

Analyzing Speech Acts Shaping Opinion in the Editorials of the Philippine Broadsheets

Laguit, Rechantonette M., Manglapuz, Abegail O., and Querol, Marites B., MA, MAT

ABSTRACT

The study examined four editorials, "Closure" (October 2) and "Alice unbowed" (October 4) from *The Philippine Star*, and "End Hazing, Brutal Rituals for Good" and "I spy..." from *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*. Utilizing John Searle's (1977) Speech Act Theory as the analytical framework, the research identified the types of speech acts employed, the illocutionary points present in the texts, and the perlocutionary effects observable through online reader responses. Through qualitative textual analysis, the findings reveal that both publications predominantly employ assertive, expressive, and directive speech acts to inform, persuade, critique, and emotionally engage readers while avoiding commissive and declarative forms. Notably, the editorials exhibit a consistent use of declarative sentence structures and a limited presence of interrogatives, suggesting a preference for authoritative expression over dialogic engagement. Additionally, the analysis of reader comments highlights perlocutionary effects, with responses ranging from support to criticism, indicating the editorials' role in provoking public discourse and reflection. This study contributes to the growing field of media pragmatics by demonstrating how Philippine editorials perform communicative functions that extend beyond information delivery. It underscores the value of user feedback as a perlocutionary measure and highlights the significance of speech acts in shaping public sentiment and journalistic influence in a digitally mediated society.

Keywords: illocutionary points, newspaper, pragmatics, speech act theory, written discourse

INTRODUCTION

Language is an outlet for understanding modern perspectives and ancient societies' worldviews. Altun (2023) explains that it plays an important role in constructing identity for individuals and society. It is also interpersonal and essential to verbal communication. Verbal communication is carried out by mouth, for example, conversations, teachings, speeches, and telecommunications. On the other hand, written discourse is carried out through the media, such as books, magazines, newspapers, tabloids, and brochures (Wiana & Khairani, 2020).

Newspapers have been a cornerstone of information dissemination for centuries. Morales and Gonzales (2023) implied that newspapers embody the soul of a nation and are regarded as historical accounts. Haloc (2018) asserts that newspapers instill ideologies and views in the minds of readers while discussing events occurring at a specific time and location. Readers prefer newspapers as they are more accessible and contain various materials such as news, opinions, editorials, commentaries, entertainment features, and sports news (Morales & Gonzales, 2023; Magtira & Bernardo, 2017; Reah, 2002). The Philippines hosts a diverse array of newspapers catering to various audiences, including *The Philippine Star* and *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (PDI), which influence public opinion, share information, and mirror the socio-political environment. While numerous studies have explored newspaper content, most have focused on the linguistic analysis of headlines, particularly the locutionary and illocutionary acts (Almarsomi & Hussein, 2021; Olamide & Segun, 2014).

The study of Wiana and Khairani (2020), which analyzed speech acts in Waspada newspaper, found that locutionary acts, which state information without a purpose, were the most common, reflecting the newspaper's role in conveying factual information. Almarsomi and Hussein (2021) found that assertives were the most common speech acts in Al Jazeera English

headlines, as they convey reliable factual information, especially in issues like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Searle (1977) modified Austin's (1962) speech act theory and classified illocutionary acts into five categories: representatives (assertives), directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives (Mey, 2006; as cited in Olamide & Segun, 2014). Searle, in the study of Dayamanti as cited in Wiana and Khairani (2020), also categorized speech acts into three types: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Locutionary acts state information without intending to influence the listener, illocutionary acts perform an action beyond conveying information, and perlocutionary acts produce an effect on the listener, such as persuading, inspiring, or entertaining.

The study focused on editorials which have drawn attention from researchers, including van Dijk (1985), Weng (1998), Taiwo (2007), Dayag (2008), and Firmstone (2019), as cited in Morales and Gonzales (2023). Analyzing speech acts in editorials provides insights into rhetorical methods, ideological biases, and cultural contexts. Sharma (2024) argued that newspaper editorials, despite their global influence, have received minimal scholarly attention. Santo (1994, as cited in Sharma, 2024) described the editorial page as "the heart, soul, and conscience of the newspaper," reflecting its stance on political and social matters. Magtira and Bernardo (2017) stated that "editorials are the mouthpiece of any newspaper." According to Guidelines for Editorials (2018, as cited in Dizon, 2021), editorials employ persuasion through simplicity and direct language.

