

PERSUASIVE ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background of the Study

Defined as utterances that seek to elicit compliance or action, it appears that persuasion is neither simple to understand or easy to achieve. Theoretical literature and research have suggested that to have a successful persuasion is difficult. According to Cicero, the Roman philosopher, persuasion is the most difficult of all attainments, regardless of how it is done. In line with Cicero, Woodward & Denton (2014, p. 4) and Doumont (2010, p. 1) consider it as a particularly challenging form of communication and a difficult task. The first two scholars even explicitly stated that persuasion is “enormously difficult” (p. 16). It is not so easy and predictable because, as Woodward & Denton observed, people are not easy to change. As a result, even apparently fluent and effective message could only produce minimal changes in the intended receivers (p. 17).

Persuasion gets even more difficult if it is carried out

through written forms. It has been acknowledged that written persuasion is often more difficult than spoken or face-to-face persuasion. This is primarily because in written persuasion, readers are not physically present and therefore writers cannot adjust in real time to readers' verbal and nonverbal responses (Nippold, Ward-Lonergan, & Fanning, 2005, p.128). For this reason, spoken or face-to-face persuasion is found to have different and mostly stronger direct persuasive effects than is possible in written persuasion (Newsom & Haynes, 2008; Nippold, et al., 2005). Speech has therefore been regarded to be more effective to change minds or to bring about compliance than writing.

Persuasive writing has therefore been acknowledged as a demanding task and a challenging form of communication (pp. 125-126). Such demanding and challenging task requires the use of complex language to attain success. As a result, most fifth-grade ELL students have difficulty writing persuasive essays and middle year students in Australia struggled to write an exposition (Lenski & Verbruggen, 2010, p. 91; Mills & Dooley, 2014, p. 33). Similarly, at the university level, Gillen (2006) found that students encountered difficulties when dealing with the persuasive nature of research articles. Due to

these, teaching students how to write persuasive texts was deemed complex and demanding or challenging (Newell et al., 2011, p. 277).

In persuasive writing, one of the most difficult tasks is to persuade people to take environmental action. This assertion had been put forward by some environmentalists and researchers. In his article, George Monbiot (2014), a British writer known for his environmental activism, wrote, “Why is it so difficult to persuade people to care about our wonderful planet, the world that gave rise to us and upon which we wholly depend?” An environmental scientist, Monty Hempel, said that even ecoliteracy, i.e. knowledge about environmental problems, does not always lead people to do something for the environment or to change their environmental behavior (Cruise, 2014). Similarly, from the viewpoint of a marketer, persuading consumers to act in an environmentally responsible manner has been regarded as a challenging task because the benefit of such pro-environmental behavior is not always immediate or direct (Kronrod et al., 2012, p. 95).

In Indonesia, the plastic bag charge policy, which turned out to be ineffective in reducing plastic bag waste, shows how difficult environmental persuasion is. The pay-for-

plastic bag campaign was launched to reduce waste from plastic bags. Even though the campaign had been intense, the public's compliance remained low. Instead of bringing their own shopping bags, many shoppers were willing to pay for the plastic bags. They found it difficult to remember to bring shopping bags or reusable containers from home and did not mind paying Rp 200 (1.5c. US) per bag. Even when major retailers in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, charged Rp 1,500 (11c. US) per bag, people were still willing to pay the additional charge. In sum, the policy had been ineffective in encouraging the public to reduce plastic bag consumption.

In a global scale, in the midst of intense campaigns, many people were still reluctant to take actions against climate change. The campaigns had been mostly aimed at reducing or eliminating the man-made (anthropogenic) causes of climate change such as deforestation, burning of fossil fuels, fertilizer use and mining. However, it turned out that the results were not as they were expected to be. In Indonesia, the rate of deforestation remained high and even increased from year to year. Moreover, instead of reducing its dependency towards fossil fuels, the Indonesian government had planned to build more steam-powered electric generators with the heat energy of

coal as the driving force. The same thing occurred in China. With a growing economy and ever-increasing need for energy, China had built new coal-fired power plants at a fast rate. As a result, China became the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases and contributed at least 10% to the human-caused climate change. Next to China was Canada, where tar sands operations emitted approximately 70 megatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions in a year. In Canada, the marches and rallies held by climate activists could not lead to major policy changes to curb the tar sands growth and further address the threat of climate change.

