

MULTIMODAL CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF NEWS EDITORIALS ON VP SARA DUTERTE'S RESIGNATION

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the linguistic and visual strategies of the two news editorials—*Daily Tribune* and *The Freeman*—to determine the meaning and consequences of Duterte's resignation in DepEd and on her political credibility. Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis was utilized to examine the textual and visual dimensions of the selected editorials. Leeuwen's Social Actors Approach was used to analyze the linguistic representation of social actors, while Barthes' Semiotic Theory guided the interpretation of the visual meanings of editorial cartoons. The *Daily Tribune* used beneficialization to frame Duterte's resignation as advantageous to DepEd. In contrast, *The Freeman* emphasized activation and subjection, portraying Duterte as accountable for the consequences of her resignation. Both editorials acknowledged the pros and cons of resignation, while the visual analysis viewed hers as beneficial to DepEd but damaging to her credibility. The study reveals how editorials and cartoons shape public perceptions of accountability and leadership by framing political decisions, institutional consequences, public service, and officials' credibility.

Keywords: *DepEd, media representation, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, news editorial, Sara Duterte's resignation*

Background of Study

Sara Zimmerman Duterte, the daughter of former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, became the 15th vice president of the country after winning a landslide vote in the 2022 national election, making her and her tandem, President Marcos Jr., the highest vote-getters in Philippine election history. Both Vice President Sara and President Marcos garnered more than 30 million votes, which were seen by many as the will of the majority that set the mood of the public; that is, President Marcos and VP Sara, under the banner of Uni Team, will lead the country towards a better Philippines.

As a show of trust and confidence, President Marcos Jr. appointed her as secretary of the Department of Education, though it was not the cabinet position that was VP Sara's personal preference (Al Jazeera, 2022). Her inauguration on June 19, 2022, was marked by high expectations that the agency could "proactively address the challenges in basic education" (Department of Education, 2022). However, roughly two years later, she tendered her resignation as the secretary of DepEd, which President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. did not hesitate to accept. She was, however, acknowledged for her MATATAG Agenda for the department, which spearheaded many programs for the students and teachers (Esguerra, 2024 June 19).

Her resignation has drawn varied opinions from journalists and political observers. It can be remembered that before this resignation, then-President Duterte, her father, accused President

Marcos Jr. of being a drug user and even advocated the separation of Mindanao from the mainland Philippines. The idea of 'resignation' indicates her breakaway from the President's UniTeam (Aspinwall, 2024 February 15). UP professor Jean Encinas-Franco asserted that Sara's resignation "would give her more power to go against Marcos" (Flores & Lema, 2024 June 20, p. 4). For Panelo (ex-PRRD executive secretary), that resignation is a strategy for Sara to establish her identity as a political figure; as quoted, "President Bongbong Marcos' ratings in the survey were taking a dive, and her continued association as VP to the P was likewise dragging her along" (Gonzales, 2024 June 23, p. 2). Because VP Sara Duterte was silent about the reason for her resignation, people are tirelessly drawing opinions about her resignation.

The resignation of VP Sara Duterte as DepEd Secretary has created speculations that the intention is both political and personal, considering the issues and events that took place before her resignation. Sara Duterte has a promising career with her outstanding records in public service as vice mayor and mayor of Davao City. Propelled by her father's popularity, former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, she was a people's choice in the recent vice-presidential election, having won a landslide vote, and is a presidential candidate in the next presidential election. However, her lack of a strong stance on what has caused her resignation generated varied reactions from people, causing her trust rating to gradually erode. Speculations surrounding her resignation and critiques made by news editorials represent how news media perceive her as a political figure and further put her popularity in a bad light. This view can powerfully alter how people perceive her actions and the future of her political career.

