

Organizational Framework in Editorials of Two Philippine Local Newspapers

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Abstract

Connor (1996) emphasizes attention to a diversity of genres and text types, including ‘accomplished texts’ written by professional writers in Contrastive Rhetoric (CR) research. The present study examines the organizational framework used by editorial writers in English of two Philippine local newspapers gathered online. This is stimulated by the apparent lack of attention given to newspapers of local circulation, despite their accessibility and significance to the local reading public. This study aims to describe local editorial writing in the Philippines, particularly organizational framework used, as well as features. The analysis shows that the editorials in English in Philippine local newspapers under study follow McCarthy’s (1991) claim-counterclaim pattern most frequently, followed by Hoey’s (1983) problem-solution framework, patterns that are consistent with editorial writing at the national level (Dayag, 2005, 2009). In addition to these two patterns, local editorials also use the essay type described by Peñaranda (1977). The analysis also reveals the use of both formal and informal language and the use of negative images, entailment, and evaluative modifiers to show the non-neutral stance of the editorials. Implications for editorial writing in local newspapers in the Philippines are presented.

Keywords: Contrastive rhetoric, organizational framework, claim-counterclaim pattern, problem-solution framework, Philippine editorials in English

Introduction

Kaplan’s 1966 seminal work on Contrastive Rhetoric (CR) examined written final outputs of students across cultures, from which he concluded two points (Connor, 1996): different cultures show different writing styles; and culture-specific patterns of

organization are negative influences in ESL writing, described as violations of native speakers' expectations and lacking in focus, organization, and cohesion. Kachru (1995) points out that this claim is based on the assumption that there is a clearly identifiable norm of writing in Inner Circle English. She adds that this claim and assumption conclude that it is "both necessary and desirable for other users of English to write like those from the Inner Circle", arguing for benefits to be derived from changing rhetoric and sequence of thought (22). Kachru argues that this position has two negative consequences. First, it regards rhetorical patterns, which do not conform to the expectations of the readers from the Inner Circle, less important; and second, it leads to contradictory practices in pedagogical contexts. She claims that there are clear differences in the rhetorical styles within Inner Circle varieties of English, and that other languages such as Arabic, Chinese, and German have distinct rhetorical organizations of expository and argumentative prose which the native varieties of English do not share. She adds that in most CR studies, there is a mismatch in the use of Western frameworks in the analysis of rhetorical organization in non-Western cultures.

From this argument, Kachru proposes that the study of the traditions of writing in different cultures is necessary to establish clear criteria for comparability across genres and registers. She justifies the importance of these bases for research saying that there may be genres that are unique to a language and culture, and that there may be different rhetorical patterns associated with different genres. She adds that the framework of CR needs to be based on the social meaning and intertextuality of texts, and concludes that it is neither necessary to train readers who consume internationally produced texts to appreciate writing conventions different from their own.

Kaplan later admits that the earliest work in CR was "significantly flawed, attempting to compare student writing in L2 with professional writing in L1, ignoring differences in genre, and assuming that there was a single 'general' text-logical structure for English" (1997, 19). He identifies more recent works that address the limitations of his original claims and have extended CR to studies across genres. These include Kaplan *et al.* in 1994, Swales in 1990, and Kaplan and Hagstrom in 1995, among others.

In the course of the development of CR research, three directions have been identified (Connor, 1996). First, the study of different L1s and the increased number of comparisons among L1s and L2s have surfaced. Second, bilingual and bicultural researchers have joined in what was once a circle of contrastive rhetoricians dominated by English speakers, resulting in a less ethnocentric role of English. Third, a diversity of genres and text types has been studied, which includes not only student writing, but also 'accomplished texts' written by professional writers. In a more recent article, Connor (2002) identifies four domains which have helped shape and direct CR: text linguistics, analysis of writing as a cultural and educational activity, classroom-based studies of writing, and contrastive genre-specific studies. Critical contrastive rhetoric characterizes recent CR research, promoting the treatment of politics and ideologies and proposes alternative conceptual foundations for CR (Kubota & Lehner, 2004). Connor considers all these developments in CR as having an "appreciable impact" on the understanding of cultural differences in writing, and she predicts that CR will continue to have an effect on the teaching of ESL and EFL writing (Connor, 2002, 493).

Related to genre-specific studies are two studies analyzing news stories. Scollon (2000) argues that one problem in the contrastive analysis of same texts is to determine how different one text is from another to sufficiently say that they are two different texts. Scollon compared three editions of Chinese government newspapers that were believed to be the same newspapers because they come from the same news agency. Investigating new stories published in five consecutive days, Scollon found that there is much variability among the newspapers, summarized in four categories: insignificant variations (syntactic choices, deletions, substitutions and additions, verbs of saying, punctuation, numbers, names, and stylistic choices), macro-variations (selection of stories, layout and formatting, and typography), significant features (page placement, headline, textual frame, point of view, tone, use of quotations, formulas, and vocabulary). These variations, particularly formulas and vocabulary differences, taken together with placement of the story in the paper, show sufficient characterization of five news genres within the data analyzed, which differ from one another within the same newspaper.