In addition to the reluctance, a considerable number of people kept on denying that climate change is real and occurring or that human activities contribute to the changing climate. This denial continued to exist despite the more intense campaigns and the more visible effects of climate change. It was most prevalent in countries like United States, Britain, and Australia where climate science had been polarized and politicized, particularly by the news media. The United States, in fact, had more climate change deniers compared to Britain and Australia. A 2014 report by Ipsos MORI confirmed only 57.3% of the Americans agreed that human beings were

heading for environmental disaster if they did not change their habits quickly (Daily Mail Reporter, 2014). This figure ranked them last in the poll of 20 countries. Such skepticism was also indicated by the 2015 Gallup's annual environmental poll. The poll showed that the public concern over major environmental problems, including global warming or climate change, was dropped and the percentage of the Americans who consider environmental threats as a great deal was lower than 2014 (Jones, 2015). Moreover, the Pew Research Center's annual poll also indicated a similar result. The survey revealed that 52% of the U.S. citizens did not consider climate change as a serious threat. Correspondingly, climate change had been considered as the least important issue in the list of the U.S. public concerns (Smith, 2015).

Interestingly, in the US, the aforesaid condition changed in 2016. Although promoting pro-environmental behavior to the Americans had been difficult, an annual environmental poll conducted by Gallup in March 2016 suggested that they had taken global climate change more seriously than at any time in the past eight years. The poll showed that 64% of 1,019 Americans were worried a "great deal" or "fair amount" about global climate change. Only 16%

of U.S. adults still believed there was not enough evidence to prove that the issue was real (Saad & Jones, 2016). Similarly, another survey conducted by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication in March 2016 revealed that seven in ten Americans (70%) thought global warming that causes climate patterns to change had really happened. The survey also indicated that over half of the Americans (58%) were “somewhat worried” and 16% were “very worried” about global warming (Leiserowitz et al., 2016, p. 3). In line with those rising worries and concerns, most U.S. citizens had agreed that everyone in the US should do more to reduce global warming and therefore support policies on climate change and energy.

Such attitude change seemed to be triggered by, among others, mass media. In general, mass media has been thought to have an important role in raising awareness of the climate change problem and instigating climate action. Thus, in the US, media observers have acknowledged the role of mass media in shaping public attitudes. According to Meghan Adams from the University of North Carolina, American values are truly shaped or so heavily influenced by the mass media (2015). The

media has driven the Americans to feel the way they do towards any topic, including environmental topics. Due to such powerful influence, the mass media in the US tends to shape public opinion or, in other words, serves as a powerful creator of the public opinions (Gruber-Magitot).

In view of the above, Martyniak (2014) posited that there is significant potential to stimulate and to call for public concern and action with climate change through the mass media. As a result, in the US, environmental persuasion exists in almost all forms of the mass media. It comes in both spoken and written forms, ranging from the most explicit to the most implicit. The most explicit forms are advertisements published in magazines or newspapers that include assertive slogans and messages like Greenpeace's "Stop the catastrophe" or World Wildlife Fund's "Stop climate change before it changes you." On the other hand, there are forms of persuasion that are less explicit. The persuaders aim to influence the audience in an implicit manner. An example of such persuasive discourse is newspaper opinion article, which according to the Earth Institute is "among the best-read sections of any publication" (Karunungan, 2016). The newspaper opinion article has been considered as one of the best-read sections because, in addition

to common people, some of the most attentive readers of the article are decision makers in government, corporations, and nonprofit institutions. Due to this, writing and publishing a newspaper opinion article has been claimed one of the best ways for the non-professional writer to express his or her perspective on the issue and/or to make an issue a focus of public attention.

Opinion articles, which are published under the opinion section of a newspaper, are generally written to convince readers of particular viewpoints or to move them to action. In those articles, journalists or writers are trying to inform, to remind, to persuade or to support certain points of view through argumentation (Halmari & Virtanen, 2005, p. 15). Due to such objectives, opinion article has been considered as a subgenre of persuasive text that has the objective to influence an audience (van Dijk, 1988, in Sukma & Sujatna, 2014, p. 16). It has been regarded as a suitable and common model of persuasive writing that sets the standards for written persuasion. In fact, it can reflect national styles regarding modes of persuasion better than any other type of writing (Connor, 1996, p. 143). Its language has been regarded as persuasive and therefore appropriate for a study of persuasive

language in newspapers (Breuer et al., 2008, p. 16).

A newspaper opinion article is inherently persuasive, yet readers may be less aware of the persuasive intent behind the text when reading it. Being less intrinsically persuasive than advertisements or political speeches, the opinion article is not expected to be persuasive as the other two types of discourse. As a result, persuasive strategies in the article are known to be implicit or less direct. The writers, or the journalists, keep their persuasive message implicit enough to successfully convince readers. In other words, they persuade their audience in a covert manner. In this manner, cited in Matus-Mendoza & Rycker (2013, p. 401), Virtanen (2005) observes that even citing a survey result can have persuasive purposes and be intended for shaping readers' perceptions in subtle ways.

