introduced illocutionary acts, categorizing them into assertives, directives, and commissives, which are fundamental for understanding how language functions in various discourse contexts, including editorials (Searle, 1976). Searle elaborated on Austin's framework, providing a detailed taxonomy and functional analysis of illocutionary acts, which is crucial for pragmatic analysis in editorial discourse.

Fairclough applied critical discourse analysis to study language use in media, emphasizing the role of illocutionary acts in shaping public discourse and ideological positions in editorials. Recent studies by Fairclough and Wodak have continued to explore the application of illocutionary acts in contemporary media, highlighting their role in shaping public opinion and political discourse (Siddiqui, 2020). Mey discussed how illocutionary acts function as persuasive tools in media texts, including editorials, influencing reader interpretations, and constructing social realities. Recent research by Mey and colleagues has expanded on this, examining the strategic employment of illocutionary acts in digital media platforms to sway public discourse and societal perceptions, (Amalia et al., 2021).

Van Dijk explored news discourse and the use of illocutionary acts to frame news events and shape public understanding and opinion, illustrating their strategic importance in editorials. Recent studies by Van Dijk and Angouri have analyzed the role of illocutionary acts in digital news media, revealing their adaptation to new communication technologies and their impact on audiences, (Searle, 1976).

These studies have emphasized the crucial significance of illocutionary acts in editorial discourse, showcasing their effectiveness as influential language instruments for molding public opinion, spreading ideas, and crafting compelling arguments. Editorial writers can shape reader interpretations, frame narratives, and contribute to the production of social realities by strategically using several sorts of illocutionary acts, including representatives, instructions, and commissives. Moreover, the deliberate use of illocutionary acts in editorial discourse enables the control of how readers see information and the strengthening of particular ideological stances. The ongoing development of digital media platforms introduces new possibilities and difficulties in utilizing illocutionary acts to influence public discourse and societal perspectives.

Illocutionary acts continue to be widely used and important in current editorial discourse as persuasive strategies for manipulating language. By studying the intricate methods of using illocutionary acts, researchers and practitioners can obtain significant understanding of the nuances of editorial discourse and how it influences the formation of public opinion. Furthermore, the analysis of illocutionary acts on digital media platforms provides a perspective to comprehend

the changing dynamics of language and persuasion in the era of digital technology.

The continued exploration of illocutionary acts in editorial discourse, coupled with the integration of digital media platforms, opens up avenues for further research and analysis. Understanding the strategic use of illocutionary acts in shaping public discourse and influencing societal perceptions is imperative for critically engaging with contemporary editorial content and its broader sociopolitical implications.

Researchers can uncover the underlying mechanisms of persuasive arguments, narrative framing, and ideological dissemination by analyzing the nuanced strategies used by editorial writers in employing different types of illocutionary acts, such as assertives, directives, and commissives (Amalia et al., 2021). Recent research has explored the use of illocutionary actions in digital media settings, demonstrating their ability to be used with new communication technologies and their significant influence on audience engagement and the shaping of public opinion. Investigating the connection between illocutionary activities and digital media platforms is a promising opportunity for additional research and analysis. With the ongoing evolution of media and communication, it is becoming more and more important to grasp the ways in which illocutionary acts are utilized and adjusted in digital contexts. Recent research have uncovered the profound influence of digital media on how audiences participate and shape public opinions. These studies have also provided insights into the strategic use of illocutionary acts in these emerging communication technologies.

Furthermore, the shifting patterns of language and the skill of persuading people in the era of technology offer both advantages and problems for editorial discourse. Researchers can get significant insights into the manipulation of public discourse and societal views in the digital era by analyzing the complicated techniques utilized to deploy illocutionary acts on digital media platforms.

The constant research of illocutionary acts in editorial discourse, specifically in the context of digital media, has crucial significance for critically examining current editorial content and its larger sociopolitical implications. It is vital to appreciate the strategic usage of illocutionary acts in molding public discourse and altering social perceptions, particularly in the intricate interaction between language, media, and ideology in the digital age.

Recent studies have revealed the transformative impact of digital media on audience engagement and public opinion formation, shedding light on how illocutionary acts are strategically utilized in these new communication technologies to sway narratives, frame events, and manipulate reader interpretations Sykes (2019).

Building upon the foundational work of scholars like Austin, Searle, and Fairclough, who have explored the pivotal role of illocutionary acts in various discourse contexts, including editorials, researchers have continued to delve into the nuanced strategies employed by editorial writers in deploying assertives, directives, and commissives to construct persuasive arguments, disseminate ideologies, and contribute to the social construction of reality.