Given the limited studies on Philippine newspaper editorials, this study aimed to analyze the newspaper editorials of *The Philippine Star* and *The Philippine Daily Inquirer* to gain a deeper understanding of the speech acts used in Philippine broadsheets. To explore the illocutionary points of speech acts and the types of speech acts present in the chosen newspaper editorials, this study sought to determine the types of speech acts employed in the newspaper editorials of PDI and Philstar, the illocutionary points of speech acts evident in the newspaper editorials of PDI and Philstar, and the perlocutionary points exemplified in response to the newspaper editorials.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative analysis to analyze the speech acts present in newspaper editorials of *Philippine Daily Inquirer* and the *Philippine Star* which were chosen because they are considered reliable and easily accessible sources of information (Cabaysa, 2021). Searle's categories of speech acts were employed as the theoretical framework for this study enabling a detailed, one-to-one analysis of the sentences or clauses used in the four editorials chosen for this study.

The collected data were tallied, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using the framework proposed by Searle (1977) and Maraan et al. (2024). Frequencies and percentages were used to answer the first two problems. The third problem was answered using the comments that were found on the online newspaper editorials, which were described as positive, negative, or neutral based on the intended meaning of the commenter and the terminology used in the comment. With that, the researchers needed two intercoders to ensure the reliability of the interpreted data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Section 1. Types of Speech Acts Employed in Newspaper Editorials

Table 1

Types of Locutionary Speech Acts Employed in “End hazing, brutal rituals for good”, a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, and “Closure”, a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Star

| | | PDI <i>“End hazing, brutal rituals for good”</i> | | | Philstar <i>“Closure”</i> | | |
|----------|---------------|---|------------|----------|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Locution | Types | Frequency | % | Locution | Types | Frequency | % |
| | Declarative | 26 | 96.30 | | Declarative | 16 | 100 |
| | Interrogative | 1 | 3.70 | | Interrogative | 0 | 0 |
| | Imperative | 0 | 0 | | Imperative | 0 | 0 |
| | Exclamatory | 0 | 0 | | Exclamatory | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 27 | 100 | | Total | 16 | 100 |

Note. Locutionary Act Analysis of Editorials on Hazing Incidents

Table 1 shows the employed speech acts in newspaper editorials of PDI and Philstar regarding the subject of hazing. The examination of locutionary acts revealed a pronounced preference for declarative constructions across both editorial texts, though with subtle variations in implementation. As can be seen, the news editorial of PDI employs declarative forms in 96.30% of analyzed instances, while the *Philippine Star* (Philstar) demonstrates exclusive reliance on declaratives at 100%. The only interrogative statement present in PDI's editorial is “But is this the only way to encourage patriotism?” This linguistic pattern indicates a shared editorial philosophy prioritizing the presentation of factual assertions and reasoned opinions over alternative rhetorical strategies such as direct questioning or emotional appeals.

This result supports the findings of the study of Hassan (2024) on types of sentences in newspapers. In his study, Hassan finds out that declarative sentences are the most frequently employed type. The reason for this is that declarative sentences aim to communicate information in a manner consistent with the purpose of news reporting. Interrogative constructions in PDI (3.70%) provide a limited but possibly significant rhetorical element. These interrogative instances may serve to stimulate the reader's thinking, emphasize ideas through rhetorical inquiry, or engage the audience directly. Philstar's lack of such structures suggests a more consistently declarative approach to editorial communication.

The notable absence of imperative and exclamatory forms in both publications reflects a deliberate editorial choice toward measured, analytical discourse rather than direct commands or emotionally heightened expression, which is in line with serious journalistic commentary, which builds credibility and authority through restrained, reasoned presentation rather than explicit emotional appeals or directive language.

Table 2

Types of Illocutionary Speech Acts Employed in “End hazing, brutal rituals for good”, a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, and “Closure”, a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Star

| | | PDI <i>“End hazing, brutal rituals for good”</i> | | | Philstar <i>“Closure”</i> | | |
|------------|---------------|---|------------|------------|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Illocution | Types | Frequency | % | Illocution | Types | Frequency | % |
| | Assertiveness | 21 | 77.78 | | Assertiveness | 9 | 56.25 |
| | Directives | 3 | 11.11 | | Directives | 3 | 18.75 |
| | Commissives | 0 | 0 | | Commissives | 0 | 0 |
| | Expressives | 3 | 11.11 | | Expressives | 4 | 25 |
| | Declarations | 0 | 0 | | Declarations | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 27 | 100 | | Total | 16 | 100 |

Note. Illocutionary Acts of Editorials on Hazing Incidents

Table 2 shows the study of illocutionary functions with more complicated differences between the two editorials. In both editorial texts, assertive speech acts, which encompass statements of opinion, factual claims, and evaluative judgments, identify the dominant category. Their relative importance does, however, differ clearly. PDI employs assertives with 77.78%, compared to Philstar with 56.25%. This difference may imply that PDI values argumentative and evaluative functions, therefore presenting itself as a demeanor offering analysis and judgment on the current affairs, a sample extract from “End hazing, brutal rituals for good”: “It behooves the leaders of this country and these organizations to stop the cycle of senseless violence that has prematurely ended many young lives because, in a just, humane, and modern society, there is simply no room for brutal rituals to continue.”