In Miller's (2015) view, such implicit form of persuasion is more likely to be successful than the explicit one. According to Miller, explicit statements, especially commands, demands, and orders, tend to generate higher levels of resistance compared to more implicit expressions like suggestions, recommendations, or questions (p. 271). In other words, people are more difficult to get persuaded with explicit

form of persuasion and relatively easier to be influenced with more implicit persuasion. This idea was echoed by Bülow-Møller (2005) and Östman (2005). Bülow-Møller suggested that for maximal success, persuasion needs to be subtle and implicit (Virtanen & Halmari, 2005, p. 17). Such assumption was resulted from Bülow-Møller's research findings, which revealed that overt or explicit persuasion was often a signal of deadlock in business negotiations. Correspondingly, Östman deemed implicit persuasion as the only form of persuasion that is likely to be successful or effective (p. 21). In his point of view, the more writers try to explicitly persuade readers into doing something, the less likely those readers will be to actually do the thing (Östman, 2005, p. 199).

In view of the above, learning persuasive language in U.S. newspaper opinion articles was deemed useful for student writers. This motivated the present study to investigate persuasive attempts in opinion articles that talk about climate change. To achieve the purpose of the study, a qualitative textual analysis was adopted as the research method. This research method was deemed suitable because this study analyzed media texts. Then, as persuasive efforts in newspaper opinion articles have been regarded to be less direct or implicit,

the textual analysis in this paper employed a pragmatic approach. Investigating implicit communication has been the task of pragmatics. Hence, according to Östman (2005, p. 196), researchers can only identify and examine implicit persuasion through in-depth study into the pragmatics of language.

In pragmatics, persuasion has been extensively studied from a speech act perspective. In this perspective, a discourse, whether it is oral or written in form, is closely bound to a writer's intention of performing an action with words (Cheung, 2015). Due to that, utterances in a persuasive text are viewed as expressing more than the sentences' contents. There is a more essential purpose behind each utterance, that is, to do something (Birner, 2013). Hence, a writer in performing an act of writing (a locutionary act in speech-act terms) also performs a second act, that is, an illocutionary act, in which he intends the utterance to do something (Horner, 1983, p. 96). That second act expresses the illocutionary force of the utterance. Following Searle (1979), it can be assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and/or declaratives. In addition to the two types of act, there is a third act, a perlocutionary act, i.e. the bringing about of effects on readers through an utterance. Persuasion is an example of this third type of act.

According to Bülow-Møller (2005, p. 28), it is a “perlocutionary end result” that is obtained through the other two types of act.

In the existing research, illocutionary acts tend to be the focus of analysis. This is because, in persuasive writing, illocutionary acts are of importance. Persuasive texts are different from texts that are coercive such as threatening messages, employer’s directives, ban on smoking, or enforcement of seat belt laws (Perloff, 2017, p. 32). In coercive texts, readers are not free to respond. The coercer usually employs a threat of some dire consequence to force people to act. Perlocutionary effects are thus of importance. Oppositely, in persuasive texts, perlocutionary effects are less important because persuasion requires freedom, free will, free choice, or voluntary action. In this case, persuasive writers simply make the best attempts and then let readers freely decide whether or not they want to accept their ideas or viewpoints. Persuasion is then seen by some theorists as attempts to persuade addressees to change their beliefs, attitudes, and/or behavior regardless of the outcome (successful or not). In view of this, researchers have been primarily interested in studying illocutionary acts or

force. Some of them tried to identify illocutionary act types that were performed in written persuasion.

Previously, Khalis (2017), Simon & Dejica-Cartis (2015), Peter & Duro-Bello (2014), and Acheoah (2012) analyzed written advertisements to discover the types of illocutionary acts the advertisers used to achieve persuasion. Khalis did a qualitative study on 11 fast food advertisements posted on the official page of each restaurant and identified six types of acts. The six types of acts were asserting, informing, directing, persuading, suggesting, and promising. Two years earlier, Simon & Dejica-Cartis conducted a quantitative analysis on 84 written adverts published in ten magazines and nine newspapers. Applying van Dijk's theory of macro- and micro-speech acts, also Searle's concept of Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs), they found that the advertisers had a preference over three types of acts, i.e. informing, directing, and asserting. Then, in Nigeria, Peter & Duro-Bello collected 12 written adverts of Pentecostal gospel programme from national dailies, televisions, billboards, and walls of residential buildings. He carried out a pragmatic analysis using Austin's (1962) speech act theory and at the end found that commissives were predominant in the adverts. In the same setting, Acheoah

tried to identify the predominant type of illocutionary act in six Nigerian advertisements. In the study, assertives or, specifically, informatives (i.e. declaring or stating a position about the products) were found to be the dominant type of act.