A news editorial is an important section in a newspaper because it presents the stand or opinion of the newspaper as an organization on an issue. Its purpose is not only to express the institutional stance of a publication but also to interpret issues, shape public opinion, encourage public debate, and potentially influence readers' attitudes and actions (Ragrario, 2022; Villanueva, 2014). The strength of news editorials over other columns in newspapers is their collective stand on an issue. It is considered the soul of a newspaper because the opinion presented is not owned by one person but by an entity. As a field of media and communication, news editorials can be an instrument of misrepresentation. Especially during election campaigns, editorials are in a pervasive state for supporting political candidates and parties that bring about biased opinions toward other candidates (Firmstone, 2019 March 26). Because news editorials can form public opinion while tackling the most trending issue that matters to the majority in an argumentative and persuasive way, people can easily perceive that information as facts and form personal opinions. Hence, the editorial write-up of newspapers on Sara Duterte's resignation is considered more reliable and intelligent than the rest of the newspapers.

Review of Related Literature

Political Party System in the Philippines.

Sara's resignation indicates her withdrawal from Marcos's political coalition, the UniTeam, as many have observed. According to Tigno (2023), political parties in the Philippines are characterized by "the lack of intraparty solidarity" and "persistent party switching" (p. 2). Dore et al. (2014) described this existing system as an "incomplete democracy" (p. 3). Also, Philippine political parties are weak because they depend on personalities rather than issues and political platforms (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2013). For Teehankee (2020), the political party system in the

Philippines is characterized by “factional dynamics,” also known as “intra-party factionalism,” which is manifested through frequent party splits. Despite being the first in Asia to become a republic and transitioning to democracy from an authoritarian structure during the 19th century, its democratic process has not been sufficient to this day (Tigno, 2023). This political scenario in the country is seen as more detrimental than beneficial to the country’s development. Sara’s alliance with Bongbong’s UniTeam is a new coalition formed because the two of them belonged to different political systems— Marcos Jr. is from Partido Federal ng Pilipinas, while Duterte is from Hugpong ng Pagbabago, a regional political party. UniTeam served as a unifying coalition that helped propel both candidates to their respective positions (Rosario, 2021). Formed without an explicit policy framework or binding governance agenda, the UniTeam coalition ultimately dissolved due to fractured power-sharing arrangements and conflicting dynastic interests (Dela Pena, 2024). This collapse reflects a broader pattern in Philippine politics, where weak party structures and dominant political families consistently prioritize personality-driven alliances over durable institutional agreements.

Philippine history is rich in its description of the country’s politics and political parties. Elections and political parties are inseparable—they go together to work toward “democratic consolidation,” a framework central to Randall and Svasand’s (2002) seminal paper. They argued that through structural and procedural consolidation—achieved via peaceful, regular electoral processes, well-organized party systems, and mechanisms for checks and balances—a fragile democracy becomes fully established and stable.

In the Philippines, after the so-called restoration of the country’s democracy in 1986, political parties began to form and gained recognition during national elections. It became common to see political personalities transfer their membership to other political parties for the sake of political alliances. Lallana (1989) argues that weak democracies often feature political parties and elections without achieving genuine democratic practice or substantive progress. Consequently, democracy must be judged not simply by formal electoral procedures but by its capacity to serve the public interest.

Media representation.

Media representation refers to the portrayal of people, groups, and communities in media forms such as television, film, and books (Indiana University Libraries, n.d.). Furthermore, Stuart Hall treats representation as a dynamic process involving three interrelated facets: construction, production, and reception. At each stage, different actors operate within distinct power relations, creating multiple possibilities for meaning to shift, be negotiated, or become contested. Hall’s framework contends that all media content we encounter is a filtered, constructed version of reality (Journalism University, 2026). Media representation is shaped by the discourses in media, and those discourses are influenced by a “specific discursive context” (Develotte et al., 2022, p. 23), which is external. The discourse in a news editorial presented in texts and images does not stand alone; reality is constructed with that discourse through the help of external factors such as “time, a place, a situation of communication, etc.” (Develotte et al., 2022, p. 23), which takes place in a “discursive exposure space” such as media. That means the timeliness and the previous events may aid in understanding or realization of an issue presented in a news editorial. Given critical discourse analysis, we can say that news editorials exercise their power to influence readers’ perceptions and views on an issue. According to Statham (2022), power is “directly connected to access to social sources” (p. 3),

in which case, editorials are sources of knowledge, and they possess influence through the language they use.