On the basis of these four categories of variability (insignificant variations, macro-variations, significant variations, and news genres), Scollon concludes that there are clear variations within the three editions of the same newspaper under consideration. A further point he makes is that any contrastive study must consider the generic structure of the text in contrast to other genres, as well as in contrast to other presentations of the same genre. He strongly expresses the need for caution on two points: first, much caution must be exercised in making contrastive discourse analyses across newspapers, that is, the need to establish variability to control comparability; and second, caution must be exercised in drawing higher level inferences about linguistic, cognitive, or social practices when such generic control is not established.

A related study comparing news stories in two Englishes is Gustilo (2002), which analyzes one week's news leads of six leading American and Philippine on-line newspapers. Her analysis reveals that there is no significant difference in the number of words used between the two Englishes, and that both sets of data show a preference for the use of summary lead with *who*, *what* and *when* as the most frequently used elements, and *who* as the frequently starting element. Gustilo postulates that the tendency for Philippine journalism to follow the European and American journalistic practice, as well as the historical influence of America in the educational system of the Philippines, may account for the invariability of the results.

Within the newspaper is the editorial, a text that is considered professional writing and a subject of inquiry in CR research. Ansary and Babaii (2009) describe it as "mundane", "pervasive", "public", and make a very good material for cross-cultural research, yet receive very little serious attention in CR. Connor (1996) writes:

Research on editorials cross-culturally is significant even if ESL students do not become editorial writers for, in most cases, they are readers of editorials. Good editorials are considered some of the best examples of persuasive writing in all countries; they set standards for written persuasion. At the present time, little is known cross-culturally about the genre (144).

Two studies on cross-cultural differences in editorials are cited in Connor's (1996) review of genre studies. Dantas-Whitney and Grabe (1989) compare twenty editorials in Portuguese and English using fifteen variables. The analysis shows a significant difference on the presentation of information, which included six text features: use of nominalization, prepositions, third-person, singular pronouns, and locative adverbs. The Portuguese editorial showed the use of more personal aspect of text such as third-person, singular and pronouns, while the English text showed a more formal, detached style, using more nominalization and propositions.

Tirkonnen-Condit and Lieflander-Koistinen (1989), meanwhile, compared the strength and placement of the main claim or argument of editorials in Finnish, English and German. They found that the Finnish texts were most different in that they were more informative rather than argumentative. The German editorials and the English editorials were more argumentative than informative. The former placed the argument statement at the beginning of the editorial more often than the English texts did.

Investigating editorials in varieties of Asian Englishes, Dayag (2009) reveals differences in the macrostructures, textual metadiscourse strategies, and interpersonal metadiscourse strategies as used in English language editorials in six Asian countries. Thirty editorials each from two leading broadsheets in countries representing ESL contexts (or Outer Circle Englishes) - the Philippines, Singapore, India - and EFL contexts (or Expanding Circle Englishes) - Japan, China and Korea - were employed in the analysis. Findings revealed significant differences in the samples in terms of global structures of newspaper editorials. Both Singaporean English and Philippine English in the Outer Circle Englishes predictably follow the claim-counterclaim pattern while Indian English tends to follow this pattern as well, but not as predictably as the two other sample groups. On the other hand, the editorials in the Expanding Circle Englishes show greater variability and less predictability in the use of both claim-counterclaim and problem-solution organizational patterns, as well as a series of claims. Both Outer Circle and Expanding Circle Englishes seem to prefer the use of deductive strategy in organizing information in the editorials. The Philippine

English sample, in particular, reveals claim-counterclaim pattern as the obligatory global structure of newspaper editorials. Exactly 50% of the Philippine English sample yielded the use of claim-counterclaim, followed by problem-solution in 40% of the total number of editorials. The claim-counterclaim pattern is supported by similar findings in an earlier study (Dayag, 2005).

To transition to the present study, it is important to note that in the Philippine English sample, Dayag (2009) employed two leading broadsheets of national circulation (i.e., *Philippine Daily Inquirer* and *The Philippine Star*) in order to address the methodological issue of writing patterns in the data as reflective of the national norm in the country they are published in (Kachru, 1995 cited in Dayag 2009). A curious question pertaining to editorial writing at the local level then emerges. Do editorials in local newspapers that are circulated within a city or province for the consumption of a localized reading public follow these organizational patterns as well?

The present study investigates whether these global structures of claim-counterclaim and problem-solution in Philippine editorials can also be seen in local newspaper editorials circulated within the province or at the city level. The selection of local newspapers for this study is based on the apparent lack of attention given to newspapers of local circulation, despite the fact that they are more easily accessible to the local reading public and that their topics are of more immediate significance to them. This study may serve to describe, particularly, editorial writing at the local level.

