

## ARGUING IN L2: DISCOURSE STRUCTURE AND TEXTUAL METADISOURSE IN PHILIPPINE NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS

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### ABSTRACT

*This study described the discourse structure and textual metadiscourse in newspaper editorials in the Philippines where English is used as a second language or L2. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions: (i) What discourse features characterize the structure of the following parts of Philippine newspaper editorials - orientation block, exposition block, and summation block?; and (ii) What textual metadiscourse strategies exist in the newspaper editorials - connectors and code glosses?*

*Data examined were the 24 newspaper editorials published in 2010 by two leading Philippine broadsheets, namely, Philippine Daily Inquirer and The Philippine Star. Frequency and percentage counts were utilized in the analysis.*

*Findings revealed that the discourse structure of Philippine newspaper editorials followed the two-move pattern in the orientation, exposition, and summation blocks. With regard to the steps used, the orientation block frequently employed the general statement and elaboration steps. The exposition block, in addition, relied more on the use of specific statements. The summation block, on the other hand, commonly used the conclusion and evaluation steps. Regarding the use of connectors, Philippine newspaper editorials were built more on the additive relation, using a progressive or accumulative strategy. In addition, the genre examined used more simple connectors, such as the additive and, or, and also, adversative but and yet, and causal because and so. In terms of code glosses, editorialists seemed to use more parenthetical definitions to provide adequate clarifications and exemplifications in the proposition or content.*

*Keywords: Argumentative Writing, Written Discourse, Editorial, Philippine English.*

### INTRODUCTION

Writing, as a discourse, has occupied a very prominent role in allowing a person to take risks in using a language - becoming adventurous - and involved with the language, with himself, and with his audience or reader. As a strategic and interactive process that involves many things, such as cognition, context, rhetorical patterns, and goals (Flower, 1990), writing does not only reflect one's thinking but also helps create a line of arguments.

One of the most common types of written discourse is argumentation. Within university environments, in particular, students have to deal with written argumentations in exams, position papers, theses, and the like. A newspaper editorial writer, likewise, engages himself in the complex activity of argumentative writing in which he takes position on a controversial issue and gives reasons and supporting evidence to convince readers to accept his position

(Anker, 2005).

Newspaper discourse, specifically editorials, has received particular attention from linguists and any other language-study enthusiasts. Although the presence and function of discourse structures and metadiscourse markers has been investigated in different contexts, including textbooks (Hyland, 2000), student writing (Crismore et al., 1993), and research articles (Mauranen, 1993; Mur Dueñas, 2007 as cited in Dafouz-Milne, 2008), still relatively little attention has been given to the genre of newspaper discourse. Newspaper discourse and editorials, in particular, can be regarded as most appropriate examples of argumentative writing. Connor (1996) emphasizes that newspaper discourse and opinion columns, in particular, are "some of the most adequate examples of persuasive writing in all countries, setting standards for written persuasion" (p. 143). Furthermore, editorials and opinion columns that seem to

target a wide audience serve to acquire and reinforce much of the readers' knowledge and beliefs. They, likewise, deal with topics that are "considered to be of particular societal importance at the time of publication" (Le, 2004, p. 688).

With newspaper editorials as corpus, Reynolds (1993 as cited in Dayag, 2004) looked into the speech acts performed in three languages, namely, American English, Egyptian Arabic, and Egyptian English. Using Searle's (1979) Speech Act Theory, the research ascertained pragmatic features unique to each language as reflected by the frequency of use in each language of representatives, declarations, commissives, expressives, and directives.

In 2009, Dayag in his study "Global structures in newspaper editorials in Asian Englishes" revealed that newspaper editorials in Singaporean English and Philippine English (both are Outer Circle Asian Englishes) follow a predictable organizational pattern, i.e., Claim-Counterclaim pattern. On the other hand, Indian English editorials seem to be less predictable but lean more closely to the Claim-Counterclaim structure instead of the Problem-Solution framework. Moreover, among the Expanding Circle Asian Englishes, Korean English tends to adopt the Problem-Solution pattern while Japanese English tends to prefer the Claim-Counterclaim framework. Chinese English seems to be partial to a pattern consisting of a series of claims. In general, newspaper editorials in both Outer and Expanding Circle Asian Englishes appear to favor a direct and deductive strategy in organizing information, as manifested by an opening statement or paragraph that summarizes the position or stand of the writer on the issue in question, followed by exemplifications, explanations, and the like.

In order to convince, newspaper editorial writers have to present the propositional material in a form that potentially convinces and magnetizes the audience. In addition, they need to create a reliable persona and develop an appropriate attitude toward their readers and the claims or arguments they present. Thus, in constructing the textual persona, meta-discourse plays a critical role.

Metadiscourse, a self-reflective linguistic expression, refers to the evolving text, to the writer, and to the imagined

readers of the text. It is anchored on a view that writing is a social engagement that reveals the ways writers project themselves into their discourse to signal their attitudes and commitments (Hyland, 2004). In a similar vein, metadiscourse is defined as a discourse that goes beyond and above the actual content of the basic propositions presented, indicating to readers how they may organize, classify, evaluate, and react (Kopple, 1985 as cited in Abdi et al., 2009) to information presented in the text.