Mey's (2001) seminal discussions on the function of illocutionary acts as persuasive tools in media texts, including editorials, have laid the groundwork for understanding how language can influence reader interpretations and shape societal perceptions (Koc-Michalska & Lilleker, 2016). Recent collaborative work by Mey and Simpson has further expanded on this, examining the strategic deployment of illocutionary acts in digital media platforms and their impact on public discourse and societal perceptions.

Building on the work of Van Dijk, who explored the use of illocutionary acts in news discourse to frame events and shape public understanding, scholars have continued to analyze the adaptation of illocutionary acts to new communication technologies, revealing their transformative impact on audience engagement and opinion formation mentioned in Amalia et al., 2021. As digital media platforms continue to evolve, the strategic employment of illocutionary acts, such as assertives, directives, and commissives, has become increasingly crucial in shaping narratives, framing events and influencing societal perceptions. (Ding et al., 2023 as cited in Koc-Michalska & Lilleker, 2016).

The continued exploration of illocutionary acts within the realm of editorial discourse, particularly in the digital age, holds significant implications for critically engaging with contemporary media content and its broader sociopolitical implications. (Koc-Michalska & Lilleker, 2016) By delving into the nuanced strategies used by editorial writers in deploying various types of illocutionary acts, researchers can uncover the underlying mechanisms through which language is leveraged to construct persuasive arguments, disseminate ideologies and contribute to the social construction of reality (Clark & Carlson, 1982).

This research aimed to explore the illocutionary points of speech acts present in the newspaper editorial and to examine the dissemination process to the readers, specifically it sought to answer the following:

1. What illocutionary points of speech acts are evident in the newspaper editorials?
How are the editorials disseminated to the readers?
2. How are the editorials disseminated to the readers?

II. METHODOLOGY

Corpus of the Study

This study focused only on the editorial "Everyday Heroes" published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer on August 30, 2021. This editorial piece serves as a poignant tribute to the unsung heroes who selflessly contribute to society's well-being and exemplify extraordinary acts of kindness and bravery in their daily lives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Gathering Procedures

The study employed a mixed methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyze the illocutionary speech actions employed in the editorial "Everyday Heroes" from the Philippine Daily Inquirer. The process of data collecting entailed retrieving the editorial from the website of the Philippine Daily Inquirer. Afterwards, the researchers carefully examined the editorial to identify

instances of illocutionary speech acts. Subsequently, the data was structured into tables to facilitate methodical examination. The collected data underwent rigorous scrutiny, resulting in the formulation of conclusions based on the analysis.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Illocutionary points of speech acts evident in the newspaper editorial.

A variety of speech acts has been noticeable in this editorial article. To mention, the assertive speech act is the most evidently used directly. The article conveys information, stating facts, as well. However, the indirect speech act mentioned in this article is expressive. It reveals that criticism, praise, and appreciation are present in this article.

TABLE 1. Illocutionary points speech acts in “Everyday Heroes” - an editorial

Taxonomy	Frequency	Percentage
Assertive	9	29.03
Directive	0	0
Commissive	1	3.23
Expressive	0	0
Declarative	0	0

Table 1 shows that of the 31 sentences in the editorial *Everyday Hero*, nine of the ten third sentences are assertive speech acts, accounting for 29.03% of all sentences, and one is a commissive speech act, accounting for 3.23%.

Since the editorial reports the ordinary Filipino heroes during the pandemic, it introduces the heroes briefly like Maria T. Cruz, the nurse, and Dr. Anne, who are fighting on the frontline of the pandemic, both sacrificed their lives in the war against COVID-19. There is also Patricia Non, who started a community pantry to offer free food to the poor, the teachers of Lawigan Elementary School who held an unforgettable graduation ceremony for the poor students, delivery riders, and Olympic medal-earning athletes, whose heroic deeds have been encouraging the people to move forward.

Sentences #1 to #9 are assertive speech acts, as according to Searle (1967), function to convey information and stating facts. Sentence #10 is a promise the rescuer Sharife promises to come back to the crashed C-130 plane and rescue the badly injured soldier. Therefore, it belongs to the commissive speech act.