This study aims to find answers to the following research questions:

1. Do Philippine local newspapers under study follow any organizational framework in their editorials? If they do, what organizational framework do they follow?
2. Are there similarities or differences in the organizational framework in editorials between newspapers?
3. What features characterize the newspaper editorials?

Framework for Analysis

Three central organizational patterns for argumentative texts serve as the framework for the analysis of the data under consideration: problem-solution structure, claim-counterclaim pattern, and the essay type.

Connor (1986, 87) describes Hoey's (1983) problem-solution structure as one of the "top-level discourse structure theories", along with Van Dijk's macrostructures, Meyer's rhetorical predicates of expository prose, Mandler and Johnson's story grammars, and Tirkonnen-Condit's superstructure of argument. The problem-solution structure has four components: describing the situation, identifying and describing the problem, proposing a solution to the problem, and evaluating the proposed solution. Below is a table outlining the moves involved in the problem-solution structure.

Table 1 Hoey's (1983) problem-solution structure

Move 1	Describing the situation
Move 2	Identifying and describing the problem
Move 3	Proposing a solution to the problem
Move 4	Evaluating the proposed solution

Miller and Parker (1997) consider a combination of Hoey's problem-solution text type with Swales' move/step structure. They define the situation section as indicating to the reader that the author is going to deal with important and generalized issues; the problem as relating to the reader who shares the situation described by the writer as a problem; the introduction as forecasting the solution, which will be proposed with a positive evaluation, which once again invites the reader to read on for details.

McCarthy (1991) offers an alternative framework for argumentative texts in the claim-counterclaim pattern. This pattern has three components: establishing a common ground, making a claim, and issuing/asserting a claim. Table 2 describes each of these components.

Table 2 McCarthy's (1991) claim-counterclaim pattern

Moves	Description
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Move 1 Establishing a common ground	The writer develops rapport with the reader by describing the current situation, retelling the news story, or citing common or general knowledge in order to ensure that both the writer and the reader refer to the same topic.
Move 2 Making a claim	Having expressed doubt on the position of the entity under discussion, the writer now proceeds in presenting the claims of the opposition in a negative light, and presents his position or stand on the issue.
Move 3 Issuing/Asserting a counterclaim	The writer now offers counterarguments to warrant his claim(s) on the issue.

The third organizational framework considered in this study is what Peñaranda (1977) describes as the essay type. It is that type of editorial which may cite at least an event or occasion but may not present an editorial reaction or appeal. Peñaranda regards such type as an essay, and strictly does not consider it an editorial.

At this point, a discussion about characteristics of Philippine editorial writing is appropriate. Viduya (2010) considers the editorial as the “soul of every newspaper” (183). Accordingly, it is the only page in the newspaper where opinions can be expressed and the “news behind the news” can be explained. Ramirez (1989, 222) quotes Spenser (n.d.) in defining the editorial as “an expression of fact and opinion in concise, logical, pleasing order for the sake of entertaining, of influencing opinion, or of interpreting significant news in such a way that its importance to the average reader will be clear.”

Ramirez (1989) presents the different parts of an editorial which readers usually encounter: title, lead or introduction, body, and conclusion, summary or appeal to action. He explains that although these parts are essential in most editorials, the editorial writer may achieve the desired result by omitting one of them. Organizational pattern in Philippine editorials, according to Ramirez (1989), is characterized by what Mott and others (1958) describe as having no established structure, but generally having two rather

definite sections: an opening statement of the question and an interpretation or explanation of the statement. The former is usually very brief and may consist of the editorial writer, which interprets, explains, appraises or performs the other specific functions. When a third section is added, it contains an important thought or direction, which may be in the form of an exhortation, plea, advice or command, a simple summary, or a separate section stating an important point towards which the other parts have been leading. Its appearance and form depend upon the nature of the subject created.

More recent publications state that the structure of the editorial is either one in which an opposing claim or point of view over an issue or controversy is presented and then the writer presents a refutation of those views (Viduya, 2010), or one that is based on a problem, and solutions are presented by the writer (Malinao, 2008). Viduya (2010) sets the editorial structure as one that begins with an objective explanation of the issue or controversy, presents the opposition first, directly refutes the opposition's belief, gives other, original reasons or analogies, and concludes with a punch. Malinao (2008), meanwhile, presents the SPECS, an acronym for Stating the problem, presenting a Position on the problem, providing Evidence to support the problem, giving a Conclusion to support one's stand or position, and presenting Solutions to the problem. Viduya's editorial structure resembles closely the claim-counterclaim pattern, while Malinao's SPECS formula follows the problem-solution pattern. It appears, then, that while some editorials follow a free structure that contains, at the very least, the basic parts of introduction, body and conclusion, others are more specific in the components and sequence of the editorial structure akin to McCarthy's claim-counterclaim pattern and Hoey's problem-solution framework.

