A CONTRASTIVE RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF PHILIPPINE AND SRI LANKAN ENGLISH NEWS COMMENTARIES

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Abstract

Newspaper commentaries constitute a part of media discourse, which is a significant area of inquiry in intercultural rhetoric analysis. Through conducting a contrastive textual analysis of newspaper commentaries culled from the English newspapers in the Philippines and Sri Lanka, this paper explored the notions of genre and micro-genre on the 2015 papal visit in the two countries. To set a *tertium comparationis* in examining the genre-newspaper commentaries on the papal visit, the timeframe was set during the two-week duration of the visit. To investigate the micro-genres employed by the writers, two sets of 15 newspaper commentaries on the visit respectively in the Philippines and Sri Lanka were selected and analyzed. Findings revealed that both Filipino and Sinhalese writers in English newspaper commentaries tended to employ the micro-genre of "media explanatory exposition" more often than other micro-genres, and in terms of rhetorical structures, both of these writers tended to show variation, dynamism, and individuality. Implications for ESL (English as a second language) and EFL (English as a foreign language) teaching are provided in the light of these findings.

Keywords: contrastive rhetoric; intercultural rhetoric; linguistics; applied linguistics

Since the inception of contrastive rhetoric studies with Robert Kaplan's (1966) "doodles articles," cross-cultural examination of texts have gradually shifted its focus on students' essays (studies of the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s) to other modes and domains, ranging from academic to professional writing such as research reports and abstracts, articles, grant proposals, business letters, resumes, newspaper editorials, letters to the editor, commentaries, etc. While this trend carries an invaluable pedagogical orientation, it also invites the audience to gain comprehensible insights into the three influential concepts underlying genre theory: discourse community, genre, and language learning task (Perez-Llantada, 2015).

In recent years, several studies have focused on the processes and products of specific genres: Connor et al.'s (1995) cross-cultural analysis of U.S. and Flemish job applications; Jenkins and Hinds' (1987) contrastive study of business letter writing in English, French, and Japanese; Mauranen's (1993) contrastive study of Finnish and English writing; Tirkkonen-Condit's (1988; 1996; Tirkkonen-Condit & Lieflander-Koistinen, 1989) study of editorials in Finnish and English; Ventola and Mauranen's (1991) non-native writing and native revising of scientific articles; Wang's (2007) contrastive study of the generic and rhetorical structures of newspaper commentaries in Australian and Chinese; Sanchez-Escobar's (2012) contrastive study of rhetorical patterns in English and Spanish expository journal writing; and Bonyadi & Samuel's (2013)

intercultural rhetoric analysis of newspaper editorial headlines in English and Persian.

In the Philippines, local genre-specific studies include Dayag's (2000) contrastive study of Filipino and Philippine English newspaper editorials; Genuino's (2002) contrastive study of Philippine, Singaporean, and American English newspaper commentaries; Gonzales' (2002) contrastive study of Philippine, Singaporean, and American English letters to the editor; and Gustilo's (2002) contrastive study of Philippine and American English structure of news leads.

The primary aim of these studies is to explore and identify textual or structural patterns in different genres. These studies have found that rhetorical patterns exist and that they are an important component of language. "These patterns are arbitrary, yet rule-governed, and they are also socially constructed and transmitted" (Wang, 2007, p. 84). Moreover, contrastive rhetoric research shows that different languages and cultures have different rhetorical structures that are dynamic; they change as the society changes (Ostler, 2001 as cited in Wang, 2007). Pursuing these studies can add to people's understanding of the way L2 English writers accomplish micro-rhetorical maneuvers (Perez-Llantada, 2015) and implicate future genre and language research, which may lead to the articulation of cogent language instructional intervention to empower and raise consciousness among the members of bi-/multiliterate academic and research communities.

The notions of genre and micro-genre in contrastive rhetoric studies

In his *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*, John Swales defined genre focusing on the communicative purpose of discourse:

> A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. (1990b, p.58, as cited in Connor, 1996, pp.126-127).

Miller (1984, 1994 as cited in Wang, 2007, p. 3), stated that "genre in its broadest sense refers to social action." Bhatia (2004) specifically defined genre as a:

> …language use in a conventionalized communicative setting in order to give expression to a specific set of communicative goals of disciplinary or social institution, which give rise to a stable structural forms by imposing constraints on the use of lexico-grammatical as well as discoursal resources. (p.23)

The above views of genre suggest a process by which writers, being members of their respective discourse communities, employ appropriation and contextualization of their writing through manipulation of linguistic devices in their construction of specific texts in order to deliver their ideas to their target audiences who recognize, share, and subscribe to these established notions of genre.