One study that looked into the textual metadiscourse in newspaper editorials was Dayag's (2009). Using Kopple's (1988 as cited in Kumpf, 2000) textual metadiscourse framework, the study investigated the use of connectors and code glosses. Dayag found that among adversative connectors, *but* was the most preferred linker in newspaper editorials in the Asian Englishes, followed by *however* and *yet*. Among causal connectors, *because* was the most preferred, followed by *since*, *thus*, and *therefore*. Further, significant differences in the use of connectors were observed across the six varieties of Asian Englishes. In terms of code glosses, significant differences were noted in the six varieties of Asian Englishes. Parenthetical definitions registered the highest frequency among the types of code glosses.

In this paper, the researchers describe the discourse structure and textual metadiscourse in newspaper editorials in the Philippines where English is used as a second language or L2. Specifically, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What discourse features characterize the structure of the following parts of Philippine newspaper editorials?
  - orientation block
  - exposition block
  - summation block
- What textual metadiscourse strategies exist in the newspaper editorials?
  - connectors
  - code glosses

## 1.1 Frameworks of the Study

### 1.1.1 Ho's Model of a Possible Discourse Structure for a General Paper (GP) Essay

In her analysis of the discourse features in students' argumentative writing, Ho (2004) identified the common features and patterns of organization that characterize the General Paper (GP) essay. She determined three blocks, namely, Orientation, Exposition, and Summation; each of these blocks consists of specific moves and sequences of steps. Ho theorized that the discourse structure of a typical GP essay may be represented by the following model (Figure 1).

According to Ho, the Orientation Block serves the function of "mapping" or "signposting" for the reader by explaining the thesis of the essay - what the writer is going to do, and how the structure of the essay will be laid out. As shown in the diagram, the Orientation Block comprises moves that enable writers and readers to "feel their way around the topic." This is followed by moves that focus on a specific area for discussion, labeled as Focusing.

The second block, termed Exposition, through a basic pattern of two moves (Inquiry and Response), develops the writer's main ideas in the essay. This basic two-move pattern

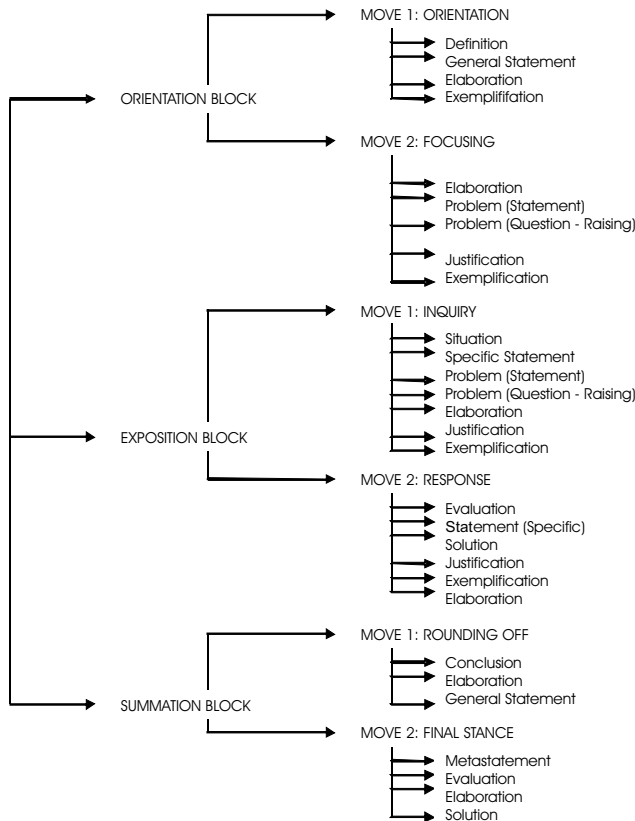


Figure 1. Ho's Model of a Possible Discourse Structure for a GP Essay

is realized in different forms, namely, Statement of a claim/Counterclaim, Problem-Raising/Resolving problem, and Gap-Raising/Gap filler. The Exposition Block, according to Ho, is less predictable than the Orientation and Summation blocks in terms of its length and number of sequence of moves and steps.

Ho claims that the closing block, Summation, is made up of moves that serve to "round off" the essay where the main points or key concerns raised in the essay are summarized (Rounding Off) and/or where the writer's main stand or "thesis" is reiterated (Final stance), paralleling what was stated in the Orientation block.

As shown in the model, each block is seen to be made up of moves. According to Dudley-Evans, moves are "parts which occur in a predictable order" (as cited in Ho, 2004). McKinlay defines a move as "a semantic unit which is related to the writer's purpose" (as cited in Ho, 2004). Ho explains that each move is motivated and characterized by a specific purpose and has a particular pragmatic function in the overall rhetorical organization of the discourse. She concludes that a move is a pragmatic, not a syntactic unit.