Similar to the aforesaid previous studies, Guga-Cotea (2014) also investigated written advertisements. However, different from the other three studies, her research was comparative in nature. She particularly compared the illocutionary acts performed in 50 British and Romanian advertisements and expected to see whether cultural differences between the two countries led to differences in the types of illocutionary act that prevailed in the advertisements. The findings later confirmed the assumption regarding the differences in the types of illocutionary act preferred by the British and Romanian advertisers. Directives and commissives were found to preferred by the British, while assertives were favored by the Romanian. Overall, both British and Romanian advertisers preferred to use directives, commissives, and assertives in order to achieve persuasion.

Focusing on the same aspect, Olamide & Segun (2014) and Alhudhaif (2005) analyzed newspaper editorials. Olamide & Segun selected editorial comments from four 2014 editions

of TELL Magazine in Nigeria to be studied from a pragmatic perspective. They chose the first two sentences in each editorial comment and tried to identify the illocutionary act types applying Searle's speech act theory. The results revealed that the journalists mostly employed representatives (assertives) and expressives to appeal to readers. The directives were not prevalent in the selected editorial comments. Similar results were shown by Alhudhaif who did a cross-cultural study on 52 American and Arabic editorials from distinguished newspapers in Saudi Arabia and US. Alhudhaif used Searle's (1979) taxonomy of illocutionary act as a coding system and discovered that both Arabic and American editorials preferred to use assertives to achieve persuasion. Differences in both editorials were found in the use of directives and expressives. American directives and expressives are more direct, more explicit, and stronger than the Arabic ones.

Having reviewed previous studies, this study also aimed to fill the gap in the literature by examining U.S. online newspaper opinion articles that talk about climate change. The articles were collected from newspaper online sites. They are the online versions that do not have column or vertical division of layout like the printed and e-paper editions, but have the

same content as the other two formats. While the printed and e-paper formats are available only by subscription, the online editions are largely free to readers. This ease of access and also similarity in content had made the online editions preferable for the data analysis.

To get the data, several U.S. online newspaper sites were accessed. The sites were those of U.S. leading newspapers ranked in the Top 25 Newspapers by Digital Traffic list (Barthel, 2015). The print editions of those online newspapers have had a high level of readership. Then, to retrieve the most relevant articles, search terms such as “climate change” and “global warming” were used. At the end of data collection, a total of 10 articles were found to be relevant. Those articles were published in five online news sites, namely the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *LA Times*, the *Seattle Times*, and *Miami Herald*.

From the speech act perspective, in opinion articles, locutionary and illocutionary acts of various types were performed with certain perlocutionary effects in mind. The locutionary act is the act of writing or producing an utterance with its literal or semantic meaning. The illocutionary act refers to what a writer intends to perform through the utterance. The

perlocutionary effect is the bringing about of effects on readers by uttering the utterance. In an opinion article, that effect can be a changed belief or attitude and even further, a real action. Thus, if a climate change activist wants to persuade readers, for instance, to stop burning fuels, he will use all utterances in his article to reinforce the idea or message. Those utterances can be counted as requests, predictions, promises, advices, or even warnings although they are mostly declarative in form. If readers can understand or recognize such illocutionary forces, they may be willing to reduce the use of fossil fuels or even stop burning them. This action is, in speech act terms, the perlocutionary effect of the text.

Following previous studies, the present study focused on the illocutionary acts of persuasive utterances in the 10 selected articles. It particularly aimed to identify the types of illocutionary acts that were employed by the writers to attain persuasion. To meet the objective, the utterances in each text were analyzed and classified applying Searle's (1979) Taxonomy of Illocutionary Act and Vanderveken's (2009) list of illocutionary act verbs. The taxonomy distinguished illocutionary acts into five types, four of which were considered relevant to this study. The four types were

assertives, directives, commissives, and expressives. This taxonomy was later improved by Vanderveken. He listed some illocutionary act verbs under each type and described them based on their features. After the first classification, the illocutionary acts were categorized into direct and indirect. This second classification was made as directness/indirectness has been claimed to affect persuasiveness. In fact, indirectness has been acknowledged to contribute to persuasion success.

To provide more useful insight to the field, this research was intended not only to classify the types of illocutionary act but also to identify illocutionary force indicators. This objective was formulated due to two reasons. First, as cited in Bach (2006), Strawson (1964) deemed that the effect relevant to communicative success is understanding (in Austin's terms, uptake) rather than a further (perlocutionary) effect. Based on this idea, in the opinion articles, the writers' illocutionary acts were regarded successful if readers could understand the utterances' meanings and illocutionary forces. In this way, the role of the so-called illocutionary force indicators in a persuasive text is undeniably important. Second, in speech act study, one of the main questions that is commonly raised by speech act researchers is how the illocutionary force of

utterances is indicated when no explicit indicators appear. This question made the analysis of illocutionary force indicators necessary. For these two reasons, the second research question was developed.