Finally, Philippine editorials are generally of five types (Ramirez, 1989): interpretation, criticism, entertainment, commendation, appreciation or tribute, and argument. Of these five types, only editorials of criticism and editorials of argument are considered in the present study. These form one of the criteria in selecting the data for this study.

Methodology

Data. The data under investigation are comprised of fifteen editorials each of two online Philippine local newspapers. *The Mindanao Daily Mirror* (henceforth MD) is published in Davao City, a major city in Mindanao, Philippines. *Sunstar Cebu* (henceforth SC), meanwhile, is published in Cebu City, center of the Visayas in southern Philippines. All thirty editorials were gathered between March 2 and March 28, 2005 from the Internet. This source was chosen to aim at variability of data, since accessibility to actual copies of local newspapers was not possible to the researcher at the time this study began. Thus, the choice of the data source conveniently samples the data from the entire population of local newspapers in the Philippines, a limitation in this study.

The two newspapers under consideration were chosen from 28 available sources online. Their editorials were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

1. They belong to different newspaper networks or have different publishers.
2. They have daily instead of weekly issues.
3. The editorials are unsigned and are presumably written by the editorial writer representing the editorial board, not by an individual.
4. The editorials are of the argumentative and/or criticism type.
5. They are accessible online.
6. They are written in English.

The editorials from the other 26 newspapers do not meet these criteria and were thus removed from the sample. This procedure narrowed the data down to only two newspapers.

An attempt to study the data diachronically from the present set of newspaper sources is made in the present study. Because of the dynamic and fluid character of texts, Connor (2002) advises a diachronic investigation of texts in CR research to identify the evolution of patterns and norms. Thus, an added set of fifteen editorials from *Sunstar Cebu* published in July, 2012 forms part of the

data. Unfortunately, no recent set of editorials could be obtained from *The Mindanao Daily Mirror* because the online version of newspaper is no longer available. A staff member based in Davao City (personal communication dated 5 October 2012) disclosed that while the print version is still being circulated in Davao City and other parts in Mindanao, the online newspaper has ceased operation. Thus, investigation of the organizational framework and features of the added set of recent editorials pertain only to editorials of *Sunstar Cebu*.

Analysis and coding. The researcher numbered each of the editorials by source and according to chronological publication. Each editorial was analyzed according to its organizational framework – claim-counterclaim, problem-solution, or essay type. The number of occurrences for each type of macrostructure/organizational framework was recorded and computed for percentage.

Finally, the researcher noted features of the editorials included in the study. I use the term *features* in a nontechnical sense that otherwise pertains to the identification of language use based on a specific taxonomy that categorizes textual or interpersonal elements in the discourse. In the present study, instances of language use that are noticeable are highlighted. Particularly, the study identifies formal and informal use of language, as well as the use of negative images, evaluative modifiers, and entailment to show the non-neutral stance of the editorials. Excerpts showing these instances are reported.

Research procedure. The study followed this procedure: (1) establishment of selection criteria; (2) collection of newspaper editorials; (3) coding the sections of the editorials and identifying the organizational framework; (4) searching for salient features in the editorials; and (5) writing the report.

Results and Discussion

Organizational framework in local editorials. The analysis of data reveals that both Hoey's (1983) problem-solution structure and McCarthy's (1991) claim-counterclaim pattern are used in the samples, as well as a third one coded as essay type. Table 3 below shows a simple percentage count of the instances of the three different organizational frameworks used in the data.

Table 3 Summary of organizational framework used in editorials

Organizational framework	Number of instances	Total number of samples	Percentage
Claim-counterclaim pattern	36	45	80%
Problem-solution structure	7		16%
Essay type	2		4%

Table 3 shows that the claim-counterclaim pattern is the most highly favored organizational framework at 80% of the samples, followed by a distant 16% for the problem-solution structure, and a much more distant essay type at 4%.

Comparing the editorials of the two newspapers, the researcher notes that MD distinctly shows an almost equal use of both the problem-solution structure and the claim-counterclaim pattern, and no essay type is recorded. The problem-solution structure is evident in six editorials, while the claim-counterclaim pattern is demonstrated in nine editorials. It should be noted, however, that while the six editorials follow the problem-solution structure, none of them contain the evaluation section, even if all of them contain the situation, problem, and solution sections, in addition to the headline. The sample text below is an editorial from MD electronically published on 11 March 2005.