The user's text is "#1". Maria Theresa Cruz, aged 47, is a nurse employed at the Cainta Municipal Hospital. Her experience epitomizes the unfortunate situation faced by our healthcare professionals - they are inadequately compensated, burdened with excessive workloads, and very susceptible to the virus. (Assertive: stating)

#2 Cruz contracted the infection and succumbed to it on July 22. (Assertive: stating)

#3 However, her daughter received a total of P7,265, which is comparable to a surprising P60.93 special risk allowance per day. (assertive: stating)

#4 "That's just how he is, sacrificing for his work," her coworker Dr. Donald Reluya remarked. (She possesses a genuine inclination for diligence) (Assertive: stating)

#5 Due to the limited and inconsistent government assistance provided to the impoverished and those affected by the economic downturn, a large number of individuals began queuing in front of Non's modest cart. (Assertive: stating)

#6 My students lack cell phones due to their economic disadvantage. (Assertive: stating, informing)

#7 The teachers embarked on a lengthy journey through the rain to the secluded mountain villages where their 13 graduating Grade 9 and kindergarten students reside. They utilized a mobile stage adorned with balloons, which was pulled by a carabao. This endeavor aimed to provide these students with the opportunity to partake in a graduation ceremony, an event that one of them will undoubtedly remember for the rest of their life. (Assertive: informing, stating)

#8 Intrepid, tireless delivery riders have not only afforded countless households the convenience and security of ordering for their food and basic needs, but they have also kept many food establishments afloat. (Assertive: stating)

#9 Together with boxers Nesthy Petecio (silver), Carlo Paalam (silver), and Eumir Marcial (bronze), these lionhearted Olympians gave the Philippines its most bountiful Olympic finish yet. (Assertive: stating)

#10 Sharief gave him his solemn promise: "Kapit lang Sir, babalik kami." (Commissive: promising)

It is understandable that for such an editorial that aims at giving facts and information, most of the sentences belong to the assertive speech act. For taxonomies such as directive, declarative and expressive, they rarely appear in such kinds of editorial articles.

TABLE 2. Types of speech acts in the editorial

Taxonomy	Direct		Indirect	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Assertive	9	29.03	0	0
Directive	0	0	0	0
Commissive	1	3.23	0	0
Expressive	0	0	9	29.03
Declarative	0	0	3	9.68

The table shows the frequency and percentage of speech acts present in the editorial *“Everyday Heroes.”* It could be interpreted from the table that all the ten sentences from the editorial have direct and indirect speech acts.

For the direct speech acts, nine sentences, or 29.03%, are assertive. These sentences are stating information or telling stories of the people who are considered heroes in this time of the pandemic. These sentences are about the life of Maria Theresa Cruz, a nurse from Cainta, who got infected and eventually died; Patricia Non, who initiated the community pantry in Quezon City; the graduation of Grade 6 six students on a “mobile stage bedecked in balloons and pulled by a carabao” in Lawigan Elementary School; he delivery riders who offered convenience and security in food delivery; and the pride brought by the Olympic medalists. Despite the difficult times, these people had gone through due to the pandemic. Their lives, as mentioned in the article, gave them the title “everyday heroes.”

Meanwhile, only one sentence, which accounts for 3.23% of the total, is commissive. The line expresses that Sharief made a solemn pledge to the person, saying "Kapit lang Sir, babalik kami. The sentence refers to a pledge made by Sharief Abridge Abdua, a Tausug member of Cafgu, to a soldier who did not wish to be abandoned inside the burning C-130 plane that crashed in Patikul Sulu.

Furthermore, the 10 statements also included instances of indirect speech acts. Out of the total, nine of them, which is equivalent to 29.03%, fall under the category of expressive. The sentence, "There's Maria Theresa Cruz, 47, a nurse from the Cainta Municipal Hospital, whose story encapsulates the sad plight of our health care workers — underpaid, overworked, and most vulnerable to the virus," is expressive as it aims to criticize the current situation of frontliners in the Philippines. It does so by referring to their situation as a "sad plight" and highlighting the reality of being "underpaid, overworked, and most vulnerable to the virus." Another example of indirect expression is the following line: "Instead, her daughter received P7,265, which is equivalent to a shocking P60.93 special risk allowance per day." This sentence reveals the demoralization of nurses who, despite their sacrifices in handling the COVID-19 problem, are only given a minimal amount of risk allowance. The term also implies a type of grievance with the little funding allocated to front-line workers. "That's just how she is, sacrificing for her work," her coworker Dr. Donald Reluya stated. The recommended indirect speech acts involve expressing praise or compliments towards the nurse stated in this statement, acknowledging their hard work and perseverance. Alternatively, it could also imply culpability, indicating that her demise was a result of excessive labor or an excessive amount of self-sacrifice.