Then, as illocutionary acts are of importance in persuasive writing, further perlocutionary effects or readers' reactions were not observed. As an alternative, the strategies that were employed by opinion article writers to achieve persuasion were investigated. According to Salmi-Tolonen (2005), such investigation is crucial as persuasive strategies enable persuaders to attain the purpose of persuasion, that is, to realize the move from believing in something to actually doing something (p. 63). In this study, those strategies were identified in relation to the types of illocutionary acts and illocutionary force indicators present in each text. Then, theories of persuasion, particularly that discuss factors affecting persuasiveness, were applied in the analysis to explain why certain strategies were adopted or why certain types of illocutionary act and illocutionary force indicator were predominant in the selected texts.

The Research Questions

Derived from the background and guided by speech act theory, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What types of illocutionary acts did the writers intend to perform through the utterances to persuade readers?
2. How were the illocutionary forces of the utterances indicated by the writers?
 - 2.1 Which parts of the utterances indicated the intended illocutionary forces?
 - 2.2 How the illocutionary forces of the utterances were indicated when no explicit indicator was used?
3. What strategies, related to the type of illocutionary acts and illocutionary force indicators, did the writers use to achieve persuasion?

The Purposes of the Study

Based on the research questions stated previously, the general purpose of the present study was to investigate the illocutionary acts used to achieve persuasion in the 10 selected opinion articles. More specifically, this study aimed to find out the types of illocutionary acts the opinion article writers intended to perform through their utterances and to identify the

illocutionary force indicators provided to facilitate readers' understanding. Besides, the present study was also undertaken to discover the strategies used by the writers to attain persuasion with reference to the types of illocutionary act and illocutionary force indicators.

Scope and Limitation

For the data, the study included in its scope those newspaper opinion articles which were published in U.S. online newspapers in 2015 (from January-December 2015). In the same year, the 2015 United Nations (henceforth, UN) Climate Change Conference was held in Paris, France. The conference negotiated the Paris Agreement, i.e. a global agreement on the reduction of climate change and limitation of global warming. As the impact of the conference, many opinion articles on environmental topics were published in the newspapers, including in the U.S. newspapers, during 2015. This fact determined the scope of this study.

In addition to the year of publication, the scope of the present study had also been determined by two other criteria. First, corresponding to the background, this study included in its scope articles that talk about climate change. The topic of

climate change includes problems that lead to such phenomenon such as global warming (i.e. global changes in temperature) and solutions to stop or reduce such problems. Hence, an article that discussed greenhouse gas reduction, for example, was the scope of this study. Second, as this study focused on persuasive illocutionary acts, the scope included articles that were intended to affect readers' beliefs, values, feelings, attitudes, intention, motivation and viewpoints on certain issues (e.g. "Adopting clean-fuels standard is a public-health imperative") or to make them (readers) perform some actions to resolve those issues (e.g. "To help stop global warming, curb short-lived pollutants").

To get the most relevant articles, websites of major newspaper titles were accessed. Those newspaper titles had a status as U.S. leading newspapers, a high level of readership, and been ranked in the Top 25 Newspapers by Digital Traffic List. After the criteria were applied, 10 opinion articles were found to be relevant. These articles were published in five online news sites, namely the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *LA Times*, the *Seattle Times*, and *Miami Herald*. The length of the articles varied between 600-900 words.

Although speech act theorists had suggested three general types of speech acts, the focus of analysis in this study was illocutionary acts. Further effects of the illocutionary acts on readers' feelings, attitudes, and subsequent behavior (the perlocutionary effects in speech-act terms) were not observed. This is due to the fact that perlocutionary effects were less important than illocutionary acts. In persuasive texts, readers are free to decide whether or not they want to accept the writers' viewpoints and act accordingly. Thus, rather than investigating perlocutionary effects, strategies that were employed by the writers to achieve persuasion were examined in this study. In the analysis, theories of persuasion that discuss factors affecting persuasiveness were also applied to see why the writers adopted certain strategies to persuade readers.