Finally, the model of Ho shows that each move, in turn, comprises a number of steps. Citing Swales and Tirkkonen-Condit, Ho (2004) stresses that the submoves or steps making up the moves can be described in terms of interactional roles that correspond to speech acts. The following terms were adopted by Ho to describe the steps in her model (see Appendix A for their definitions): General statement, Specific statement, Definition, Situation, Problem, Justification, Elaboration, Exemplification, Evaluation, Solution, Reformulation, Conclusion, and Metastatement.

### 1.1.2 Metadiscourse

Metadiscourse is writing about writing. In his 2004 article, Hyland refers to metadiscourse as "the linguistic devices writers employ to shape their arguments to the needs and expectations of their target readers" (p. 134). It also includes a varied array of features that help relate a text to its context by assisting readers to connect, organize, and interpret materials in a way preferred by the writer and with regard to the understandings and values of a specific discourse

community (Hyland, 1998).

For some decades ago, a number of taxonomies on metadiscourse markers have been proposed. Most of these classifications organize the linguistic units under textual and interpersonal metadiscourse, e.g., Vande Kopple (1988 as cited in Dayag, 2009) and Ken Hyland (1998 as cited in Dayag, 2009). The first one, textual metadiscourse, is central to the present study. It includes words writers use to strengthen cohesion (connectives) and define unfamiliar words (code glosses) (Kopple as cited in Kumpf, 2000). Kopple further explains that items in this textual category fulfill an "enabling function, that of creating text, which is language in operation as distinct from strings of words or isolated sentences and clauses" ("Metadiscourse"; p. 242 as cited in Kumpf, 2000). Connectors reveal organization and intertextuality (e.g., first, next, however). Code glosses, on the other hand, include parenthetical definitions and discourse markers, like *such as*, *like*, *for example/instance*, and *in other words*. They all aim at clarifying a term or exemplifying a point raised by the writer. Thus, the omission of these markers make the text more difficult to read and less cohesive.

### 1.1.2.1 Halliday and Hasan's (1976) Categorization of Conjunctions Based on Cohesive Relations

Cohesion is defined as the set of linguistic means for creating *texture* (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), that is, "the property of a text of being an interpretable whole" (rather than unconnected sentences) (p. 2). Anchored on the concept of relation – structural and semantic – between elements in the text, cohesion is achieved through lexis and grammar by the selection of structures and lexical items at the structural level (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

The present study employed Halliday and Hasan's categorization of conjunctions based on cohesive relations (additive, adversative, causal, temporal) – both on the structural and semantic levels – to identify the connectors used as textual metadiscourse markers in Philippine newspaper editorials. Additive relation, in the form of coordination, considers the pair coordinated as a single unit that can be delineated in a constituent. Likewise, it takes the form of cohesive relations where the meaning of the elements connected is dependent on the

other. Adversative relation expresses "contrary to expectation," where the expectation stems from the content of what is being said. Causal relation, on the other hand, entails result, reason, or purpose. Temporal relation denotes sequence in time: one is subsequent to the other (Halliday & Hasan, 1976 as cited in Genuino, 2002).

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Study Corpus

The corpus of data for the present study consisted of a total of 24 editorials published in 2010 by two local newspapers (see Appendix B for the list of the editorials). One editorial for each month was randomly selected; thus, 12 editorials were gathered from each newspaper. The two broadsheets were the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (PDI) and *The Philippine Star* (PS) since the members of the board of these newspapers are Filipinos. Moreover, based on a survey conducted by Nielsen Media Research in the first quarter of 2010, the PDI, *The Manila Bulletin*, and PS ranked first, second, and third, respectively, as broadsheets of choice in key urban cities nationwide.

Online versions of the newspaper editorials lifted from <http://www.philstar.com> and <http://www.inquirer.net> were considered based on the assumption that both print and electronic versions are similar at least in substance. The online texts were likewise more accessible than the newsprint version.

Although diligent efforts were made to specify and control the topic or subject matter of editorials from the two newspapers, it was nearly impossible to gather those that dealt with the same topic. Further, using Ramirez's (1989) classification of editorials, only those texts characterized as editorials of interpretation, criticism, and argument were considered in the study. This means that those that fell under the entertainment, commendation, and appreciation or tribute types were weeded out. Therefore, editorials from *The Manila Bulletin*, another leading English newspaper in the country, were not considered in the corpus based on the assumption that its editorials often withhold any criticism of a policy or judgment on an issue (Dayag, 2009), thus, considering that the newspaper is "innocuous and harmless" (Dayag, 2004, p. 102).

## 2.2 Research Procedure

The study made a systematic analysis of the discourse structure and textual metadiscourse in Philippine newspaper editorials published in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* and *The Philippine Star* in 2010. The analysis was quantitative; however, the qualitative aspect was also covered in all parts of the analysis.

Two levels of qualitative analysis were utilized in the study: macro-analysis and micro-analysis. The former was used to code the data in terms of discourse structure. The categories of blocks, moves, and steps adopted from Ho were used. The texts were divided into stages or blocks using transition signals as guides. Then, the sentences in each block that had move and step occurrences were simply counted, tallied, and tabulated.

The micro-analysis, on the other hand, involved the coding of textual metadiscourse strategies: connectors and code glosses.