The expressive illocutionary force compares the two publications. Philstar (25%), which exceeds PDI (11.11%), may employ a more emotionally invested rhetorical approach, perhaps to forge reader sympathy or explain the moral and emotional aspects of issues being addressed. According to Guro (2017), expressiveness—one of the basic strategies of journalism—is achieved using linguistic means to express the speaker's subjective attitude to the content or addressee of speech, which influences the recipient's personality. The increased usage of expressives may indicate an editorial style designed to engage readers' emotional responses rather than only offering logical reasoning. Directive speech acts, which attempt to influence reader's behavior or perspective, appear with moderate frequency in both editorials. This suggests that while both publications seek to influence their audiences, Philstar may adopt a more prescriptive approach, offering clearer instructions or recommendations to readers. The lack of commissives indicates that neither publication positions itself as making commitments or promises on behalf of institutions or individuals. Similarly, the absence of declarations suggests that these editorials do not attempt to enact pronouncements but rather focus on influencing public opinion and discourse through persuasive commentary.

Table 3

Perlocutions or Comments Observed in “End hazing, brutal rituals for good”, a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, and “Closure”, a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Star

| Newspaper Editorials | Perlocution (comments) |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| PDI | 4 |
| PHILSTAR | 2 |

Note. Comments on Editorials on Hazing Incidents as Perlocutions

Table 3 shows that perlocutionary acts, which aim to influence reader response, are infrequent in both editorials but varied. Four perlocutionary occurrences are found in PDI compared to two in Philstar. These figures are minor, but the newspapers' editorials reflect varied reader involvement and persuasive strategies. Both figures are low, but PDI had twice as many comments, suggesting it was slightly more effective at generating reader responses to hazing. PDI's editorial may have been more powerful, emotive, or activist than Philstar's commentary. Though minor, this difference shows PDI's somewhat stronger success in triggering reader response on a recurring, devastating social issue.

Table 4

Types of Locutionary Speech Acts Employed in “I spy...”, a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, and “Alice unbowed”, a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Star

| PDI “I spy...” | | | | Philstar “Alice unbowed” | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------|------------|
| Locution | Types | Frequency | % | Locution | Types | Frequency | % |
| | Declarative | 24 | 82.76 | | Declarative | 15 | 100 |
| | Interrogative | 5 | 17.24 | | Interrogative | 0 | 0 |
| | Imperative | 0 | 0 | | Imperative | 0 | 0 |
| | Exclamatory | 0 | 0 | | Exclamatory | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 29 | 100 | | Total | 15 | 100 |

Note. Locutionary Act Analysis of Editorials on Alice Guo

Table 4 demonstrates that PDI editorial implemented declaratives in 82.76% of the recognized locutionary acts, which is a strong choice but not an exclusive one. As can be seen, there are a lot of declarative statements, which suggest that the main goal is to give facts, views, and critical observations in a clear, expository way.

Conversely, Philstar editorial uses declarative constructs 100% of the time. This consistent approach claims that the editorial perspective is more reliable and provides facts through declarative statements. However, the absence of interrogative elements may indicate an editorial philosophy that prioritizes direct communication over dialogical engagement strategies, unlike PDI. Declarative phrases help communicate information and ideas concisely. By acquiring clear sentences, writers and speakers could improve their ability to get their point across and keep the attention of their audience.

However, the editorial's use of interrogative forms (17.24%) adds a major rhetorical element that sets it apart from more common editorial methods. The presence of interrogative constructions in PDI editorial serves multiple rhetorical functions that should be carefully considered.

The complete absence of imperative and exclamatory forms in both editorials reflects serious journalistic commentary. This pattern suggests that both newspapers retain editorial credibility through calm, professional speech rather than overtly directive language or emotionally heightened expression.

Table 5

Types of Illocutionary Speech Acts Employed in "I spy...", a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, and "Alice unbowed", a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Star

| PDI "I spy..." | | | | Philstar "Alice unbowed" | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------|------------|
| | Types | Frequency | % | | Types | Frequency | % |
| Illocution | Assertiveness | 9 | 31.03 | Illocution | Assertiveness | 13 | 86.67 |
| | Directives | 8 | 27.59 | | Directives | 1 | 6.67 |
| | Commissives | 0 | 0 | | Commissives | 0 | 0 |
| | Expressives | 12 | 41.38 | | Expressives | 1 | 6.67 |
| | Declarations | 0 | 0 | | Declarations | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 29 | 100 | | Total | 15 | 100 |

Note. Illocutionary Acts of Editorials on Alice Guo

As evidenced in Table 5, 86.67% of Philstar editorial relies overwhelmingly on assertive illocutionary acts. This heavy concentration of assertives suggests an editorial strategy centered on factual information and authoritative editorial viewpoints. The assertive function aligns with editorial goals of informing readers as well as providing expert analysis of current events and issues. This finding validates other researchers' studies regarding the frequency of the use of assertives. In the study of Abba et al. (2015) regarding the speech acts analysis of daily trust newspaper headline reports on boko haram attacks—assertives were the most frequent use of illocutionary force. Assertive speech acts dominated as well in the findings of the study of Maraan et al. (2024), in which they also concluded that assertive speech acts significantly influence the formation of reader perceptions and appeal to audiences.