With this descriptive sense of genre, genre analysis should not focus only on the products of discourse such as the actual texts produced, but should also focus on the processes by which these produced texts were subjected to, taking into consideration the contextual factors involved in the text production. This textual and contextual approach to genre analysis will help present a complete picture of the dynamic processes involved in text production, thus enabling us to draw more valid and clearer insights from our study on genre-specific specific writings across various languages and cultures.

In performing empirical contrastive rhetoric studies, different schools of genre analysis emerged, aiming to analyze and describe genre by employing various linguistic and non-linguistic techniques. In line with this, one particular relevant framework for genre studies is Martin's (1994, 1995, 1997 as cited in Wang, 2007) demarcation of genre (or macro-genre) and elemental genre (or micro-genre).

Martin's definition of genre can be traced to Halliday's (1994) systemic functional linguistics. Martin (1984, p. 25 as cited in Wang, 2007, p. 4) defined genre as "a staged, goal-orientated, and purposeful social activity that people engage in as members of their culture." Martin also proposes a concept of micro-genre, which is similar to Biber's (1989) "text type." Micro-genres describe texts in terms of rhetorical functions which may include discussion, exposition, problem-solution, etc. This notion of micro-genre can be useful, as it provides an analytical framework in genre-specific contrastive rhetoric studies.

In a response to Connor's (1996) call to conduct more genre-specific studies, the present study used the notions of genre and micro-genre in identifying the textual, contextual, and intertextual factors influencing the construction of newspaper commentaries on the Papal Visit of Pope Francis (Pontiff Jorge Mario Bergoglio) to Sri Lanka (January 12-14, 2015) and to the Philippines (January 15-19, 2015).

This study analyzed the rhetorical structures in relation to micro-genres used in the text construction of Philippine and Sri Lankan English newspaper commentaries. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions: (1) What are the generic and rhetorical structures of Philippine and Sri Lankan newspaper commentaries on the 2015 papal visit to these countries? (2) What are the micro-genres of these newspaper commentaries? and (3) What are the social functions of these micro-genres?

METHOD
Research design
This contrastive genre study on the newspaper commentaries on the 2015 Papal Visit in the Philippines and Sri Lanka employed the concept of "genre" to capture contextual and intertextual related factors that mediate and influence the construction of texts in different socio-cultural settings. It also used the notion of "micro-genre" to examine the textual features of the texts.

Data
Thirty newspaper commentaries were purposively gathered from 10 English newspapers published in the Philippines (print) and in Sri Lanka (on-line). For the purposes of this study, Wang's (2007) definition of newspaper commentary was adopted, which she refers to as any opinion article excluding editorials and letters to the editor, which are written by expert writers or journalists but not editors. These newspaper commentaries were published in the Philippines (in English) and in Sri Lanka (in English).

Following Wang's recommendations in establishing a comparable set of data to account for the nature of genre in the languages and cultures

under study, the researcher drew on the following criteria:

a) *Time limit.* This refers to setting of data collection, which was set within the papal visit period (January 10 – 20, 2015). This aimed to capture the freshest and the most immediate commentaries to the event.

b) *Focus.* The data collected were only the newspaper commentaries that focused on the papal visit to these two countries.

c) *Tertium comparationis.* According to Connor (2004), *tertium comparationis* refers to a common platform of comparison or shared similarity at the various levels of data collection and analysis. Connor stressed that the notion of *tertium comparationis* is important at all levels of research, which include identifying texts for corpora, selecting textual concepts to be studied in the sets of data, and identifying linguistic features that realize these concepts.

Newspaper commentaries on the papal visit in Sri Lanka did not seem to be as common as in the Philippines. This may be partly because Sri Lanka's attention was still drawn on the results of the presidential elections between ex-President Mahinda Rajapaksa and newly-elected President Maithri Sirisens early January. Newspaper commentaries focused mainly on the national political issues resulting in very limited publications about the papal visit.

To gather Sri Lankan data, the online databases of Sri Lanka newspapers were culled. There were over 40 newspaper companies in Sri Lanka published in two languages, Sinhalese and English. Of all the more than 20 English newspapers, only seven newspapers published commentaries about the papal visit. Fifteen newspaper commentaries were culled from the following English newspapers: *Lanka Web (*henceforth, *LW), Sri Lanka Guardian (SLG), Daily News (DN), Tamil Net (TN), The Sunday Leader (TSL), Daily Mirror (DM),* and *The Sunday Times (TST).* The newspaper commentaries were saved in PDF formats and were printed afterwards for analysis.