The editorials were reformatted in Microsoft Word version. The analysis was carried out manually to ensure its validity. And since the discourse structure and the appearance of textual metadiscourse markers are varied and multifunctional, a context-sensitive analysis had to be carried out before finalizing the classifications. Two independent coders were asked to code one-third of the total number of editorials in terms of their discourse structure and textual metadiscourse features. Frequency and percentage counts were employed to analyze the data gathered.

## 3. Results

Data in the following tables show the discourse features characterizing the structure of Philippine newspaper editorials. Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distributions of the moves used in Philippine newspaper

Move	Frequency	%
Two-move pattern (i.e., Orientation Block: Orientation/Focusing; Exposition Block: Inquiry/Response; Summation Block: Rounding off/Final Stance)	20	83.33
Non-Two-move pattern	4	16.67
Total	24	100

Table 1. Moves used in Philippine newspaper editorials

editorials.

The data in Table 1 show that out of the 24 Philippine newspaper editorials under study, 20 or 83.33% followed the two-move pattern in each block. Only four editorials did not apply the two-move pattern.

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage distributions of the steps used in the orientation block.

Both general statement and elaboration were the most common steps used in the orientation block, which got the frequency of 15 or 36.59%; followed by the steps situation, 6 or 14.63%; and problem statement, 5 or 12.19%.

The following extracts show the use of general statement and elaboration as steps in the orientation block:

### PDI Extracts

#### General Statement

The presidential bid of Joseph Estrada can be summarized in three words: it is about I, Me, and Myself.

#### Elaboration

He is the male counterpart of the faded silent movie-era star Nora Desmond in Billy Wilder's classic film, "Sunset Boulevard." It tells of a failed screen writer who gravitates to Desmond, who dreams of making a cinematic comeback. In the end she kills the screenwriter in a jealous fit, and ends up losing all touch with reality, thinking that the news crews covering the murder are a film crew that has begun filming her comeback role.

### PS Extracts

#### General Statement

The Aquino administration came to power on the wings of public hopes that it would deliver on its promise to fight corruption.

Steps	Frequency	%
General Statement	15	36.59
Elaboration	15	36.59
Situation	6	14.63
Problem (Statement)	5	12.19
Definition	0	0.00
Exemplification	0	0.00
Elaboration	0	0.00
Problem (Question-Raising)	0	0.00
Justification	0	0.00
Total	41	100

Table 2. Steps used in the orientation block

## Elaboration

Kung walang corrupt, walang mahirap, candidate Benigno Aquino III trumpeted, and millions of voters agreed with him, giving him a decisive victory.

Table 3 shows that among the steps used in the exposition block, specific statement was the most commonly employed with a frequency count of 33 or 27.05%; followed by elaboration, 27 or 22.13%; situation, 24 or 19.67%; problem statement, 19 or 15.57 %; justification, 10 or 8.20%; solution, 5 or 4.10%; and exemplification, 4 or 3.28%.

The use of specific statements supported by facts and examples (i.e., elaboration, situation, justification, solution, and exemplification) are seen in these extracts:

### PDI Extracts

#### Specific Statement

ASEAN risks losing its credibility and imperiling its members' attempts at democratization and liberalization by letting Burma continue with its depredations.

#### Justification

Its largely soft approach on Burma has not been effective and it should be quickly discontinued, especially since it would strike a discordant note to the charter the members signed in Singapore which seeks to bring regional economic integration to a higher level, similar to the European Union's, but also with the promise of political reforms. The charter commits ASEAN members, including Burma, "to strengthen democracy, enhance good governance and the rule of law and to promote human rights and fundamental freedom."

#### Solution

ASEAN by now should be uncomfortable with the insolence

Steps	Frequency	%
Specific Statement	33	27.05
Elaboration	27	22.13
Situation	24	19.67
Problem (Statement)	19	15.57
Justification	10	8.20
Solution	5	4.10
Exemplification	4	3.28
Evaluation	0	0.00
Problem (Question-Raising)	0	0.00
Total	122	100

Table 3. Steps used in the exposition block

of Burma's military junta and its refusal to play by the rules and introduce measures to democratize the country.

#### Elaboration

It has the gall to call for an election without releasing Aung San Suu Kyi so she can organize the opposition. Burma wants to have its cake and eat it, too. Rangoon has practically shut itself from all the world's pleadings: its military dictatorship is committed to perpetuating itself in the new century with the assurance of a cold-blooded killer.

#### Specific Statement

Reducing the number of buses in the metropolis should not be overdone.

#### Justification

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), for example, is pushing for a new regulation to keep provincial buses off Edsa, in violation of the buses' franchises. Especially since provincial buses ferry passengers and goods, they ensure the continued flow of commerce and development from the provinces to the metropolis and back.

#### Solution

How traffic control can run out of control can be seen in Manila

#### Elaboration

Where Mayor Alfredo Lim has banned provincial buses from entering the city since April 1, in violation of the buses' franchises. Gravely inconvenienced are the daily commuters from the provinces who work in offices or study in schools in Manila.