Furthermore, three sentences or 9.68% of the sentences are identified to contain indirect speech acts for confirming the information stated. For example in the sentence, "*Together with boxers Nesthy Petecio (silver), Carlo Paalam (silver), and Eumir Marcial (bronze), these lionhearted Olympians gave the Philippines its most bountiful Olympic finish yet.*", aside from it expresses praise and acknowledgment to the athletes, it also confirmed the "*glorious moment of pride*" brought by the medalists. Also, the sentence: "*Cruz got infected with the virus and died on July 22*" confirmed the plight the front liners are going through, being the most vulnerable to the virus, which can result in death.

Dissemination of the editorial to the readers.

Editorials are disseminated to readers through various platforms and formats, utilizing linguistic expressions to govern speech acts. These editorials serve to inform, persuade, praise, and sometimes entertain readers.

In terms of dissemination, editorials are primarily distributed through digital platforms and printed forms. Digital platforms include websites, online news portals, and social media channels where editorials are published and shared with a global audience instantly. This digital approach ensures quick access and widespread distribution, reaching a larger and diverse audience across different geographic locations.

Printed forms, such as newspapers and magazines, also play a crucial role in editorial dissemination. These traditional formats provide a tangible medium through which editorials can reach readers who prefer physical copies or who may not have access to digital platforms.

Over time, editorial dissemination has evolved to cope with technological advancements and changing reader preferences. This evolution has facilitated greater accessibility and engagement, enabling editorials to effectively communicate ideas, influence opinions, and contribute to public discourse on a wide range of topics.

IV. CONCLUSION

To summarize, the examination of illocutionary speech acts in editorial discourse demonstrates the significant impact of assertive and expressive speech actions on shaping reader perceptions and captivating audiences. Editorials, being aggressive expressions, are mostly based on factual facts and supported arguments rather than solely subjective opinions. The focus on authenticity and truth is crucial for upholding credibility and trustworthiness with the audience, guaranteeing that editorials function as dependable sources of information and opinion.

Furthermore, the use of expressive speech acts is essential in editorials since it elicits emotional reactions and promotes reader involvement. Editorials can efficiently stimulate cognition, promote discourse, and cultivate a more profound rapport between the writer and the reader by appealing to the audience's senses and emotions. The interactive nature of expressive speech acts plays a crucial role in accomplishing the editorial's communicative objectives and shaping public opinion on many social and political matters.

Practitioners and researchers in the field of editorial discourse might make many recommendations based on the findings of this examination. Editors and writers should give top priority to fact-checking and ensuring the accuracy of their information. Editorials must be founded on genuine and confirmed facts to uphold their credibility and dependability as confident statements supported by verifiable proof. The focus on factual correctness not only increases the credibility of the editorial but also boosts its ability to persuade the readers.

Furthermore, writers should tactically utilize evocative speech acts to captivate the emotions and senses of their readers. Through the elicitation of emotional reactions and the promotion of reader involvement, editorials have the ability to successfully incite contemplation, promote discussion, and cultivate a more profound bond between the writer and the audience. The interactive nature of expressive speech acts plays a crucial role in accomplishing the editorial's communicative objectives and shaping public opinion on many social and political matters.

Furthermore, editors must possess a comprehensive comprehension of the tastes, interests, and beliefs of their intended audience. Adapting the use of illocutionary acts to align with the audience can improve the efficacy of editorials in shaping public opinion. Editors can create editorials that are

both informative and emotionally and intellectually engaging for readers by comprehending the audience's perspective.

Moreover, it is imperative for scholars to further investigate the utilization of illocutionary speech actions in editorial discourse across various media platforms, such as digital and social media. This research has the potential to enhance our comprehension of how the spread of language impacts public perception and affects societal conversations. Through the examination of the efficacy of different illocutionary actions, scholars can offer valuable insights into optimal methods for editorial writing and communication tactics that effectively connect with modern audiences.

Finally, both practitioners and researchers should adhere to ethical standards while utilizing illocutionary activities. Editorials must prioritize transparency, fairness, and responsibility when communicating with the public. This entails the act of providing a wide range of perspectives, recognizing possible prejudices, and encouraging productive conversations. Adhering to these ethical norms guarantees that editorials make a good contribution to public discussion and uphold the confidence of their audience.

Illocutionary speech acts, whether assertive or expressive, have a significant impact on forming public opinion and promoting meaningful interaction with readers in editorial discourse. By comprehending and utilizing these speech acts proficiently, authors and editors can amplify the influence of their editorials and contribute to well-informed public discourse.

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