In the Philippines, publications on the papal visit abound in various sorts (headline stories, news articles, editorials, feature articles, commentaries, etc.) and were published before, during, and after the event. To gather Philippine data, newspaper commentaries on the papal visit were culled from the three leading national newspapers in the Philippines – *Manila Bulletin* (henceforth, *MB*), *Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI)*, and *The Philippine Star (TPS)* – from January 15–20, 2015. Five newspaper commentaries were selected from each of these three publications, giving a total of 15 commentaries.

Table 1 summarizes the Philippine and Sri Lankan newspaper commentaries used in this study.

Table 1. Newspaper commentaries examined in the paper

Philippine Newspapers	No. of Texts	Sri Lankan Newspapers	No. of Texts
Manila Bulletin (MB)	5	*Lanka Web* (LW)	3
		Sri Lanka Guardian (SLG)	3
Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI)	5	*Daily News* (DN)	3
		Tamil Net (TN)	2
The Philippine Star (TPS)	5	*The Sunday Leader* (TSL)	2
		Daily Mirror (DM)	1
		The Sunday Times (TST)	1
Subtotal	**15**	**Subtotal**	**15**

Data analysis

In order to capture the basic micro-genres and social functions of the texts under study, the categorization of expositions and media commentaries established by Martin and Peters (1985), Hoey (1983), and Wang (2007) was adopted. Table 2 shows the micro-genres and social functions of the newspaper commentaries that were analyzed in this study.

In order to capture the basic textual patterns that the writers used to develop their texts, identification of micro-genres and analysis of generic and rhetorical structures of the texts under examination was performed. According to Wang (2007, p. 8), "generic structure" refers to "the way that particular texts develop typical and recognizable textual structures; that is, the stages the texts move through in order to achieve their particular goal." The notion of generic structure in this study mirrors Biber's (1988, 1989 as cited in Wang, 2007, p. 8) concept of "genre" which is defined as "a category assigned on the basis of external criteria such as social purpose, intended audience and activity type rather than lexical or grammatical features." The notion of "rhetorical structure" in this paper refers to the "internal textual patterns that describe the stages or steps which realize rhetorical functions, such as thesis statement, arguments, evidence, and conclusion" (Wang, 2007, p. 8). Table 3 illustrates the conceptual distinction between generic structure and rhetorical structure as applied in this study.

Table 2. Micro-genres and functions of newspaper commentaries in the Philippines and Sri Lanka (based on Martin & Peters, 1985; Hoey, 1983; Wang, 2007)

Micro-genres		Functions
Media exposition	Explanatory exposition	To explain what/how/why
	Argumentative exposition	To persuade that something is the case
	Hortatory exposition	To persuade that something should be the case or should be done
Problem/Solution		To illustrate a problem and propose solutions to it
Media challenge		To question, argue against, or challenge an existing opinion on an issue of public interest
Media discussion		To survey, or present (at least) two points of view about an issue of public interest

Table 3. Generic structure and rhetorical structure of a letter to the editor (Wang, 2004, p.78 as cited in Wang, 2007)

The Daily Telegraph 09/08/2002

Text	Generic structure	Rhetorical structure
Guests don't feel welcome	Title	
Gary Taylor seems to think that the facilities that City-Rail provides to its customers are badly abused and mistreated ("Guests show no respect," Letters, August 8). He seems to miss the point that I am the paying customer who deserves proper service.	Body of the letter	Situation
If there is too much rubbish on the trains, use some revenue to employ more cleaners, or place a bin near all doors. Or maybe have the guards enforce the prohibitions on eating and smoking.		Problem / Solution
Perhaps if City-Rail provided an improved and adequate service there would be minimal letters of complaint.		Evaluation
Mark Brazier, Bradbury	Sign-off	

Using this analytical framework, the two sets of data on Philippine and Sri Lankan newspaper commentaries were examined to identify the micro-genre, generic structure, and rhetorical structure of each text.

FINDINGS
The Philippine texts
The Philippine set of data consisted of 15 newspaper commentaries gathered from three national English newspapers published in the Philippines, namely, *Manila Bulletin*, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, and *The Philippine Star*. Table 4 summarizes the micro-genres identified in these texts.

As can be seen in Table 4, most of the commentaries (10 out of 15 texts) in the Philippine data fall into the category of "media expository exposition" micro-genres. Two texts were identified as "media hortatory exposition", another two texts as "media challenge", and one text as "media argumentative exposition." No text was categorized as "problem/solution" and "media discussion."