#### Specific Statement

The ban is obviously politically motivated:

#### Justification

Lim does not want the provincial buses to park at the Park and Ride on Lawton, which had been built by his predecessor and political foe. The complex has become a white elephant, a waste of taxpayer's money, as a result. During the election last summer, to appease irate commuters, Lim promised to further waste taxpayer's money by putting up a public bus terminal at the old Manila ice plant site at the foot of Quezon Bridge. The

pledge indicated that it was wrong in the first place to ban provincial buses from the Park and Ride, but Mayor Lim would not admit that. In the meantime, he complains that Manila's income has dipped. Why? Of course, because he has banned people from the provinces from entering his city and, in effect, from shopping and doing business there!

**PS Extracts**

*Specific Statement*

The proposal is laudable – if it can be backed by the necessary resources for effective implementation.

*Elaboration*

Additional years in primary and secondary schools will require more teachers, classrooms, and all the other facilities and equipment for education. As it is, the government's teaching pool is already stretched thin, especially in schools that have been forced to hold classes in three shifts to accommodate the booming student population. More textbooks – free of factual and grammatical errors – must be produced.

*Specific Statement*

In this country, a cop dismissed from the service for extortion can continue wearing his uniform and keep two weapons, one of them an assault rifle.

*Justification*

Little wonder then that many dismissed cops have been implicated in carjacking, kidnapping and bank robbery, sometimes serving as gang leaders themselves.

*Situation*

In Mendoza's case, his Manila Police District uniform and rifle helped him persuade the driver of the ill-fated tourist bus that he needed to hitch a ride to the Quirino Grandstand.

*Specific Statement*

Even if Mendoza's case was on appeal, he should have been immediately disarmed after the order for his dismissal was issued by the Office of the Ombudsman.

*Elaboration*

A dismissed officer can be allowed to wield guns again only if the order is reversed. If the appeal is rejected and the order becomes final, an officer dismissed for dishonorable

causes must never be authorized to own a gun again.

Table 4 shows that in the summation block, the only steps present were conclusion with 20 or 51.28%; followed by evaluation, 15 or 38.46%; and solution, 4 or 10.26%. The following extracts show the evaluation and conclusion steps:

**PDI Extracts**

*Evaluation*

As it is, the legal community has braced itself to make its opinion heard, joined in by civic groups disturbed by the implications of the decision. Since the justices do not make rulings in a vacuum, they have to weigh the implications for the dignity and effectiveness of a court that, quite legitimately, could be embroiled in an investigation into its decision, on the way to the only legal avenue the public has for the redress of grievances against justices – impeachment.

*Conclusion*

There is a reason the highly political method of impeachment is provided for: No one is above the law – including members of the Supreme Court.

**PS Extracts**

*Evaluation*

With President Arroyo herself under fire last year for her frequent travels despite the recession threat, there was no political will to stop lower-ranking government officials from indulging their penchant, at taxpayers' expense, for globe-trotting. The failure to curb the travel bug of certain public officials has encouraged others to do the same. Congressmen themselves are among the biggest travelers.

*Conclusion*

In the absence leadership by example, taxpayers are

Steps	Frequency	%
Conclusion	20	51.28
Evaluation	15	38.46
Solution	4	10.26
Elaboration	0	0.00
General Statement	0	0.00
Metastatement	0	0.00
Total	39	100

Table 4. Steps used in the summation block

bound to see more public funds going to officials' foreign travel expenses.

Tables 5 and 6 present the findings of the study with regard to the use of textual metadiscourse strategies in Philippine newspaper editorials. These strategies are connectors and code glosses.

Table 5 shows the types of connectors used in the genre examined, i.e., Philippine newspaper editorials. Likewise, it summarizes the frequency of occurrences of these connectors in the texts.

Data show that among the additives, "and" was the most frequently used, accounting for 86.59% of the sum of additive connectors in the editorials. The connector "or" followed with 19 or 7.72%. "Also" and "as well as" comprised 2.85% and 2.44%, respectively, of the total number of additives in the texts. "Moreover" appeared once in the corpus, comprising only 0.41% of the total.

Of the nine adversative connectors identified in the

editorials, "but" was the most commonly used, comprising 63.10% of the total. The other types of adversative connectors appeared minimally in the texts. For instance, "despite," "still," and "while" occurred four times, constituting only 4.76%, respectively, of the sum of adversative connectors. The connector "on the contrary" was used once, accounting for only 1.19% of the total.

Causal connectors were also employed in the editorials. Among them, the connector "because" got the highest frequency, comprising 48.72% of the sum. "Thus" and "so" followed with 15.38% and 10.26%, respectively. Some connectors very minimally occurred in the texts; "so that," "in order to," and "as a result" appeared only once in the editorials, accounting for only 2.56%, respectively, of the total number of causal connectors.

To summarize, of all the 24 editorials examined, additive connectors were the most commonly used, constituting more than half (66.67%) of the total number of connectors identified in the texts. Adversative connectors were the next frequently employed, accounting for 22.76% of the total. Causatives followed, comprising 10.57 of the total. No temporal connectors were identified in the 24 editorials.