PDI editorial's illocutionary distribution is completely distinct, demonstrating a more complicated and diverse editorial communication style. Similarly to Philstar, the editorial uses assertive functions (31.03%) as the most frequent. 27.59% to directives, and 41.38% to expressive acts. This balanced distribution reflects an editorial strategy that integrates multiple communicative functions.

The significant rhetorical feature of the PDI editorial with 41.38% is expressive illocutionary acts. Expressives include expressions and other attitudinal responses that show the speaker's emotional or evaluative stance on the topic. The high frequency of such acts suggests that PDI's editorial deliberately indicates evaluative elements into its discourse to connect with readers through shared values, concerns, or emotional responses.

Both editorials lacked commissive and declarative illocutionary acts, revealing their shared understanding of editorial functions. Lack of commissives suggests neither publication positions itself as making binding commitments or promises, maintaining journalistic detachment from the issues they address. Relatively, Olamide and Segun (2014) implied that editors seldom rely on commissive acts. Commissive acts encourage readers by increasing their interest in in-depth news. The low number of commissive acts indicates that assertions of promises to future activities are less common than other speech acts (Afifuddin, 2024). Similarly, the absence of declarations suggests that these editorials do not attempt to exercise formal institutional authority or make official pronouncements but rather focus on influencing public opinion through persuasive commentary.

Table 6

Perlocutions or Comments Observed in "I spy...", a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and "Alice unbowed", a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Star

| Newspaper Editorials | Perlocution (comments) |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| PDI | 25 |
| PHILSTAR | 5 |

Note. Comments on Editorials on Alice Guo as Perlocutions

Table 6 reveals that perlocutionary acts represent explicit attempts to achieve specific effects on reader response, including persuasion, emotional reaction, behavioral change, or continued engagement with the issues under discussion. The difference shows that PDI's editorial did a much better job of getting people to respond strongly and in a variety of ways, whether they were positive, negative, or simply interested. There are more comments on PDI, which means that readers are more interested in, emotionally engaged to, and maybe even intellectually stimulated by its commentary. It means that PDI's way of putting the Alice Guo issue, its linguistic choice, or its general editorial stance made readers desire to express their thoughts, critiques, or agreements publicly. This might be because PDI's opinion was more direct or confrontational. After all, it was more in line with how most people feel, or because it told a more interesting story that made people want to react. On the other hand, Philstar's editorial on the same problem may have been seen as less important, less interesting, or less in line with its readers' immediate worries or emotional state, which may explain why the public response was less strong.

Section 2. Illocutionary Points of Speech Acts Evident in the Newspaper Editorials

According to Maraán et al. (2024), it is essential to grasp how illocutionary acts are strategically employed to shape public discourse and influence societal perceptions. They added that this understanding is crucial for critical engagement with today's editorial content. Written utterances were analyzed according to how they functioned beyond their literal meaning.

Table 7

Illocutionary Points of Speech Acts in "End hazing, brutal rituals for good", a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, and "Closure", a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Star

| PDI <i>"End hazing, brutal rituals for good"</i> | | | | Philstar <i>"Closure"</i> | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------|-------|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Taxonomy | Function/ Intention | Frequency | % | Taxonomy | Function/ Intention | Frequency | % |
| Assertive | Stating/ | 21 | 77.78 | Assertive | Stating/ | 9 | 56.25 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------|----|------|-------------|---------------|----|-------|
| Expressive | Informing | | | Expressive | Informing | | |
| | Condemning | 2 | 7.41 | | Determination | 1 | 6.25 |
| Directive | Consoling | 1 | 3.70 | | Regret | 1 | 6.25 |
| | Interrogating/ Challenging | 1 | 3.70 | | Reject | 1 | 6.25 |
| | Urging/ Advising | 1 | 3.70 | | Relief | 1 | 6.25 |
| Declaration | Warning | 1 | 3.70 | Directive | Demand | 3 | 18.75 |
| | — | 0 | 0 | Declaration | — | 0 | 0 |
| Commissive | — | 0 | 0 | Commissive | — | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 27 | 100 | Total | | 16 | 100 |

Table 7 summarizes the illocutionary acts analysis of PDI editorial news “End hazing brutal rituals for good” and Philstar editorial news “Closure”. In both newspaper editorials, assertive speech acts including stating, describing, and informing dominated. PDI used assertives 77.78% of its content, whereas Philstar used 56.25%. This dominance emphasizes journalism's fundamental function of informing the public and objective reporting. However, the higher percentage in PDI suggests more informational density and less editorial elaboration. In Philstar, expressive speech acts were more frequent. Philstar also showed determination, sorrow, and relief at 6.25%, suggesting moderate emotional language. This denotes a more personal or opinionated style.