Table 4. Summary of micro-genres of the Philippine data

Micro-genre Newspaper	Media exposition			Problem/ solution	Media challenge	Media discussion
	Explanatory exposition	Argumentative exposition	Hortatory exposition			
MB (5)	4				1	
PDI (5)	1	1	2		1	
TPS (5)	5					
Total	10	1	2	0	2	0

The Philippine explanatory expositions were those texts that aimed to explain what the papal visit is all about, how it is carried out, and why it is done. In addition, these texts also provide backgrounds of the Pontiff, the Church, and the individual and societal significance of the Papal Visit. PDI-01 provides a typical example of an explanatory exposition text found in the Philippine data. Table 5 shows the summary of the generic and rhetorical structure used in this text.

With the thesis statement of "Pope Francis is the pope of the peripheries," this text seemed to aim to explain to the readers certain characteristics of Pope Francis that make him touted as "the Pope of the poor," "pastor of the poor," and "The Great Reformer" by using rhetorical moves such as definition of terms, comparison with the former Pope Benedict, and elaborations drawn from Pope Francis' personal history to his active campaign leading to Church reforms.

Table 5. Generic Structure and Rhetorical Structure of a Philippine Text

Generic Structure	Rhetorical structure
Headline	Thesis
By-line	
Introduction	Definition
Body	Situation
	Elaborations
	Opinion
	Wrap-up
Conclusion	Conclusion
*Author's brief bio-note/e-mail address	

Table 3 shows that the writer employed a tripartite generic structure, which includes an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Other parts include the obligatory headline and by-line, and the non-obligatory author's bio-note and e-mail address. As regards rhetorical structure, this text followed the structure shown above, foregrounding the traits of Pope Francis that make people call him the "Pope of the peripheries". The text starts with the conceptual definition of the word "peripheries," explicating it with reference to Pope Francis' "peripheral beginnings." Then, it goes on to narrate a historic moment in a pre-conclave congregation of cardinals discussing the future directions and immediate concerns of the Church. The text elaborates how the cardinals were stunned by the succinct yet sharp speech of Pope Francis, who linked the problems confronting the Church to the task of evangelization. It further elaborates how Pope Francis refers to the poor, the oppressed, and the suffering as "God's holy people," who are in the "peripheries", in both physical and metaphysical aspects. Finally, the text explains that the Church can achieve its mission of evangelization only if it breaks out of its "theological narcissism" and "self-referentiality" and starts to go out in the peripheries and find God among the poor. In the latter part of the text, the writer uses the pronoun "I" to indicate his involvement in the discussion. Although the text is generally explanatory in its exposition, some lines in the conclusion may be viewed as radical and provoking, which may give rise to debate.

Most of the texts in the Philippine data (10 out of 15 texts) fall into the explanatory exposition type of micro-genre, which explains to the readers who Pope Francis is, his Church reforms, and the significance and impact of his visit. In developing these explanatory expositions, writers tackled a gamut of topics in different angles and styles. In general, these texts aim to explain the unique traits of Pope Francis, particularly his special heart to the poor. It should also be noted that the writers' voices appear widely within the texts (12 out of 15 texts used the pronoun "I"), giving a sense of personal involvement and attachment in the topics under discussion.

Other micro-genres such as "hortatory exposition," "media challenge," and "argumentative exposition" were also found in the Philippine data. In "hortatory expositions," the writers usually argue for a position and persuade their audience that something should be the case or that something should be done (Martin & Peters, 1985). For example, in the Philippine text titled "Honor Pope Francis by ending torture," the writer developed her points following a rhetorical structure of an exposition. This text develops around the thesis of stopping torture, which Pope Francis condemned as a "very grave sin." Exemplification, reasoning, and presentation of facts were employed to show that despite the government's efforts to end this horrific practice, it still continues to persist; and to exert genuine effort to give justice to victims and to stop this crime would be one of the best ways to honor Pope Francis. Personal pronouns, particularly the first person "I," are widely used in the texts, complementing facts and other references used by the writers. Most of the writers tend to be very personal and intimate in approach, while some try to keep a distance from the topic under discussion.

The Philippine data appear to have a large variety of rhetorical structures or patterns, which makes it impossible to generalize one or more structural models from the data that fit all the Philippine texts. The Philippine data show diversity in rhetorical structures in discussing topics on the papal visit, resulting in insufficiency in providing a general overview of the rhetorical patterns to account for all texts under examination. This is despite the fact that the three widely-used micro-genres in the Philippine data are the explanatory exposition, hortatory exposition, and media challenge. Table 6 summarizes the micro-genres and rhetorical structures found in the Philippine texts.