The use of connectors can be explained in terms of its structural and semantic aspects. In the structural view, connectors used as cohesive devices occurred within the sentence connecting words, clauses, and any other elements. Others appeared between sentences and/or paragraphs. Semantically, on the other hand, connectors were employed to establish either structural, i.e., as coordinators, or cohesive relations in the texts. As elucidated by Halliday and Hasan (1976), there is a difference between structural relations that hold within sentences and cohesive relations that hold between sentences; hence, the hold within sentences is usually coordination rather than cohesion. For example, the extracts below show that *and* appears in the medial position of sentences to denote logical relation between the elements in the sentence.

### *PDI Extract*

The same lust for gambling, drinking, and womanizing that led Estrada to bungle the presidency is making him run regardless of how his nostalgia for lost power promises

Types of Connectors	TOTAL %	
	Frequency	%
<i>Additive</i>		
and	213	86.59
or	19	7.72
also	7	2.85
as well as	6	2.44
moreover	1	0.41
<i>Total</i>	246	66.67
<i>Adversative</i>		
but	53	63.10
yet	7	8.33
even if	6	7.14
despite	4	4.76
still	4	4.76
while	4	4.76
on the other hand	3	3.57
although	2	2.38
on the contrary	1	1.19
<i>Total</i>	84	22.76
<i>Causal</i>		
because	19	48.72
thus	6	15.38
so	4	10.26
since	3	7.69
therefore	2	5.13
due to	2	5.13
so that	1	2.56
in order to	1	2.56
as a result	1	2.56
<i>Total</i>	39	10.57
GRAND TOTAL	369	100.00

Table 5. Types of connectors used in Philippine newspaper editorials



nothing but a return to failure.

## *PS Extract*

With Congress in recess and with just three months left in the Arroyo administration, the new Cabinet officials have temporary appointments and don't need confirmation by the Commission on Appointments – something that is allowed under the constitution.

In the following examples, on the other hand, and behaves in a different way to signal logical relation between a preceding idea and another one:

## *PDI Extract*

It has been pointed out by some observers that ours is a messianic culture. We look for messiahs. And even in politics, there is a kind of contest to be perceived as the most capable messiah among those who promise to usher our parched land into a new era and turn it into a land of milk and honey.

## *PS Extract*

It would return the proposal back to square one, prolonging the 14 years already spent in deliberations by different sets of lawmakers. And it would further reinforce the image of the Arroyo administration, whose allies control the House, as a champion of opaqueness in governance.

But, as an adversative connector, usually appears in the initial position of sentences to indicate the transition from a preceding idea to one that denotes a contrary idea as exemplified in the following extracts:

## *PDI Extract*

The Palace, for its part, had tried to limit Estrada's freedom of political action by holding over his head a condition in his pardon that stated he would give up political aspirations. But when the deadline for the filing of candidacies for 2010 approached, the Palace itself announced it had no intention of blocking his comeback plans.

## *PS Extract*

In the age of globalization, foreign trips for certain public officials may be unavoidable and may reap long-term dividends for the Philippines. But in many cases, trips have been undertaken for frivolous reasons.

The causal connector because behaves in a different way

since it usually appears in the medial position of sentences to indicate an idea that explains a reason or cause as evidenced by these extracts:

## *PDI Extract*

It is no wonder that they have found common purpose in attacking Edsa Dos because the former provoked it, and the latter betrayed it.

## *PS Extract*

Among emerging powers Brazil, Russia, India and China, only Brazil registered a marked improvement, rising 12 notches to 58th place because of new legislation promoting press freedom.

Another aspect of textual metadiscourse examined in the study was the use of code glosses. These code glosses explain, rephrase, expand, or exemplify the propositional content. In the study corpus, these metadiscourse categories were realized through the use of parenthetical definitions and specific discourse markers that include like, such as, otherwise known as, for example/instance, and in other words. These features helped clarify a term or exemplify a point raised by the writer.

Data in Table 6 present the frequency of occurrences of the six types of code glosses identified in the corpus. Among the code glosses, 37 or 72.55% were classified as parenthetical definitions. The exemplifier "like" accounted for 6 or 11.75% instances, "for example/instance" (4 or 7.84%), and "such as" (2 or 3.92%). The reformulation expressions "in other words" and "otherwise known as" constituted 1 or 1.96%, respectively, of the total number of code glosses.

The following are extracts exemplifying parenthetical definitions as a type of code gloss:

## *PDI Extract*

Yet throughout, whoever of our many candidates the exposés meant to pin down as false prophets-for all the official hand-washing of responsibility and accountability in the manner of Pontius Pilate-faith, like hope, springs eternal in the Filipino voters' hearts and minds.

## *PS Extract*

No doubt all the new appointment papers will be released by Mala-cañang, bearing the proper dates - before the

start of the constitutional ban on March 10 - even if those replaced continued to perform for the next two weeks the functions of their positions.

The PDI-published editorial in April 2010 from which the above extract was lifted was a commentary about the Feast of Resurrection and the resumption of political campaigns, comparing politics with the country's messianic culture. The parenthetical definition in the PDI extract clarifies the allusion of false prophets. In the same manner, the PS extract of a parenthetical definition makes clear the idea about the deadline for the Commission on Appointments to release new appointment papers.