Notably, both editorials recorded 0% in declarations and commissives, which is expected. According to Kone (2020), declarations (e.g., pronouncing verdicts) and commissives (e.g., promises or commitments) are typically used by people with institutional roles such as government officials or judges. Their absence confirms that these speech acts are outside the journalistic domain and reinforces the newspapers' role as commentators rather than decision-makers.

Table 8

Illocutionary Points of Speech acts in “I spy...”, a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, and “Alice unbowed”, a Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Star

| PDI “I spy...” | | | | Philstar “Alice unbowed” | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|------|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------|-------|
| Taxonomy | Function/ Intention | Freq | % | Taxonomy | Function/ Intention | Freq | % |
| Assertive | Stating/ Informing | 9 | 31.03 | | Describing | 1 | 6.67 |
| Expressive | Approval | 1 | 3.45 | | Making a claim | 2 | 13.3 |
| | Concern | 2 | 6.9 | | Stating/ Informing | 10 | 66.67 |
| Directive | Criticize | 1 | 3.45 | Expressive | Disapproval | 1 | 6.67 |
| | Doubt | 2 | 6.9 | Directive | Urging/ Advising | 1 | 6.67 |
| | Reject | 1 | 3.45 | Declaration | — | 0 | 0 |
| | Suspicion | 5 | 17.24 | Commissive | — | 0 | 0 |
| | Call for Action | 1 | 3.45 | | | | |
| | Caution | 1 | 3.45 | | | | |
| | Command | 1 | 3.45 | | | | |
| | Demand | 2 | 6.9 | | | | |
| | Persuade | 1 | 3.45 | | | | |
| | Recommend | 1 | 3.45 | | | | |
| Declaration | Suggests | 1 | 3.45 | | | | |
| Commissive | — | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| | — | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| | Total | 29 | 100 | Total | | 15 | 100 |

Table 8 presents the illocutionary points of speech acts and their functions in “I spy...”, of the PDI and “Alice unbowed”, of Philstar. PDI has 29 illocutionary acts, as indicated in the table. Most often were assertive (31.03%). This means that the editorial primarily informs or states the publication's stance on issues. Expressives included approving, concerning, criticizing, rejecting, doubting, and raising suspicion. Suspicion under Expressive acts accounted for 17.24%, suggesting the newspaper's scepticisms in its commentary. This may indicate an informational and critical tone. PDI also exhibited a wider range of expressive and directive acts, each appearing with diversified functions including call for action, caution, command, demand, persuade, recommend, and suggest. This diversity implies that the editorial voice of PDI is not merely informative but also evaluative and persuasive, often seeking to influence readers' opinions and actions. The use of multiple directive functions such as "call for action," "persuade," and "recommend" reflects the newspaper's inclination to encourage civic participation or policy change.

On the other hand, Philstar demonstrated a more concentrated use of speech acts, with only fifteen (15) recorded instances. A dominant 66.67% of these acts fall under the assertive category, particularly to state or inform. Only minimal instances of Expressive and Directive acts were found, each accounting for 6.67% of the total.

The absence of commissive and declaration speech acts in both newspapers aligns with the nature of editorials, which typically aim to influence public opinion rather than perform institutional functions. However, the richer variation and higher frequency of expressive and directive acts in PDI suggest a more active and engaging editorial style compared to the more reserved and informational approach of Philstar.

Section 3. Perlocutionary Points Exemplified in Response to the Newspaper Editorials

The perlocutionary acts evident in the editorials, as demonstrated by the varied and immediate reader responses, illustrate a complex interplay of emotions, demands for reform, skepticism, and accusations, underscoring the editorial's effectiveness in provoking public sentiment and discourse on a highly sensitive national issue.

PDI editorial contains 25 identifiable perlocutionary instances, indicating a systematic attempt to influence reader response. This high frequency shows that the editorial is aimed at engaging readers in numerous ways to evoke reactions or maintain readers' interest in the subject matter. Perlocutionary activities are common in PDI editorials due to the communication paradigm that emphasizes reader engagement and response.

Moreover, in this study, the researchers also examined and analyzed the responses, focusing on the purpose and context behind each comment. Based on this analysis, the researchers carefully determined whether the responses appropriately corresponded to specific sentences in the editorials. In the tables below are some examples of the analyses of the comments and their correlation to a specific text or statement in the news editorials. The researchers relied on the content and meaning of the comments in interpreting.