Table 6 illustrates that there is a great diversity in rhetorical structures in the Philippine data. This is evident even within the same micro-genre. For example, with "explanatory expositions," there can be different structures such as Thesis ^ Orientation ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Evaluation 1 ^ Evaluation 2 ^ Conclusion, or Thesis ^ Elaboration ^ Reflection ^ Opinion ^ Evaluation ^ Wrap-up ^ Conclusion. The same diversity and individuality in the use of rhetorical structures can be seen in other micro-genres in the Philippine texts.

Table 6. Summary of the textual analysis on the Philippine texts

Text	Micro-genre	Rhetorical Structure
MB-01	Media challenge	Thesis ^ Situation ^ Evaluation ^ Argument 1 ^ Support ^ Argument 2 ^ Support ^ Observation ^ Digression ^ Situation ^ Appeal 1 (to the masses) ^ Appeal 2 (to the clergy) ^ Evaluation ^ Opinion ^ Conclusion
MB-02	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Orientation ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Situation 3 ^ Situation 4 ^ Thesis ^ Conclusion
MB-03	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Orientation ^ Situation ^ Evaluation ^ Anticipation ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Situation 3 ^ Conclusion
MB-04	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Orientation ^ Elaboration ^ Thesis ^ Elaboration 1 ^ Elaboration 2 ^ Elaboration 3 ^ Conclusion
MB-05	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Elaboration ^ Reflection ^ Opinion ^ Evaluation ^ Wrap-up ^ Conclusion
PDI-01	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Definition ^ Situation ^ Elaboration 1 ^ Elaboration 2 ^ Elaboration 3 ^ Elaboration 4 ^ Elaboration 5 ^ Elaboration 6 ^ Opinion ^ Wrap-up ^ Conclusion
PDI-02	Media exposition (Hortatory)	Orientation ^ Thesis ^ Elaboration 1 ^ Elaboration 2 ^ Evidence 1 ^ Evidence 2 ^ Evidence 3 ^ Evidence 4 ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Evaluation ^ Argument ^ Evidence ^ Conclusion
PDI-03	Media exposition (Hortatory)	Orientation ^ Thesis ^ Elaboration ^ Thesis reiteration ^ Example 1 ^ Elaboration ^ Example 2 ^ Elaboration 1 ^ Elaboration 2 ^ Elaboration 3 ^ Wrap-up ^ Example 3
PDI-04	Media challenge	Orientation ^ Thesis ^ Argument 1 ^ Support 1 ^ Support 2 ^ Situation ^ Argument 2 ^ Support 1 ^ Support 2 ^ Evaluation ^ Argument 3 ^ Support 1 ^ Elaboration 1 ^ Elaboration 2 ^ Support 2 ^ Thesis reiteration ^ Elaboration ^ Conclusion
PDI-05	Media exposition (Argumentative)	Situation 1 ^ Orientation ^ Argument ^ Situation 2 ^ Thesis ^ Support 1 ^ Elaboration 1 ^ Elaboration 2 ^ Support 2 ^ Evaluation 1 ^ Evaluation 2 ^ Evaluation 3 ^ Conclusion
TPS-01	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Elaboration 1 ^ Elaboration 2 ^ Evaluation 1 ^ Evaluation 2 ^ Conclusion
TPS-02	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Orientation ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Evaluation 1 ^ Evaluation 2 ^ Conclusion
TPS-03	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Situation ^ Thesis ^ Elaboration 1 ^ Elaboration 2 ^ Evaluation ^ Conclusion
TPS-04	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Situation 3 ^ Conclusion
TPS-05	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Situation ^ Reflection ^ Thesis ^ Thesis reiteration ^ Situation ^ Reflection ^ Evaluation ^ Situation ^ Thesis reiteration ^ Reflection ^ Conclusion

(NB: ^ = followed by)

In summary, "media explanatory exposition" is the predominant micro-genre found in the Philippine texts. In terms of generic structure, most the texts follow a pattern of "headline," "by-line," "introduction," "body", "conclusion," and "author's bio-note or e-mail address." However, as regards rhetorical structures, the Philippine data showed a large variety of diverse structures.

The Sri Lankan texts
Table 7 provides the summary of the 15 Sri Lankan newspaper commentaries that were analyzed to identify the micro-genres employed in the texts.