Another scope of this study was related to the taxonomy of illocutionary acts. In Searle's (1979) taxonomy of illocutionary act, only four of the five basic illocutionary categories were considered relevant to the present study. Those four types were assertives, directives, commissives, and expressives. Declarations were excluded from the scope of the study as this type of acts has been categorized as conventional acts, which derive their force from the part they play in a ritual

(Leech, 1983, p. 206). They are conventional rather than communicative. In fact, it has been argued that declarative acts are not illocutionary acts at all and thus do not have an illocutionary force.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study was primarily based on the speech act theory, which holds that utterances in a given context can be described in terms of the actions they perform. This theory was developed by two philosophers, Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). It mainly suggests that in an utterance, three types of actions are simultaneously performed. The first type is the locutionary act, which refers to the act of writing or the act of using words to convey some meaning. The second is the illocutionary act, which signifies the act that is performed by producing an utterance. The third act is the perlocutionary act, which refers to the bringing about of effects on the reader by uttering of a linguistic expression. All speech acts, either spoken or written, can be analyzed on those three dimensions.

As the illocutionary act or the utterance's force had been the focus of analysis in this paper, it needed to be elaborated further. To determine the types of illocutionary act

the writers intended to perform in their persuasive utterances, the correlation between locutionary and illocutionary act needed to be understood and the distinction between locutionary and perlocutionary act had to be drawn. In addition, distinctions also needed to be made between illocutionary force and semantic/propositional content. Then, the illocutionary acts were classified as belonging to one of four main categories, i.e. assertives, directives, commissives, and expressives. These corresponded to four of the main types of illocutionary acts proposed by Searle (1979).

Searle's taxonomy further was improved by Vanderveken (2009). Vanderveken listed some illocutionary act verbs and put them under Searle's five basic illocutionary categories. He then analyzed each verb in terms of its illocutionary force features. There are seven features of illocutionary force, which previously had been put forward by Searle & Vanderveken in 1985. Those features are: illocutionary point, degree of strength of the illocutionary point, mode of achievement, propositional content conditions, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions, and degree of strength of the sincerity conditions. Based on these features, Vanderveken provided a detailed description of each

illocutionary act verb. In the data analysis, such description was applied to analyze the illocutionary act type and employed as the basis for developing the rubrics.

Then, as illocutionary acts can also be analyzed in terms of directness and indirectness, this study also applied the distinction between direct and indirect illocutionary acts in the analysis. The differentiation is based on the types of illocutionary acts used to attain persuasion and Miller's (2015) distinction between explicit and implicit persuasive attempts. Miller distinguishes explicit and implicit persuasive attempts based on the consistency between content and intention. If the content of an utterance is consistent with the writer's intention to persuade, a persuasive attempt or an illocutionary act is said to be explicit or, in other words, direct. On the contrary, if the content is inconsistent with the persuasive intent, the attempt or illocutionary act is considered to be implicit. As the writer's intention in persuasive writing is ultimately to persuade readers to perform an action, illocutionary acts that belong to the category of directives are classified as direct. Other types, i.e. assertives, commissives, and expressives, are considered as indirect. This differentiation is necessary because directness/indirectness has been found to affect persuasiveness.

The other concept used to inform the analysis was illocutionary force indicators. In performing an illocutionary act, a writer always has an intention to make readers understand the act being performed. If an understanding is achieved, he achieves what Austin called “uptake” (Bach, 2006, p. 152). To secure or facilitate such uptake, the writer employs linguistic devices that indicate illocutionary force. Searle called such devices “illocutionary force indicator(s)” (Green, 2014). These illocutionary force indicators can then be classified into two categories: explicit and implicit. The first includes performative verbs, sentence moods, etc. The second applies to those that invite or trigger pragmatic inferences, namely reference, presupposition, and implicature.

Then, as illocutionary acts are sometimes performed in a less explicit way, the analysis of illocutionary force indicators should be supplemented with contextual analysis. In the context analysis, contextual clues are put into consideration. Such clues are provided by the immediately adjacent surroundings of an illocutionary act. They can be in the form of linguistic, cognitive, and/or social (extra-linguistic) materials. Hence, they are respectively referred to as linguistic, cognitive, and social context.

Furthermore, as persuasive illocutionary acts were the focus of the study, theories on persuasion were also employed as theoretical framework that guided the study. The theories explain features of persuasion, (types of) persuasive strategies, and factors that affect persuasiveness (i.e. explicitness/implicitness). These theories, along with previous studies, were used in the analysis to analyze the writers' persuasive strategies. In particular, they were applied to find out why the opinion article writers adopted certain strategies (i.e. performed certain illocutionary acts or employed certain illocutionary force indicators) in their efforts to persuade readers.