Table 6 shows that like as an exemplifier ranked second among the six types of code glosses examined in the corpus. In the following extracts from the PDI, the key terms "so strict in the case of party lists" and "filed a similar measure" are clarified by the use of like.

### *PDI Extract (1)*

The Comelec, so strict in the case of party lists like Ang Ladlad and presidential candidates such as Nicanor Perlas, lapsed into uncritical promiscuity in the case of Estrada.

### *PDI Extract (2)*

In 2000, then Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. filed a similar measure but like the 1991 measure, it was not passed, either.

For example/instance, another type of code gloss, was used in the texts. Usually placed in the initial position of statements, it is a strategy used to make a clear point in an editorial as shown in the following PDI extract:

### *PDI Extract*

For example, there's a need to lift the exemption of public utility buses (PUBs) from the traffic coding scheme to further reduce the number of vehicles on Edsa and other major

Code Glosses	Frequency	%
parenthetical definitions	37	72.55
like	6	11.76
for example/instance	4	7.84
such as	2	3.92
in other words	1	1.96
otherwise known as	1	1.96
Total	51	100.00

Table 6. Code glosses employed in Philippine newspaper editorials

thoroughfares.

The code glosses in other words and otherwise known as were minimally used in the corpus. They function to elaborate on a previous proposition as shown in these PDI extracts:

### *PDI Extract (1)*

In other words, now is most definitely not the time to advance Charter change. In 2005, partly as a defensive measure after the Hello Garci scandal, Arroyo used her State of the Nation Address to signal the start of the "great debate" on Charter change. It would be an outright insult to the electorate if, as a first-term representative, Arroyo is allowed to hijack the legislative agenda, and restart the debate.

### *PDI Extract (2)*

Including PUBs in the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program, otherwise known as the color-coding system, can no longer be seen as anti-commuter, given the full operation of the Metro Rail and Light Rail transit loops, as well as the completion this year of the LRT North Extension Project, which should give commuters the fuller benefit of a truly mass transport system.

### **Discussion**

The general findings from this study reveal the discourse structure and the textual metadiscourse markers used in Philippine newspaper editorials.

The discourse structure of Philippine newspaper editorials follows the two-move pattern in the orientation, exposition, and summation blocks. Based on this result, it can be inferred that these editorials, like any other argumentative essays, are structured in a way that: the orientation block introduces the writer's claim on an issue; the exposition block expands the discussion of this claim; and the summation block provides a summary of the writer's primary point and a recommendation or solution.

With regard to the steps used in the blocks, it can be gleaned that the orientation block frequently employs the general statement and elaboration steps. According to Baker and Brizee (2010), the introduction of an argumentative essay should set the context by reviewing the topic in a general way, thus, explains the use of general

statements in the orientation block. The general statement, in fact, may be considered the thesis statement - a general claim about a topic, which can be an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation (Brizee & Tardiff, 2011). The editorials under study used general statements to state in general terms the main argument of the text, then followed by an explanation of this statement through the elaboration step.

The editorials' exposition block, in addition, relies more on the use of specific statements; that is, the body section of each editorial mainly performs the function of presenting well-ordered arguments to persuade a reader that the writer's point of view is correct. These arguments are presented through the use of specific statements that are elucidated by facts and examples (i.e., elaboration, situation, justification, solution, and exemplification).

The summation block, on the other hand, commonly uses the conclusion and evaluation steps. According to Brannan (2003), an argumentative essay should end decisively. The concluding paragraph must present the strongest analytical point of the essay by giving a judgment, an opinion, or an evaluation. Thus, the summation blocks of the editorials under study adhere to this assertion.

Regarding the use of connectors, Philippine newspaper editorials are built more on the additive relation. This high frequency of additive linkers may suggest that Philippine newspaper editorial writers use a progressive or accumulative strategy; that is, they move forward to present their ideas, and add evidence to their claims. This rhetorical feature may have been influenced by socio-historical forces (Thatcher, 2000); that is, in the Philippine context, the use of such "elaborate" rhetoric can perhaps be attributed to the influence of the Spanish colonizers. On the other hand, the use of adversative linkers, second in rank among the connectors employed in the genre examined, suggests that the rhetorical pattern of Philippine English in terms of stating views or opinions, comments, and analyses aims to present two contrasting sides; hence, in Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework, adversative relations mean contrast or contrary to expectations.

In addition, it is interesting to note that Philippine newspaper

editorials prefer the use of simple connectors, such as the additive and, or, and also, adversative but and yet, and causal because and so. This linguistic economy suggests that these editorials conform to the journalistic principles of conciseness or brevity.

Another textual metadiscourse feature examined in the corpus is the use of code glosses. Editorialists seem to use more parenthetical definitions to provide adequate clarifications and exemplifications in the proposition or content. Further, the use of different code glosses to explain, rephrase, expand, or exemplify information tends to validate the elaborate and change-oriented ((Mohamed & Omer, 2000) rhetorical pattern of Philippine English as an Outer-Circle-English variety.