Table 7 shows that the predominant micro-genre in the Sri Lankan newspaper commentaries is the "media explanatory exposition" (10 out of 15 texts). Other texts were found employing "argumentative exposition" (1 text), "hortatory exposition" (1 text), "problem/solution" (1 text), "media challenge" (1 text), and "media discussion" (1 text) micro-genres. In these Sri Lankan commentaries, the writers usually explained the aims and possible impact to the nation of the papal visit, although some writers attempted to influence their readers to follow their line of argument. TSL-02 is an example of a typical Sri Lankan media explanatory exposition. The summary of the generic and rhetorical structure found in this text is shown in Table 8.

The thesis of this text states that "Pope Francis' visit [to Sri Lanka] is good timing." It develops its claim by first describing the tensed national political situation after a recently-concluded and "bitterly contested" Presidential elections between ex-President Mahinda Rajapaksa and newly-elected President Maithri Sirisens. The text goes on to explain that Pope Francis" visit helps consolidate the space that polarized the polity, which he addressed upon his arrival: "The process of healing also needs to include the pursuit of truth, not for the sake of opening old wounds, but rather as a necessary means of promoting justice, healing and unity." In fact, there was a peaceful transmission of power from Rajapaksa to Sirisens, with both parties showing goodwill. When it comes to the national significance of the papal visit, the writer claimed

that it projected a "positive and hopeful image" of Sri Lanka to the world, which was evident during Pope Francis' interreligious dialogue with over a thousand of religious clergy of all religions in the country. In addition, the text explains that the papal visit helped heal deep wounds and memory of the internally-displaced victims of 30-year civil war in Sri Lanka when Pope Francis conducted a religious service at Madhu, which is considered a sacred place to both Sinhalese and Tamil Catholics. Finally, the text concludes that what remains now is how Sri Lanka is going to demilitarize itself physically and mentally, and how it can use the way of religion to heal the wounds of war.

Table 7. Summary of micro-genres of the Sri Lankan data

Micro-genre Newspaper	Media exposition			Problem/ solution	Media challenge	Media discussion
	Explanatory exposition	Argumentative exposition	Hortatory exposition			
LW (3)		1			1	1
SLG (3)	3					
DN (3)	2		1			
TN (2)	1			1		
TSL (2)	2					
DM (1)	1					
TST (1)	1					
Total	10	1	1	1	1	1

Table 8. Generic structure and rhetorical structure of a Sri Lankan text

Generic Structure	Rhetorical structure
Headline	Thesis
By-line	
Introduction	Situation
Body	Evaluation
	Point 1
	Elaboration
	Point 2
	Elaboration
	Wrap-up
Conclusion	Conclusion

The text follows the rhetorical structure shown above. The writer's personal voice does not appear within the text, giving a sense of objectivity and non-involvement in the topic being discussed. In terms of generic structure, the text also follows a tripartite structure comprised of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. It also contains a headline and a by-line, but it does not provide any author's bio-note or contact details.

Similar to what is observed in the Philippine data, a large variety of rhetorical structures is found in the Sri Lankan texts, showing diversity and individuality in textual development. Table 9 provides the summary of the micro-genres and rhetorical structures found in the Sri Lanka data set.

As shown in Table 9, the rhetorical structures that the Sri Lankan writers used tended to be divergent and follow unstable patterns, so much so that there is a great variation even within the same micro-genres. For instance, with "explanatory expositions," there can be various structures possible such as Thesis ^ Elaboration 1 ^ Elaboration 2 ^ Point 1 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 2 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 3 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 4 ^ Elaboration ^ Summary ^ Conclusion, or Thesis ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Argument ^ Reason ^ Thesis reiteration ^ Elaboration ^ Conclusion.

To sum up, the predominant micro-genre found in the Sri Lankan texts is "media explanatory exposition." In case of generic structure, all texts follow the pattern of "headline", "by-line," "introduction," "body," and "conclusion." However, in terms of rhetorical structures, there is a variety of diverse structures in the Sri Lankan data.

DISCUSSION
The main objective of this study was to identify the generic and rhetorical structures in relation to the micro-genres used in the newspaper commentaries on the 2015 papal visit to the Philippines and Sri Lanka. In the genre analysis of these newspaper commentaries, this study found four micro-genres in the Philippine data, namely, explanatory exposition, argumentative exposition, hortatory exposition, and media challenge. Of these, explanatory exposition is the dominant micro-genre. No examples of problem/solution and media discussion micro-genres were found in the Philippine data. On the other hand, six micro-genres were found in the Sri Lankan data: explanatory exposition, argumentative exposition, hortatory exposition, problem/solution, media challenge, and media discussion, representing all the micro-genre categories set by Martin and Peters (1985). Explanatory exposition is the dominant micro-genre in the Sri Lankan data.