Text 1 Problem-solution structure in a *The Mindanao Daily Mirror* editorial

Headline	Are Smugglers Having a Field Day in Davao?
Situation	<p>The near-successful sneaking of 20 motor vehicles, including eight luxurious BMWs, contained in eight 20-foot vans last December, makes Davao City one of the most, if not really the most, favorite landing points of smuggled motor vehicles.</p> <p>Six of the container vans came from South Korea which of late has become the biggest supplier of used motor vehicles to Mindanao, if not to the whole country, while the two others came from Japan. Altogether the 20 “hot” cars were estimated to be worth P70 million to P75 million.</p> <p>As is the usual practice of traders of “hot” cars, the shipments were misdeclared as “used replacement parts.” Fortunately, concerned personnel of the Bureau of Customs in the Port of Davao did not sleep on the job or look the other way, at least in these particular shipments.</p>
Problem	<p>Still, one cannot help but ask what makes Davao the favorite landing ground for “hot” cars and other types of motor vehicles for Mindanao, if not for the whole country.</p> <p>Is it the virtual ease of getting these contraband past Customs? The wide market in Mindanao of used motor vehicles smuggled from other countries compared to other parts of the country? The ease of having these vehicles registered in the Land Transportation Office? Early this week, no less than the top honcho of LTO in this area, Regional Director Felix Magalona, revealed that a syndicate engaged in the issuance of counterfeit registration of motor vehicles and other LTO documents is operating right near the entrance of the LTO regional office.</p> <p>Accordingly, Customs has seized a total of 196 units</p>

of smuggled motor vehicles declared as spare parts in the ports of Davao and nearby General Santos City. Not only dealers of “hot” cars but also drug traffickers have apparently found Davao a “haven” for their highly illegal trade. It will be recalled that last New Year’s eve, a shabu factory in Dumoy, Talomo District owned by a foreigner with a Chinese-sounding name yielded tens of millions worth of shabu when raided by combined elements of the police and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency.

Subsequent raids of at least two alleged foam factories in other parts of the city owned by the same foreigner yielded drums of chemicals used in the manufacture of shabu. These chemicals no doubt came from abroad and obviously entered Davao through the usual smuggling channels.

All these developments point to one thing: the apparent ease of smugglers in sneaking their merchandise here.

Solution

Which, in turn, boils down to the need for tighter measures to curb, if not totally eradicate, smuggling in this part of the country.

Evaluation

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In this example, the editorial begins by providing specific cases of smuggling activities in Davao City, citing quantity and brands of smuggled vehicles, their origin, their purported worth, and the point that these illegal imports did not go unnoticed by the customs personnel. The transition to the problem is signaled by the conjunction *still*, which implies that while the said cases of illegal shipments were successfully identified and stopped by customs personnel, smuggling remains a real problem in the city, the region and the country. This point is followed by a series of possible causes of smuggling posed as questions, including reference made to a smuggling syndicate operating near a government transportation agency. These are further supported by a narration about drug

smuggling activities in different parts in Mindanao, suggesting its widespread operation. The editorial at this point squarely identifies the problem as the inefficiency of customs agencies in keeping their mandate to which strengthening operations against smuggling is posed as a solution. No evaluation of this solution is made.

On the other hand, the eight editorials that follow the claim-counterclaim pattern all contain the common ground section, in addition to the claim and counter-claim sections, as well as the headline. The sample that follows is from MD, electronically published on 24 March 2005.

Text 2 Claim-counterclaim pattern in a *The Mindanao Daily Mirror* editorial

Headline	Let's Keep Calm Amid Alleged Threats to Peace
Common Ground	<p>At the rate the police and the military in particular and the entire bureaucracy in general are panicking over alleged threats from that bandit group known as Abu Sayyaf to bomb shopping malls, churches and vital installations during the Holy Week, one would think the Moro gang specializing in hostage-taking for huge ransom are that powerful and fearsome.</p> <p>In Metro Manila no less than 15,000 policemen were deployed in places perceived as targets for terrorist attacks even as military forces are placed on double alert.</p> <p>Similar moves are made here in Davao City where at least three bomb-attacks have occurred in the last two years, all believed to be the handiwork of terrorists.</p>
Claim	<p>There is nothing really wrong in making preparations against attacks from criminal elements, organized or unorganized, for it is said that offense is the best defense. This is true in war as well as in sports.</p>

No one doubts about the ruthlessness of the Abu Sayyaf and their allies in the Asian terrorist network Jemaah Islamiyah and the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front. These Islamic terrorists know no law and observe no rules in inflicting harm on and in murdering innocent people.

Counter-claim

However, the way defense preparations are carried out is as though these Moro terrorists are all that fearsome and powerful. They may have devil-may-care mindset in carrying out their evil designs but they are not that powerful. For all we know, all these alleged threats supposedly coming from Abu Sayyaf terrorists are all empty blah-blahs. And if the whole nation cowers as we all seem to, more than half of the Abu Sayyaf grim plan is already accomplished.

A famous American president once said that the greatest fear is fear itself. That seems to be what is happening in the country as believers in Christ in this predominantly Christian country are in the thick of the observance of Holy Week.

Can we stay calm without dropping our guard against thugs and other lawless elements?