Definition of Key Terms

The following central or key terms are operationally defined based on their usage in the study:

Environment. In a book titled *Environment and Ecology*, Singh (2010) defines environment as “sum total of water, air and land interrelationships among themselves and also with the human being, other living organisms and property” (p. 1). In another definition, environmental issues are defined as “problems with the planet's systems (air, water, soil, etc.) that have developed as a result of human interference or

mistreatment of the planet” (Environmental Issues, 2016). Considering the definitions of those two terms, in this study, the term environment refers to the sum total of water, air and land interrelationships between themselves and also with the human being, including problems (with the water, air and land) that have developed as a result of human interference or mistreatment. Such problems include, among others, global warming and climate change.

Online newspaper. An online newspaper is described by Jott (2011) as “a newspaper that exists on the World Wide Web or Internet, either separately or as an online version of a printed periodical.” Moreover, it is differentiated into two types, that is, the E- and Web edition. The E-edition is laid just like the print edition of the newspaper, whereas the Web edition presents news in a format much like a website. Based on this knowledge, the term “online newspaper” is defined here as the online version of a newspaper that exists on the World Wide Web or Internet and presents news in a format much like a website, i.e. a format that has no column or vertical division of layout. Additionally, the content of that online version is the same as the other two formats (the print and E-edition).

Opinion article. In the *New York Times*, an opinion article is defined as “a commentary written by someone who is independent of the newspaper” (The Opinion Pages: More information about opinion articles, 2005). It explains an author’s opinion or point of view on a subject or issue (Saleh, 2013, p. 224). Based on these explanations, an opinion article in this study refers to an article or commentary available in an online newspaper site that is written by someone who is independent of the newspaper to express his/her opinion or point of view on environmental issues or topics. The opinion or point of view expressed in the article therefore does not represent that of the newspaper.

Persuasion. Cited in Hardin (2010), Lakoff (1982) defined persuasion as the “attempt or intention of one party to change the behavior, feelings, intentions, or viewpoint of another by communicative means” (p. 155). In other definition, Salmi-Tolonen (2005) viewed persuasion from the speech act theory and described it as an attempt “to realize the move from constative to directive or from believing in something to actually doing something” (p. 63). Cited in Salmi-Tolonen (2005), Searle (1969) also regarded persuasion as a “directive speech act” in which the persuader’s intention is to make the

persuadee to commit him/herself to perform some form of actions. In addition, such speech act is not always performed explicitly. Accordingly, in this study, persuasion is defined as all linguistic expressions used by a writer as attempts to affect the environmental beliefs or viewpoints of readers and further to make those readers perform some form of environmental actions, either in explicit or implicit ways.

Writer. The term “writer” in this study stands for individuals, journalists, scientists, public officials, or environmentalists who wrote the opinion articles. Otherwise, it may be simply understood as a person who has written something.

Speech acts. In Fowler’s (1991) view, to consider an utterance as a speech act is to acknowledge that a writer in uttering sentences not only says something (the propositional function), but also thereby does something (p. 64). What the utterance does is much more than is conveyed by its literal sentence meaning (Grundy, 2008, p. 71). If written in appropriate conditions and under appropriate conventions, such utterance actually constitutes the performance of an action (Fowler, 1991, p.88). In view of these, speech acts in this research refer to utterances in the selected opinion articles that,

written in certain conditions and under certain conventions, are able to do much more than are conveyed by their literal sentence meanings and thus can be described in terms of the actions they perform.

Locutionary act. Locutionary act is defined by O'Keeffe et al. (2011) as “the physical act of producing an utterance and its apparent meaning” (p. 85). Following O'Keeffe et al., in this study, the term “locutionary act” applies to the opinion article writer’s act of writing an utterance with its semantic or literal meaning.

Utterance. In a book titled *Semantics: A coursebook*, Hurford et al. (2007) define an utterance as “the use by a particular speaker, on a particular occasion, of a piece of language, such as a sequence of sentences, or a single phrase, or even a single word” (p. 16). Corresponding to this definition and the aforementioned definition of locutionary act, the term “utterance” is defined here as the result of the locutionary act (a sentence or sequence of sentences), which is used by the opinion article writer on a persuasive occasion.

Illocutionary act. Huang (2009) defines illocutionary act as a types of function writers intend to fulfill or an action they intend to accomplish in the course of producing an

utterance (p. 1002). Marmaridou (2000) adds that this act can be performed either explicitly or implicitly (p. 174). Thus, in this study, the term “illocutionary act” signifies an act or a type of function that the opinion article writers intend to perform, either explicitly or implicitly, in the course of producing an utterance or performing a locutionary act.

Illocutionary force. The terms “illocutionary act” and “illocutionary force” are used interchangeably. While the former refers to the performance of an act, the latter signifies what is done in uttering the words, the function of the words, the specific purpose that writers have in mind (Cutting, 2002, p. 3). Accordingly, in this research, the term “illocutionary force” is used to refer to actions, functions or purposes that the opinion article writers have in mind when uttering an utterance in order to attain persuasion.