## Conclusion

Based on the abovementioned findings, it can be inferred that Ho's model of a possible discourse structure for a general paper essay applies to Philippine newspaper editorials, and the textual metadiscourse resources used in the corpus are supplemental and essential. Discourse structure and textual metadiscourse, as appropriate linguistic resources, influence the way an editorial writer argues and engages with his readers; that is, a writer presents himself, negotiate an argument, and evaluate his readers' need for elaboration and involvement, thereby, guaranteeing that he provides sufficient cues to secure understanding and acceptance of a proposition.

Pedagogical implications arise from this study. First, raising the consciousness about the argumentation structure of newspaper editorials can contribute toward the improvement of the academic-writing skills of L2 learners. Even though L2 learners seldom compose editorials, it is still essential to study editorials since they reveal global norms of written persuasion, as pointed out by Connor (1996). In addition, findings regarding the discourse structure of editorials can help students analyze how written argumentations are organized or structured (e.g., a general statement or thesis is anchored on the quality and quantity of supporting evidence or specific statements).

Second, editorials, which are authentic or "real texts," can be used to promote a more context-dependent or -specific and meaningful L2 pedagogy. Furthermore, the

use of editorials helps sharpen the critical thinking skills of students because editorials normally present opinions about significant real-life events.

Third, the use of textual connectives and code glosses plays a pragmatic and persuasive role in the transaction between a writer, a reader, and a text. Increasing the awareness about these metadiscourse resources seems crucial in L2 instruction since it can reduce the merely information-exchange view of reading and writing, thus, helping students move beyond from a simple and ideational process to a more complex and context-rich interaction (Dafouz-Milne 2008).

To contribute to the growing number of researches on discourse analysis, further studies with larger samples or corpus (i.e., five broadsheets) can be undertaken to come up with more conclusive results. Using a different framework (e.g., McCarthy's Claim-Counterclaim model), an analysis of the discourse structure of argumentative papers submitted by L2 students can be carried out. Future researches can also cover interpersonal metadiscourse markers (e.g., hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, commentaries).

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## Appendix A

### Steps in Ho's Model

*Conclusion (Con.)*. This step presents an assertion or a statement that is justified or explained by the preceding statement. It may state the consequence of the cause specified in the preceding statement, reiterate ideas earlier expressed, (Reiteration) or summarize main points, events, or situations (Summary).

*Definition (Def.)*. This is a step that explains or interprets the meaning of a concept or term.

*Elaboration (Elab.)*. This step provides details, particulars, and any other elaborations of the preceding statement.

*Evaluation (Eva.)*. This discusses the worth of a statement, its validity, and degree of importance. It makes an evaluative judgment of a given claim or proposition – Evaluation (Qualification of Stand). It also answers the question "How successful was this solution?" Positive evaluation follows the "solution" and speculates on the feasibility or the outcome of the recommended solution. Negative evaluation usually initiates the "problem" component.

*Exemplification (Exem.)*. This illustrates an aspect of the state of affairs or proposition expressed in the form of concrete data, specific examples, or statistics illustrated by the writer to support his arguments.

*General Statement (Gen. Stat.)*. This is a step that states in broad, general terms the state of affairs or a proposition.

*Justification (Just.)*. This step provides reasons in support of a given statement.

*Metastatement (Meta.)*. This helps the reader organize, classify, interpret, evaluate, and react to the material or information about the subject of the text. Metastatement (stating a stand) is where the writer tells the reader explicitly that a stand is being taken.

*Problem (Prob.)*. This step, which is an aspect of a situation, requires a response. It can be realized in the form of a statement – Problem (Statement) or an explicit question – Problem (Question-Raising).

*Reformulation (Reform.)*. This step constitutes a paraphrase or a restatement of the preceding statement.

*Situation (Sit.)*. This presents facts and circumstances that provide background information and/or the setting for a full appreciation of the problem.

*Solution (Sol.)*. This is a step which puts forward recommendations and proposals as to how the "problem" could be solved.

*Specific Statement (Spec. Stat.)*. This step states a specific claim or proposition.

## Appendix B

### Corpus

Philippine Daily Inquirer Editorials from <http://www.inquirer.net>

"The egotist" (January 23, 2010)

"True meaning" (February 21, 2010)

"Judicial impunity" (March 20, 2010)

"Keeping the faith" (April 3, 2010)

"Judicial quarantine" (May 15, 2010)

"Kuryente" (June 25, 2010)

"Not the right time" (July 5, 2010)

"Road sanity" (August 7, 2010)

"Bad image" (September 20, 2010)

"Gun control" (October 12, 2010)

"The gall of Burma" (November 3, 2010)

"Shoot first" (December 5, 2010)

The Philippine Star Editorials (from <http://www.philstar.com>)

# RESEARCH PAPERS

"The travel bug" (January 21, 2010)

"Jammed" (February 3, 2010)

"Appointment binge" (March 27, 2010)

"Earth Day" (April 22, 2010)

"Beyond lip service" (May 31, 2010)

"Additional years of learning" (June 28, 2010)

"The killing continues" (July 6, 2010)

"Dismissed, armed and dangerous" (August 26, 2010)

"Substandard education" (September 27, 2010)

"Steep fall" (October 21, 2010)

"Long wait for justice" (November 23, 2010)

"Anti-Corruption Day" (December 10, 2010)

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