The editorial above opens with an inference made about the apparent formidability of a local terrorist group called Abu Sayyaf brought about by heightened police and military alert in the area. Details of police deployment to crowded places in Metro Manila and Davao City are then presented to demonstrate this level of alert. In the next move, the editorial expresses agreement to the caution demonstrated by the armed forces in responding to terrorist threats and criminal attacks, especially from the Abu Sayyaf, which is known to have international and intranational terrorist affiliations. The conjunction *however* in the final move begins to present a counter argument, expressing disagreement with the manner in which these

preparations are carried out, claiming that the need for people to stay calm and collected is paramount to fear generated by military presence. The editorial ends by citing a quotation and posing a rhetorical question.

The SC data, on the other hand, reveal that almost all of the fifteen editorials follow the claim-counterclaim pattern, while only one shows the use of the problem-solution structure and one coded as essay type. Notably, two editorials that use the claim-counterclaim pattern show the use of exposition and documentation to show clearly the claim and counterclaim components of the editorial. This is exemplified by the SC editorial electronically published on 7 March 2005.

Text 3 Exposition in a *Sunstar Cebu* editorial

Headline	High-stakes testing
Presentation of the issue	Failure is a good teacher. But in the high-stakes world of standardized exams and education reforms, it no longer is.
Common ground	A four-decade veteran of public schools, Olive (real name withheld upon request) says that the teachers of old used to stay after school to help slow performers.
Exposition by means of example	<p>These days, with the National Achievement Tests approaching, Olive says they are back to extending their hours in review classes for sixth graders and high school seniors.</p> <p>It's not because the mentors are buckling under the withering public perception that public education has slid far below acceptable standards.</p> <p>Their vigor can be traced to a few lines at the bottom of Regional Memorandum 20, series of 2005, signed by Department of Education (DepEd) 7 Director Carolino Mordeno: "results of the National Achievement Test... (are) one of the factors to be considered for purposes of promotion</p>

Restatement of the issue	<p>and performance rating.”</p> <p>Failure is no longer good, only passing percentiles. But does anyone care to find out if the scores measure learning at all?</p> <p>Accountability</p>
Claim	<p>According to the National Educational Testing and Research Center, standardized tests assess if education is effective and provide information for policies making Filipinos more globally competitive.</p> <p>The practice is part of education accountability, which the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) defines as: “Asking students, educators and institutions to be responsible for education outcomes.”</p> <p>According to a paper posted on www.ncsl.org, the logical outcome after decades of infusing und, curriculum offerings, and resources is measuring student achievement.</p> <p>This accountability can be publicly reported as school scores through a report card system, as well as used as basis for giving rewards and sanctions.</p>
Counterclaim	<p>Straitjacketing</p> <p>However, educational accountability also has its critics.</p> <p>The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) questions whether the testing tools measure student learning at all. Where norm-referenced (comparing the student to national standards) or criterion-referenced (measuring student performance according to specific content standards), the tests may not be</p>

authentic gauges of analysis, creativity and grasp of social realities. The multiple-choice format, for instance, is inferior to essays that require extended writing responses.

In states where performance tests are linked to high stakes such as promotion to the next level or acquisition of a diploma, the NCSL has documented mass protests filed by students, parents and civil rights advocates.

They cite that the tests are biased against minorities, such as students with disability and proficiency problems in English. As NCSL pointed out, "Unless a primary purpose of a test is to evaluate language proficiency, it should not be used with students who cannot understand the instructions of the language of the test itself.

High stakes testing that is mandated for school accreditation or curriculum adoption has resulted in the strategy of weeding out underperforming teachers. But as OECD observed, this "risks blaming a victim (when) teachers often need help, not punishment."

Common sense

This "top-down reform, divorced from the needs and realities of the classroom" violates equity, according to OECD. When teachers are not equipped to deliver the curriculum enabling the students, even those put at risk by social causes, to meet learning standards, the problem is not the accountability of outcomes but the availability of inputs to jumpstart education.

"You cannot expect a 'formula one' performance

from a regular car," observed www.oecdobserver.org. "This is not rocket science, just common sense."

High stakes-testing also creates a regime of rigidity in classrooms where "pass" or "fail" rules are not just students but also teachers. "This...encourages (or scares) teachers into spending more class time drilling students to answer questions, with little left to explore the substance of the curriculum and to learn together."

Will the ability to pass tests replace love of learning and a passion for excellence in catapulting Filipinos into a knowledge-based society? Our future looms dark.

The sample above presents straight on the issue concerning student evaluation claiming that its use today, particularly in high-stakes testing such as the National Achievement Test, has fallen short of its original intention. To exemplify the issue, an example featuring a public school teacher is presented. Her recollection of the practice among teachers in the past - that of going out of their way to assist slow learners, presents a contrast to what teachers at present do to pull up performance results. Accordingly, teachers now use test results as bases for promotion in reference to the memorandum issued by the Department of Education. This issue surrounding high-stakes testing is then discussed with a series of claim and counterclaim arguments in the succeeding sections.