Hall (1997) explains that representation is the production of meaning through language. Individuals interpret texts using conceptual maps that organize their understanding of the world, while language translates these concepts into words, images, and other signs. Together, conceptual maps and language construct and communicate meaning. Hall argues that signs, symbols, and cultural artifacts are representations of the ideas or feelings humans seek to convey. Thus, language is central to the production of meaning—it is not simply a tool for expressing pre-existing thoughts but a representational system through which meaning is actively constructed. Consequently, this theoretical framework can be applied to analyze how meaning is produced through signs and how these representations function within a broader discourse. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as an interdisciplinary approach provides the means to study or investigate what meanings are constructed through discourse, how these meanings are shaped by ideological assumptions, and how they reflect, reproduce, or challenge existing power relations within a society (Khotimah et al., 2025). In the case of news editorials, which convey a newspaper organization's position on public issues, language serves as a means through which the organization exercises its institutional authority to shape public opinion. In many instances, they are subject to analysis using critical discourse analysis approaches.

Newspaper Editorials

Editorials are designed to shape public opinion and encourage readers to think critically about current issues (Azura Magazine, 2023). Using reasoned arguments and persuasive language, news editorials aim not only to inform their audience regarding socially significant topics but also to move audiences toward beliefs or action. In the digital era, editorials have expanded beyond print newspapers to online news sites and social media platforms, where they are more accessible, and readers are free to comment, share, and debate the issues raised (Azura Magazine, 2023).

By description, Le (2010) noted that editorials are “fascinating objects of study” because of the profundity of ideas written line by line in paragraphs enough to “leave[s] readers with the newspaper’s own position” (p. 1). Editorials are good study subjects because they deal with two fields of discipline – “discourse analysis and political communication” (Le, 2010, p. 1). As a discourse, editorials have many linguistic features that researchers find interesting. Contrary to hard news, editorials do not simply present facts or stories; rather, they are written with consideration for persuasion and argumentation. This means they follow certain writing conventions (Ngai, 2022). With this, editorials can be the object of analysis, such as writing conventions, move analysis, contrastive analysis, genre analysis, and others. Le (2010) even suggested several approaches to study editorials as a genre; they are (1) structure + style + content + purpose; (2) genre; (3) context; (4) repurposing the genre; and (5) reviewing genre status. These steps, according to Le, are “compatible to Critical Discourse Analysis approach” (p. 16).

Political communication is known to affect public opinion, which is why studies related to political communication reside in the process involved in influencing public opinion through media. What makes media/digital media powerful in influencing the public is that they take an active role in interpreting and evaluating social issues. Ragragio (2020, September 26) stated in the abstract of his study, “Editorials are a political force used by news media to fulfill its watchdog function in fragile

democracies like the Philippines." Editorials, as political discourse, can set the agenda for public discussion.

Research Problem

The selected texts and visuals to be studied are the editorials by 'The Freeman' on June 21, 2024, and the 'Daily Tribune' published on June 25, 2024. These two editorial articles were selected because (1) they both tackled VP Sara's resignation as the Secretary of the Department of Education and (2) they are the only editorials with texts and images that tackle the subject of the study. This study aims to analyze how the editorial texts and images portray the resignation of VP Sara Duterte. In this study, multimodal critical discourse analysis was used, where a traditional CDA approach was used to analyze the linguistic and visual aspects of the editorials. Particularly, the Social Actors Approach by Theo van Leeuwen was used for linguistic analysis and Barthes' Semiotic Theory for the visual part.

Research Questions

a. Main Research Question (MRQ)

MRQ: How do media news editorials represent Sara Duterte's resignation as DepEd secretary?

b. Contributory Research Questions (CRQs)

CRQ 1: How do media news editorials portray the implications of VP Sara's resignation as DepEd Secretary?

CRQ 2: How do editorial cartoons portray the implications of VP Sara's resignation as DepEd Secretary?

c. Operational Research Questions (ORQs)

QR1: What grammatical system in the texts represents the implications of VP Sara's resignation as DepEd Secretary?