Direct illocutionary act. The term “direct” in speech act theory is often considered as synonymous with explicitness. In a definition, explicitness is referred to as “the degree to which the language of the message makes plain the source’s intent” (Dillard & Shen, 2005, in Miller, 2015, p. 272). Based on such definition, “direct illocutionary act” in this thesis refers to illocutionary acts that make plain the intention of writers to

persuade, i.e. to make readers perform environmental actions. In this study, the term applies to directive illocutionary acts.

Indirect illocutionary act. Derived from the definition of direct illocutionary act, the term “indirect illocutionary act” in this study refers to illocutionary acts that do not make plain the intention of writers to persuade, i.e. to make readers perform environmental actions. Specifically, in this study, the term applies to assertives, commissives, and expressives.

Illocutionary force indicator. Searle (1969) cited in Green (2014) defines “illocutionary force indicator” as a device whose role is to make explicit the force of a writer’s utterance. Marmaridou (2000) describes it further as indicators that show what illocutionary force an utterance has (p. 181). Based on these descriptions, the term “illocutionary force indicator” in this study stands for all linguistic devices (lexical expressions, grammatical constructions, pragmatic elements, etc.) whose role is to make explicit the force of the opinion article writer’s utterances or illocutionary acts.

Significance of the Study

This study was first and foremost desired to be able to give meaningful contribution to the field of pragmatics. In

speech act study, a key question that is often raised by speech act researchers is how the illocutionary force of an utterance is indicated when no (explicit) illocutionary force indicators appear. This question was addressed in the present study. By doing so, this study would be able to contribute to the enrichment of the speech act theory. Moreover, this research was also expected to be able to show the contribution of pragmatics to the other fields of study such as media discourse and environmental communication.

Secondly, the significance of the current study for researchers in the field of applied linguistics was to promote further research on the speech act of persuasion. Further study could examine other form of persuasion in the same field (i.e. environment) or in other fields (e.g., politics, health, religion, and so on) applying the speech act theory. Alternatively, as perlocutionary acts or effects were excluded from the current study, further research could investigate those aspects to find out types of illocutionary acts that are likely to be effective in achieving persuasion. Researchers can, for example, use readers' comments as data to study perlocutionary acts or effects. Readers' comments, which were posted directly in

attachment to an article, can be a rich source of qualitative data that reflect public opinions or attitudes towards the article.

Finally, in the field of applied linguistics, the importance of this research is also to encourage further research on materials development. In particular, findings from the present study were expected to be able to provide insight for researchers that intend to adapt, design or develop materials for teaching persuasive writing. As a good persuasive writer should be able to balance explicitness and implicitness, students need to have knowledge of pragmatics, particularly of illocutionary act types and illocutionary force indicators. Media texts that contain persuasive strategies involving illocutionary act types and illocutionary force indicators might be good sources of authentic materials to teach persuasive writing. In view of that, the findings from this research were expected to be able to inspire materials development researchers to do more research on such type of texts.

Subsequently, the aforementioned further research might later motivate teachers to use media texts that contain environmental persuasion in writing classrooms. As reading persuasive texts about environmental issues has been found to be effective in promoting attitude change and a commitment to

take action (Sinatra et al., 2011), the inclusion of such type of texts in classroom instructions can urge students to take environmental actions. These small-scale actions might lead to actions in a wider scope. In this way, the present study can also contribute to global efforts for protecting the environment.

Thesis Organization

This thesis is organized into five chapters, supplemented with appendixes. Chapter one provides an overview of the current study or the Introduction. It covers the Background of the Study, The Research Questions, The Purposes of the Study, Scope and Limitation, Theoretical Frameworks, Definition of Key Terms, Significance of the Study, and Thesis Organization. In chapter two, the theoretical framework of the current study is discussed. It includes theories on persuasion, speech act, illocutionary act, illocutionary force, and illocutionary force indicators. The chapter ends with a review of existing research that is related to the problem under study. The next chapter, chapter three, describes the research method of the current study. It discusses several methodological aspects of the study, namely research design, source of data, data, Units of Analysis, research

instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis steps, and triangulation method. The last two chapters deal with the results or findings of the study. Chapter four presents such results, along with some discussions about them. The conclusions that were drawn from the whole study as well as suggestions for future research are provided in chapter five.

The appendices section consists of Appendix 1-4. Appendix 1 and 2 provide the taxonomy of illocutionary acts and checklist form applied in the analysis. Appendix 3 contains the full texts of the 10 selected newspaper opinion articles. The summary tables of the results are presented in Appendix 4.