The preponderant use of the claim-counterclaim pattern by SC editorials is further reflected in the present set of data published between July 12-27, 2012 with 13 out of 15 samples. The following is an SC editorial electronically published on 12 July 2012 where the use of the claim-counterclaim pattern is demonstrated.

Text 4 Claim-counterclaim pattern in a *Sunstar Cebu* editorial

Headline **Dolphy as National Artist**

Common ground When rapper Francis Magalona died in 2009, talks about conferring on him the title of National Artist were floated although these were promptly shot down by officials of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), which administers the awards together with the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP).

A similar discussion surfaced recently with the illness and subsequent death of “comedy king” Dolphy. Unlike Magalona, Dolphy (Rodolfo Vera Quizon) was already nominated for the award prior to his death, a recognition of his contribution to cinema and the community.

Claim The Order of National Artists (National Artist Award) “is the highest national recognition given to Filipino individuals who have made significant contributions to the development of Philippine arts.” That is the intention.

Counterclaim Actual practice, however, does not usually follow ideal.

The selection process is slow and choice at times invites criticism or controversy. The slowness of the process was attributed by NCCA chairman Felipe de Leon Jr. to several factors, like the lack of manpower and budget and the number of nominees (hundreds of them).

At times, favoritism and politics in the selection process resulting in controversial choices are alleged, like what happened in 2009 when National Artist titles were bestowed on Cecile Guidote-Alvarez for theater, Carlos Caparas for visual arts, Jose “Pitoy” Moreno for fashion design, and Francisco Manosa for architecture.

Alleging interference by Malacañang in the selection process, a group led by National Artists eventually went to the Supreme Court, which stopped the Office of the President from conferring the title on the four. It was also in 2009 when Dolphy was nominated for the award.

A few months ago, a debate on the choice of National Artist cropped up when Nora Aunor's name was mentioned as nominee. Critics alleged that by pointing to Nora's rival Vilma Santos as more deserving of the title. Others, like Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, lobbied for Dolphy.

The process of choosing a National Artist obviously needs refinement even as Malacañang has to provide the NCCA and CCP with enough logistics to be able to function well. Without that, we will continue to hear complaints similar to those raised by Dolphy supporters recently.

Finally, the essay-type editorial does not have a clear editorial stand on the issue even if the issue is clearly presented. The editorial that evidences this type is electronically published by SC on 15 March 2005 (the exact text is not included here because of space constraints). This sample is a retelling of a three-part special report published previously in the same newspaper. It is a research effort of an undergraduate student from a university in the city about the trafficking of persons that is controlled by crime syndicates and allegedly protected by the police. This piece highlights the main arguments of the research, as well as problems the researcher identified, but it does not present the editorial's position on the issue. Instead, it presents the researcher's recommendation as a solution to the issue. This essay demonstrates a well-documented argument against the issues of trafficking of persons. Nonetheless, these arguments are quoted or lifted from the researcher's whose expressions of disagreement with the issues are presented in the

editorials, and do not necessarily represent the editorial board's stand on the issues. There is no explicit statement of position in the editorial; hence, it is considered an essay.

Features in local editorials. As regards the third research question, there appear different writing styles in the SC data, which suggest a lack of consistency that is otherwise characterized in the MD editorials. The SC data show two distinct writing styles. The first one is non-neutral, and, to an extent, informal, recorded in some SC editorials. These characteristics are exemplified in the excerpts below. The non-neutral stance of the SC editorials is accounted for by the use of negative images, evaluative modifiers, and entailment. Excerpts showing these features follow.

Negative images.

Excerpt 1 SC editorial published on 2 March 2005 (Tuburan's plea)

Tuburan in effect suggest amending the constitution, which is a lot tougher to do than **butchering Cebu and slicing off territories** for each of the three house members whose terms expire before the next elections. . . Tuburan councilors see the town has been shut out by Capitol "since time immemorial." Note a hint of desperation in the cliché, the kind that compels people to join even "yabag" causes like the **butcher-Cebu plan**.

Evaluative modifiers.

Excerpt 2 SC editorial published on 11 March 2005 (Talisay: negatives and outsiders)

Until these rules are changed, these **outsiders, interlopers and carpet-baggers** will continue to lay siege, on political fiefdoms and enclaves. Which shakes crowns on heads and makes politics more interesting. And as the Gullasses love to say, "The sun shines for everyone."

Excerpt 3 SC editorial published on 16 March 2005 (Assault on the Capitol)

Those wishing to butcher Cebu - reps. ClavelAsas-Martinez, Simeon Kintanar and Antonio Yapha - are apparently motivated by political interests . . . aside from the common **selfish** motive of people mounting the assaults, there is a big difference though. . . but will it promote Cebu's welfare if we allow its territory and political unit to be **mangled by dirty hands**, for motives less than honest, with strategies **more than dubious**?

Entailment.