Table 9. Summary of the textual analysis on the Sri Lankan texts

Text	Micro-genre	Rhetorical Structure
LW-01	Media challenge	Orientation ^ Thesis ^ Argument ^ Elaboration ^ Point 1 ^ Point 2 ^ Point 3 ^ Point 4 ^ Conclusion
LW-02	Media exposition (Argumentative)	Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Thesis ^ Fact 1 ^ Fact 2 ^ Argument ^ Fact ^ Argument ^ Facts ^ Argument ^ Reason ^ Argument ^ Reason ^ Thesis reiteration ^ Conclusion
LW-03	Media discussion	Thesis ^ Situation ^ Argument ^ Point 1 ^ Point 2 ^ Point 3 ^ Point 4 ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Argument ^ Situation ^ Argument 1 ^ Argument 2 ^ Argument 3 ^ Summary ^ Conclusion
SLG-01	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Argument ^ Reason ^ Thesis reiteration ^ Elaboration ^ Conclusion
SLG-02	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Situation 3 ^ Situation 4 ^ Conclusion
SLG-03	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Opinion ^ Evaluation ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Point 1 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 2 ^ Opinion ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Conclusion
DN-01	Media exposition (Hortatory)	Definition ^ Thesis ^ Elaboration ^ Appeal ^ Situation ^ Conclusion
DN-02	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Orientation ^ Situation ^ Comment ^ Situation ^ Comment ^ Situation ^ Comment ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Situation 3 ^ Conclusion
DN-03	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Orientation ^ Situation ^ Point 1 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 2 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 3 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 4 ^ Elaboration ^ Conclusion
TN-01	Problem-Solution	Thesis ^ Situation ^ Problem ^ Point 1 ^ Point 2 ^ Point 3 ^ Point 4 ^ Point 5 ^ Problem ^ Point 1 ^ Point 2 ^ Point 3 ^ Summary ^ Problem ^ Solution
TN-02	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Orientation ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Situation 3 ^ Situation 4 ^ Situation 5 ^ Situation 6 ^ Point ^ Argument ^ Conclusion
TSL-01	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Thesis reiteration ^ Situation 1 ^ Situation 2 ^ Situation 3 ^ Situation 4 ^ Point 1 ^ Elaboration 1 ^ Elaboration 2 ^ Elaboration 3 ^ Elaboration 4 ^ Point 2 ^ Elaboration 1 ^ Elaboration 2 ^ Conclusion
TSL-02	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Situation ^ Evaluation ^ Point 1 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 2 ^ Elaboration ^ Wrap-up ^ Conclusion
DM-01	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Elaboration 1 ^ Elaboration 2 ^ Point 1 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 2 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 3 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 4 ^ Elaboration ^ Summary ^ Conclusion
TST-01	Media exposition (Explanatory)	Thesis ^ Orientation ^ Situation ^ Evaluation ^ Elaboration ^ Point 1 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 2 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 3 ^ Elaboration ^ Point 4 ^ Elaboration ^ Conclusion

(NB: ^ = followed by)

Both the Philippine and the Sri Lankan data showed a great diversity and variation in rhetorical structures in relation to the micro-genres employed. Irregular, unstable, and individualized patterns characterize these data sets. Thus, given the current data, it is not possible to draw general models of rhetorical structures adopted by the writers in developing their texts.

Although the findings of this study are not conclusive or encompassing of the rhetorical structures that Filipino and Sinhalese newspaper commentators employ in text construction, the results similarly reflect Wang's (2007) findings on her study of the rhetorical structures of Chinese newspaper commentaries on terrorism events on September 11, 2001, which showed a greater diversity and variation in rhetorical structures in relation to the micro-genres used. These results suggest that the writers seem to focus more on content and clarity rather than on form and structure (Wang, K., 1991; Wang, X., 1994 as cited in Wang, W., 2007).

The findings indicate that Filipino and Sinhalese

writers, though belonging to one culture, do not have one definite, clear preference to rhetorical structures in developing their texts in relation to micro-genres employed. They do not limit themselves to only one pattern; instead, they utilize different patterns made available for them in their desire to impart meaning. Malcolm (1999 as cited in Almaden, 2006) has noted that "within a culture, different sub-cultures may develop different writing practices" (p. 122). Charity Hudley & Mallinson (2011), in conjunction with Sanchez-Escobar (2012), claimed that "language is an essential component of…culture and identity" (p. vii). Liang (1968, p. 3, as cited in Wang, 2007, p. 104) emphasized that "no matter how you arrange an essay's structure, the purpose is to make the essay clear to the reader." This may partially explain why both the Philippine and Sri Lankan textual structures demonstrated more dynamic and unstructured traits.