3.1 Perlocutionary Points Exemplified Correspondingly in Response to the Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Daily Inquirer: “End hazing, brutal rituals for good”

In the analysis of the comments, most of them point to a generalized thought, referring to the editorials' main subject matter. However, some comments are also observed to be concentrated to certain statements mentioned in the editorial, for example, an extract from the PDI's editorial “End hazing, brutal rituals for good” states that “Legislators supporting the revival of ROTC justify their move as necessary to instill “strong love for the country” especially given recent geopolitical developments in the region.” Associated with commenter Hali Moore's

comment, which says that “The fact that we’re still debating ROTC revival, knowing its past with hazing, is absurd. How can we justify instilling patriotism through fear and pain?” Hali Moore's comment directly challenges this justification by highlighting the historical problem of hazing within ROTC that is stated in the editorial text, leading to a perception of the revival debate as "absurd."

The comments that were identified as perlocutions have undergone speech acts analysis as well. Each comment of each user was divided per sentence according to their complete thought. The locutions and illocutions of each comment from the four newspaper editorials were determined. Moreover, the positive and the negative effects of the perlocutions were also identified in the following tables below.

Table 9

Analysis on Comments as Perlocutionary Points Exemplified in Response to the Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Daily Inquirer: “End hazing, brutal rituals for good”

| | Categories | Frequency |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Locutions | Declarative | 7 |
| | Interrogative | 1 |
| Illocutions | Assertive | 3 |
| | Expressive | 2 |
| | Directives | 3 |
| Positive, Negative, or Neutral | Positive | 0 |
| | Negative | 8 |
| | Neutral | 0 |

Note. Results of perlocutionary points (comments) analysis per sentence

Table 9 illustrates the analysis of the perlocutionary points of the editorial of PDI. The comments collectively convey a strong negative connotation, expressing outrage, condemnation, and a fervent call for the abolition of hazing and, by extension, fraternities. Additionally, the Illocutionary points that were analyzed in the comments are only assertives (3), expressives (2), and directives (3). Phrases such as "deeply ingrained culture of violence," "haven't stopped the deaths," "absurd," "instilling patriotism through fear and pain," "senselessly harming others," and "brutal rituals" vehemently denounce the practice. The direct mention of historical hazing deaths, like that of Ferdinand Tabtab, and the involvement of Alpha Phi Omega serve to underscore the tragic and fatal consequences. Even the statement "how lucky to be alive through that or at least, still functioning kidneys" implies the severe, life-threatening nature of hazing. The suggested "simple solution, anyone joining a frat will get no diploma upon graduating," is a punitive measure born out of extreme disapproval.

Table 10

Analysis on Comments as Perlocutionary Points Exemplified in Response to the Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Star: “Closure”

| | Categories | Frequency |
|-------------|---------------|-----------|
| Locutions | Declarative | 2 |
| | Interrogative | 3 |
| Illocutions | Expressives | 2 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|---|
| Positive, Negative, or Neutral | Positive | 0 |
| | Negative | 5 |
| | Neutral | 0 |

Note. Results of perlocutionary points (comments) analysis per sentence

These comments overwhelmingly imply a negative connotation, expressing profound concern, anger, and a demand for drastic action regarding the issue of hazing and fraternities. Phrases like "no closure till the fraternity issue is resolved," the explicit mention of a student's death due to hazing, and rhetorical questions such as "How many more fatalities should be added?" etc. underscore the tragic and unacceptable consequences of these practices. The biblical allusion "Do we call it fraternity when you kill your brother, like Cain?" further intensifies the negative framing by associating the acts with fratricide. Finally, the statement "bawal na ang hazing pero may nabibiktima pa din kaya ipagbawal na ang fraternity" directly advocates for the prohibition of fraternities, clearly stemming from a deep-seated negative perception of their involvement in harmful activities.

Table 11

Analysis on Comments as Perlocutionary Points Exemplified in Response to the Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Daily Inquirer: "I spy..."

| | Categories | Frequency |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Locutions | Declarative | 67 |
| | Interrogative | 18 |
| | Imperative | 3 |
| | Exclamatory | 3 |
| Illocutions | Assertive | 22 |
| | Expressive | 54 |
| | Directives | 15 |
| Positive, Negative, or Neutral | Positive | 10 |
| | Negative | 78 |
| | Neutral | 3 |

Note. Results of perlocutionary points (comments) analysis per sentence

In Table 11, most comments are negative, expressing strong dissatisfaction, suspicion, and cynicism about Philippine political issues, particularly Alice Guo. Remarks like "do we need to spell it out?" criticize governmental authorities and processes.