ORQ 2: What denotative, connotative, and mythic meanings are constructed in the editorial cartoons regarding the implications of Vice President Sara Duterte's resignation as DepEd Secretary?

Methodology

Critical discourse analysis is derived from the critical linguistic theory that later encompasses various fields ranging from linguistic study to anthropology. Many of the approaches of CDA were derived from CL; however, many would prefer using CDA because it is problem-oriented "studying social phenomena" (Wodak & Meyer, p. 2) by analyzing texts and discourses that contain subjects on "social power, dominance, and inequality" (Mayor & Bietti, 2017, para 2).

Media representation has a pivotal role in shaping people's concepts about a personality, a company, a government, an idea, or a culture. Media content producers use this power to influence opinions that impact people's perception of a subject. Mannarini et al. (2020) stated, "Representation involves the production of meanings that have formative, tangible effects, and therefore it is itself a form of social action" (p. 10). However, in many cases, media representation carries negative

associations. As Hamelink (2011) observed, the media often functions as “an active tool of misinformation about others” (p. 126). Building on this idea, Newman and Fletcher (2023) note that whether subjects are under-represented or misrepresented, the lasting effect is a fundamental distortion of how people perceive reality.

The Social Actors Approach was developed by Van Leeuwen and is recommended for media representation analysis, as it centers on social actors such as people, groups, or organizations being portrayed in the discourse. The model's strength is the focus on how the participants are portrayed using Leeuwen's framework of role allocations. The source of the representation is a text about the social actors being portrayed, made or assigned by the text writer or producer, given their perception of them (Bustam, 2023). The portrayal of the characters in the texts and images is ideological in presentation, making this approach a CDA.

Van Leeuwen's Social Actors approach provides an analytical framework for representing actors visually and verbally in texts. Within this approach, role allocation is defined as the “roles that social actors are given to play in representation” (Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 43). The role allocations identified in clauses contain the actions of the study. The features of the Social Actors Approach include inclusion and exclusion, activation and passivation, generalization and specification, categorization and nomination, and individualization and assimilation. *Inclusion and exclusion* refer to how actors are made visible in the text or even legitimize their existence. *Activation and passivation*, on the other hand, refer to the roles of participants or agents in the text, whether they are the ones acting or the ones receiving the action. *Objectification* is one aspect of *passivation*. *Generalization and specification* are linguistic strategies used in the text to represent the actors. Actors can be represented as a group, abstract, or generic term, eliminating any detail about them. Specification, on the other hand, portrays the actors' characteristics or attributes relatable to human experiences. *Categorization* (functionalization and identification) and *nomination* are important in the portrayal of actors in the text because their roles represent the nature and influence of their social relations. The labeling involved in nomination signifies the writer's perception or connotation about the actors. Individualization and assimilation (collectivization and aggregation) are roles used to determine the identity of actors as perceived by the writers. Actors can be distinct individuals with known attributes, or they can be a part or member of a group (Van Leeuwen, 2008).

Semiotics or semiology is “the study of the social production of meaning from sign systems; the analysis of anything that can stand for something else” (Griffin, 2012, p. 332). For Barthes, signs contain both denotative and connotative meanings, and the method to analyze signs is by the sign's structure composed of the signifier and signified. The sign, therefore, is the combination of the signified and signifier and not a separate part of the structure. The signifier stands for words, images, or sounds, while the signified refers to the meaning the word, image, or sound carries. Barthes' semiotic analysis approach comes in two layers—denotation and connotation. Understanding the meaning of a sign begins with its literal meaning (denotation), followed by secondary meaning with cultural or emotional values known as connotation. Barthes also mentioned the concept of myth in semiotic analysis. It is called a myth because signs have meanings embedded in a culture that appear natural. The yellow ribbon from the example of Barthes became a symbol of forgiveness. Its interpretation is a simple piece of cloth tied to something (denotation); then, during the war in the United States, it symbolized support for soldiers. The symbol became a myth when the meaning went deeper and wider in scope and transcended cultural value.

Results and Discussion

Textual Analysis of Editorials Using Social Actors Approach by Van Leeuwen

Exclusion

Some clauses were excluded from the study—one out of twenty-six clauses from ‘The Tribune’, and two out of twenty clauses from ‘The Freeman’. They were excluded because the actors were not visible in the clauses.