Excerpt 4 SC editorial published on 19 March 2005 (City hall as weather forecaster)

Besides, data gathered by instruments, no matter how sophisticated, needs to be interpreted by people, in this case, experts. **What interpretation can one get from a "Typhoon tracking" unit headed by Councilor Sylvan Jakosalem, a broadcaster?**

Informality is accounted for by the use of informal language, including the insertion of advertisements in the editorial. The following excerpts show these.

Informal language.

Excerpt 5 SC editorial published on 18 March 2005 (Why pick on Castro? Why not?)

Those who deplored "Excessive attention" on Castro maybe grateful now that the same harsh and unflinching scrutiny has slowed down, if not stopped, have further risen to power. **boo**. . . fraternities whose members regularly disrupt community peace and order what they are promoting must be a brotherhood of thugs.

Excerpt 6 SC editorial published on 9 March 2005 (What the lawyers want)

The mayor must obsessively believe that lawyers love criminals, which **sucks** because (A) a person charged before a fiscal or judge is presumed innocent, and (B) the law requires every suspect. . . but lumping all lawyers who defend suspects or accuse as friends of criminals or criminals themselves is outrageously, or ignorant, of the system the mayor has sworn to uphold.

Advertisement.

Excerpt 7 SC editorial published on 11 March 2005 (Talisay: natives and outsiders)

CHEERS. . .to Barangay Lahug in Cebu City and Barangay Capt. Mary Ann de los Santos whose barangay justice system called “lupon” was adjudged the best in the country for 2004.

The other type of writing style is formal, research-oriented, and follows an inductive presentation. It is recorded in three SC editorials, which include one of the essay-type editorials. These editorials are issue-based and are documented with figures, data from organizations, and case studies. No informal language is noted, and the structure is characteristically inductive, that is, from individual cases to a larger picture of the issue, capped off with a thesis statement towards the end of the piece.

It is further interesting to note that the first type of writing style focuses on local issues affecting Cebu. All six SC editorials that demonstrate non-neutrality tackle the issue of the split-Cebu move in three editorials, appointments of prosecutors (in two editorials), and local elections (in one editorial). All these editorials are critical of personalities in Cebu’s political scene. The second type of writing style, on the other hand, handles the national issues - sex trafficking, educational testing, and migration. While the first type is characteristically an attack on individual persons, the second type is largely an exposition of the issues.

The informal and non-neutral use of language that appears in some SC editorials is nevertheless completely absent from the present set of SC editorials. Collected seven years after the first set of SC data was published, the current set of *Sunstar Cebu* editorials shows a

stylistic change. Whereas editorials in the earlier years showed the use of informal and non-neutral use of language, editorials in the current year evidence a formal style with more presentations of the thesis at the onset of the argument. Perhaps a more careful editorial writing is in progress at the local level especially since recently published handbooks on journalism, specifically Malinao (2008) and Viduya (2010), already specify what structure and style editorials should follow. Both sources cite the use of formal and objective language in the editorial with no strong reactive emotion.

The foregoing analysis reveals that the Philippine local newspapers under study follow an organizational framework in their editorials. The most frequently used organizational framework is McCarthy's (1991) claim-counterclaim pattern, followed by Hoey's (1983) problem-solution framework, and the essay type described by Peñaranda (1977). The analysis also shows that one newspaper uses both McCarthy's and Hoey's argumentative frameworks almost proportionately, while the other prefers one type to the other with some variations in structure, as well as considers the use of the essay genre as editorial.

That editorials of local circulation in the Philippines tend to follow the claim-counterclaim organizational framework is consistent with Dayag (2005, 2009) who reports that editorials of major newspapers in the Philippines do make use of claims and counterclaims in argumentation more often than discuss problems and present concrete solutions. Editorial writing at the city or provincial level as well reflects this tendency as the present study shows.

The analysis also reveals the use of both formal and informal language, inductive presentation, and the use negative images, entailment, and evaluative modifiers to show the non-neutral stance of the editorials in one of the two newspapers. Recent editorials from the same newspaper, though, do not exhibit these.

Nevertheless, the results that the foregoing analysis has yielded speak only for the two newspapers under consideration, and are inconclusive of provincial editorials across the Philippines. Hence, this study recommends a more extensive investigation of the organizational framework used in editorials of Philippine local newspapers by employing a sampling procedure to get a cross-

section of all Philippine local newspapers, so that proper qualitative and quantitative description can be made about the organizational framework employed in this sub-category. A diachronic sampling of the data will also yield more insightful information. In addition to sampling design, the researcher also recommends inter-coding of analysis in order to validate findings. Finally, a more focused definition and a systematic analysis of the features in the editorials may prove insightful. Once completed, this study may serve as an empirical basis for describing the state of editorial writing at the local level. It may also serve as a basis for newspaper publishers to review editorial writing practices to facilitate easier comprehension by the reading public.

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