Many comments lament the perceived damage to the Philippines' international reputation and economy, stating "damaging the country's global reputation," "harmful to the economy," There is a clear sense of despair about the country's fate, exemplified by "let this country go down in oblivion FOREVER," "Goodbye Philippines!" Furthermore, there are strong anti-China sentiments, with blanket statements like "Absolutely no Chinese investment should be allowed in the Philippines for any reason," and the warning about "selfish hegemony" in Southeast Asia. Criticism includes government agencies' inaction and incompetence. ("bakit hanggang ngayon wala pang napapatunayan, nakakasuhan at naipakulong ang mga psa, nsc, doj? anu pa hinihintay nyu, pasko?"). While there are occasional sarcastic or humorous remarks "HAHAHAHHA!!!! Nice one sir/mam...", "Ako naman half German half Shepherd", and one

instance of a positive comment about an editorial's title ("Maganda ang title ng editorial. Nakapag pa init, ha ha ha ha."), These are overtaken by anger, dissatisfaction, and a feeling of a country in danger due to corruption, external threats, and governmental incompetence. The majority perceive negativity and are frustrated with the existing quo.

Analysis found three (3) neutral comments. First is, "At the heart of all this is the bigger issue: how the Philippines presents itself to the world," is neutral to somewhat negative. It suggests that the Philippines' current presentation requires improvement. Given that the prior remarks focused on political scandals, suspected espionage, and internal disputes, this statement suggests that unresolved concerns are contributing to the country's poor global image. Instead of being positive, it indicates a problem. Another is, I'm "American by birth ako, half Filipino and half Ilocano," states just the speaker's backdrop. Lastly, "The topic of the day is the midterm election," indicates neutrality. A factual remark that sets the topic, like a news headline, which just simply references a major political event.

Table 12

Analysis on Comments as Perlocutionary Points Exemplified in Response to the Newspaper Editorial of the Philippine Daily Inquirer: "Alice unbowed"

| | Categories | Frequency |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Locutions | Declarative | 4 |
| Illocutions | Assertive | 1 |
| | Expressive | 1 |
| | Directives | 2 |
| Positive, Negative, Or Neutral | Positive | 0 |
| | Negative | 4 |
| | Neutral | 0 |

Note. Results of perlocutionary points (comments) analysis per sentence

The comments analyzed reflect a strong tone of negativity, marked by deep dissatisfaction and anger toward the current political and societal landscape. Many express a desire for harsh consequences for those perceived as corrupt or disloyal, including calls for deportation, forced labor, and immediate legal action. The language often turns cynical and despairing, with phrases like "morons govern the country," "rotten system," and "clown show," underscoring a profound loss of trust in leadership and democratic institutions. This widespread disillusionment is further emphasized by statements such as "Goodbye Philippines!" and appeals to foreign powers—indicating a sense of hopelessness and resignation about the country's future and the people's perceived inability to drive meaningful change.

Conclusion

This study analyzed speech acts in Philippine newspaper editorials from Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI) and Philippine Star (Philstar), highlighting their pragmatic impact on public discourse. Editorials primarily perform illocutionary acts—informing, persuading, critiquing, and advocating—beyond simply stating facts. Both publications favor declarative sentences, reflecting a journalistic norm that emphasizes authority over emotional appeal or reader engagement. PDI occasionally uses interrogatives to provoke thought, while Philstar omits them entirely. The general absence of imperatives and exclamatory aligns with Filipino cultural values favoring politeness and reasoned argument. PDI's frequent use of assertives suggests a more analytical tone, whereas expressive speech acts varied by topic and publication. Philstar was

more expressive on hazing, while PDI was more expressive on Alice Guo—highlighting how editorial tone adjusts based on issue sensitivity and brand identity. Directive acts were moderately used to shape opinion without commanding, while commissive and declarative acts were avoided, maintaining editorial neutrality. Reader comments—mostly negative—reflected public dissatisfaction, but both positive and negative feedback served as critical tools for gauging public engagement and editorial impact. These reactions offer newsrooms essential qualitative data to refine communication and strengthen editorial relevance. Limitations include the narrow sample (only two broadsheets from October 2024), subjective interpretation of comments, and lack of direct commenter interviews, limiting insights into the perlocutionary effects and commenters' intentions.

Recommendations

To deepen the analysis of public sentiment surrounding critical issues in the Philippines, future research should implement a comprehensive methodology that expands beyond the current scope. It is strongly recommended that future studies incorporate direct interviews with the commenters to better understand their intentions. Qualitative approach would help clarify ambiguities, disclose intentions, and provide context, especially for emotionally charged or rhetorically complex terms. Although challenging due to ethical concerns like anonymity and informed consent, this method would offer depth understanding on perlocutionary effects and how statements impact others and if they succeed. Additionally, researchers should adopt an integrated analytical framework that combines Speech Act Theory with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to move beyond surface-level meanings and assess the actual communicative force and social impact of reader comments. Expanding the scope to include more Philippine broadsheets and media outlets is also crucial for capturing a wider range of editorial perspectives and public engagement patterns. Interviews with readers could further enhance understanding of how editorials are received and interpreted, offering deeper insights into the relationship between intended messages and actual impact. Moreover, incorporating Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory would shed light on how commenters handle face-threatening acts and use politeness strategies to influence or challenge others. Similarly, Van Dijk's (1992) framework on micro and macro-speech acts can be applied to better understand the layered functions of discourse and how utterances reflect both individual expression and broader editorial intentions.