Another way of looking at the above data is to say that there are more similarities among the Philippine and Sinhalese newspaper commentaries on the papal visit than there are differences,

although one distinct difference is that Filipino newspaper commentators tend to write in the "I" point of view by showing their personal involvement to the text, by employing individualized and personalized comments, and by exhibiting freedom to express their opinions on the event. The Sinhalese newspaper commentators, on the other hand, tend to write in the third person point of view, distancing and detaching themselves from the topic, and maintaining a sense of objectivity. Whether this is ideological, or a matter of writer's style, and whether this in keeping with the paper's editorial policy, is beyond the scope of this paper, which is simply a description of how the Filipino and Sinhalese newspaper commentators employ micro-genres and rhetorical structures in their texts. Future studies may therefore look at commentaries in these newspapers from the perspective of critical discourse analysis.

To sum up, after analyzing micro-genres and the generic and rhetorical structures used in the newspaper commentaries used in the Philippines and Sri Lanka, the present study found that generally both the Filipino and Sinhalese writers tended to use the micro-genre of "media explanatory exposition" more often than other micro-genres. Furthermore, they both exhibit diverse, dynamic, varied, and individual characteristics in terms of rhetorical structures. On the other hand, they vary in the use of writer's perspective, with most of the Filipino newspaper commentators employing the "I" point of view, and the Sinhalese newspaper commentaries using the third person point of view.

Finally, a diachronic study of how Filipino and Sinhalese newspaper commentators in English write on events may yield insights into whether the rhetorical structures and micro-genres used in writing newspaper commentaries in these newspapers have stabilized through the years. Furthermore, considering the contexts that influence the production of the texts, increasing the corpus to include other newspapers and exploring the processes of text production and text consumption may also draw different results and insights on this genre-specific study. Or, to echo Dayag's (2000) question: "Are micro-genres and rhetorical structures defined by the type of event being commented?"

Pedagogical implications

With the ubiquity of the Internet comes unlimited access to a large number of English newspapers around the world. Considered as the most up-to-the-minute inexpensive textbook available to students, newspapers can bridge the gap between general academic subjects and the real world (Bonyadi & Samuel, 2013).

The uniqueness in structure and format in presenting real information about the issues on the various aspects of the society makes newspapers an authentic material that language teachers can utilize in the classroom to provide learners a contextualized, meaningful, and situated language instruction. Recent studies have reported this move and recommended newspapers to be an integral part of language classes (Belge & Slowik, 1988; Edfeldt, 1990; Rafael, 1995; Nunan, 1999; Tomlinson, 2000; and Hadley, 2003 as cited in Bonyadi & Samuel, 2013).

Introducing newspaper and its sub-genres into the language classroom affords learners consciousness-awareness of the language conventions and the ability to understand deeply how language can be used in various ways to convey information to different audiences across cultures and contexts. However, in doing so, language teachers who plan to employ media discourse as a teaching device should also consider Bhatia's (1993 as cited in Bonyadi & Samuel, 2013) recommendation that teachers should first focus on the genres' generic distinctive features such as communicative purpose, schematic structures, and syntactic patterns in order that they can use it to empower their learners to be sensitive to genre distinctions.

CONCLUSION

Drawing from the pedagogical viability of utilizing newspapers in teaching media discourse in the language classroom, this study aimed at analyzing the micro-genre and rhetorical structures through textual and contextual analysis of newspaper commentaries of the Philippine and Sinhalese English newspapers.

The findings of the study revealed that the newspaper commentaries in the two data sets tended to utilize a specific micro-genre of media explanatory exposition over other micro-genres. Furthermore, the writers in both cultures tended to show variation, dynamism, and individuality in their rhetorical and textual strategies.

It is important to note some limitations of this study. First, the study was carried out using two sets of data consisting of only 15 newspaper commentaries on a specific topic in selected English newspapers in the Philippines and in Sri Lanka. Hence, the findings of the study may limit their external validity to other contexts, populations, and settings. Second, the point of inquiry was only about the micro-genre and rhetorical patterns of newspaper commentaries; thus, it may have limited its scope of description to other genres of newspapers such as headlines, editorials, news leads, and news articles. Future studies may look into the textual analysis of other newspaper commentaries on other issues in other cultures and contexts to reveal the discourse conventions of this newspaper genre.

Finally, it is hoped that the findings in this

study on newspaper commentaries inform language practitioners in utilizing media discourse as a pedagogical tool in equipping students with media literacy and linguistic conventions.

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