REFERENCES

- Abba, T. S., Olakunle, I. A., & Musa, N. A. (2015). A speech act analysis of Daily Trust newspaper headline reports on Boko Haram attacks. *Prospects*, 8(3). <https://icidr.org.ng/index.php/Jcc/article/view/1035/905>
- Afifuddin, A. (2024). Investigating Student-Lecturer Interactions in EFL Classroom: A Speech Acts analysis. *JETLEE Journal of English Language Teaching Linguistics and Literature*, 4(1), 117–125. <https://doi.org/10.47766/jetlee.v4i1.2570>
- Almarsomi, N. M. N. H., & Hussein, N. J. Q. (2021). A speech acts analysis of English COVID-19 news headlines. *Journal of College of Education for Women*, 32(4), 22–37. <https://doi.org/10.36231/coedw.v32i4.1547>
- Altun, M. (2023). The power of language: Exploring its significance in shaping perceptions, beliefs, and relationships. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies*, 10(3). <https://doi.org/10.23918/ijsses.v10i3p362>
- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford University Press. <https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=1831314>

- Cabaysa, R. D. (2021). Exploring the linguistic features of Philippine headlines in on-line newspapers. *International Journal of Research Publications*, 81(1). <https://doi.org/10.47119/ijrp100811720212115>
- Dizon, B. O. (2021). The typology and semantic functions of reporting verbs in online editorials of Philippine newspapers. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Studies (IJELS)*, 7(2), 58–73. <https://doi.org/10.24071/ijels.v7i2.3637>
- Guro, C. (2017). *Expressiveness in newspaper discourse*. https://www.academia.edu/30731552/Expressiveness_in_newspaper_discourse
- Hassan, A. S. (2024). *Types of sentences in newspapers* [Unpublished manuscript].
- Haloc, L. (2018). *From the palace to the picket lines: An analysis of news reports on Pres. Duterte's threat to kick out UP student protesters* [Unpublished manuscript].
- IJMRAP Editor. (2024). *Illocutionary speech acts in editorial discourse: A pragmatic analysis of language dissemination*. www.academia.edu. https://www.academia.edu/124150766/Illocutionary_Speech_Acts_in_Editorial_Discours_A_Pragmatic_Analysis_of_Language_Dissemination
- Kone, N. (2020). Speech acts in UN treaties: A pragmatic perspective. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 10(06), 813–827. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2020.106051>
- Magtira, J. M., & Bernardo, A. (2017). A contrastive analysis of Filipino and American newspaper editorial headlines. *Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 5, 15–33. <https://doi.org/10.59960/5.a2> *Manila Bulletin - the nation's leading newspaper*. (n.d). <https://mb.com.ph/our-company>
- Mey, J. (2001). *Pragmatics: An introduction*. <https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=991892>
- Morales, N. R. C., & Gonzales, N. M. I. M. (2023b). A Filipino-American contrastive study on newspaper Genre: A response to post pandemic period. *Open Access Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 6(2), 038–048. <https://doi.org/10.53022/oarjms.2023.6.2.0046>
- Olamide, I., & Segun, A. (2014). *A Speech Act analysis of editorial comments of TELL Magazine*. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/A-Speech-Act-Analysis-of-Editorial-Comments-of-TELL-Olamide-Segun/c047cd251e3bf73d89f76c559f67a970ecc40c62>
- Rismayanti, H. (2021). The analysis of locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act in five feet apart movie. *MEDIOVA Journal of Islamic Media Studies*, 1(2), 138–149. <https://doi.org/10.32923/medio.v1i2.1915>
- Searle, J. R. (1977). A taxonomy of illocutionary acts. In K. Gunderson (Ed.), *Language, mind, and knowledge* (pp. 344–369). University of Minnesota Press. <https://conservancy.umn.edu/items/2b9aa876-a427-4f47-8640-74c20f583c86>
- Sharma, B. K. (2024). Newspaper editorial: Genre of rhetorical artifact. *Haimaprabha*, 23(1), 82–90. <https://doi.org/10.3126/haimaprabha.v23i1.66732>
- Stevani, M., Tarigan, K. E., Sawalmeh, M. H., & Ginting, F. Y. A. (2023). A case study of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts in English learning interactions in Junior High school. *Journal of World Englishes and Educational Practices*, 5(1), 47–56. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jweep.2022.5.1.5>
- Wiana, D., & Khairani, A. I. (2020). *An analysis of speech acts on headlines Medan Newspaper*. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/An-Analysis-of-Speech-Acts-on-Headlines-Medan-Wiana-Khairani/c063ae72d51e7a08f9070380e8960ae645a43f07>