Table 1. *Role Allocation in Categories*

ROLE ALLOCATION	Daily Tribune	The Freeman
Activation	3 (12%)	8 (47.06%)
Passivation		
Subjection	3 (12%)	8 (47.06%)
Beneficialization	19 (76%)	1 (5.88%)
Genericization	4 (16%)	1 (5.88%)
Specification		
Individualization	19 (76%)	12 (70.59%)
Assimilation		
Collectivization	2 (8%)	4 (23.53%)
Aggregation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Functionalization	23 (92%)	14 (82.35%)
Identification		
Relational Identification	2 (8%)	3 (17.56%)
Physical Identification	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Activation and Passivation (Subjection and Beneficialization)

The study deals with the role allocation based on Van Leeuwen’s framework of the social actors presented in the editorials of two (2) newspapers—Daily Tribune and The Freeman. Based on Table 1, *beneficialization* is higher in ‘Daily Tribune’ than in ‘The Freeman’ with only one count. On the other hand, *activation and subjection* got equally high points in ‘Daily Tribune’, but not in ‘The Freeman’. Thus, in Daily Tribune, the writers focused on passivation, particularly beneficialization. The actors are passivated and beneficialized. The reason for this is the shift of focus in the discussion in the editorial from Sara Duterte to other social actors (in the education sector) - the impact of VP Sara Duterte in the Department of Education and in the education sector in general. Comparing the number of outcomes, the resignation of VP Sara Duterte as DepEd Secretary, according to the text, contains nine (9) positive outcomes and five (5) negative outcomes.

Example 1: Her resignation could also lead to a more transparent and accountable education system (negative outcome).

Example 2: By stepping down from her political roles, Sara Duterte could potentially focus on advocacy work, philanthropic initiatives, or other endeavors that support and enhance the education system (positive outcome).

'The Freeman' on the other hand, used activation and subjection strategies in presenting the social actors. The writers used activation to present the direct connection of the social actors to the social actions. It is like making the social actor responsible for the actions or events that took place. Subjection, on the other hand, is used to present that some actions are beyond the control of social actors.

Example 3: Remember when she forbade interaction between the teachers and students outside the classroom, claiming this would lead to favoritism? (activation)

Example 4: We can't really blame her for this, though; she didn't choose the Education portfolio; it was chosen for her by the president (subjection).

Example 5: We hope the president sees his mistake that the Education portfolio should have been handed to someone who is involved in the educational system, is a qualified educator, and who knows what needs to be done with the educational system (beneficialization)

Genericization, Individualization, and Collectivization

Based on Table 1, both the 'Daily Tribune' and 'The Freeman' emphasized the individuality of the social actor with a focus on their attributes, identity, and achievements. Primarily, editorials point to specific subjects of critique, so greater value is placed on individuality. Since the editorials are particular to the resignation of VP Sara as DepEd Secretary, her decision is attributed only to her, including her responsibilities in making that decision. 'Daily Tribune' has one genericization that focuses on the act of resignation and not on Sara as an abstract representation of a possible outcome (see example 6). In 'The Freeman,' genericization focuses on the educational system (see example 7).

Example 6: This could also bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and a renewed commitment to improving the quality of education in the Philippines.

Example 7: For those paying attention, our educational system isn't exactly improving.

Individualization in 'Daily Tribune' takes two sides: one is showing VP Sara's vulnerability to the existing conflict between her father (former Philippine President) and President Bongbong Marcos Jr. (see example 8). The second side is seen as justification for her resignation regardless of its impact, attributing it all to her resignation (see example 9).

Example 8: Despite the fireworks, Sara has tried to remain neutral, even as her father's attacks on the President have continued.

Example 9: Her resignation could also lead to a more transparent and accountable education system.

On the other hand, 'The Freeman' presents individualization through argumentation of the writer's opinion toward the social actor. In the examples below, the writers used active voice in each sentence, except in example 12, which used a subject complement, or the predicate complements the

subject. The presence of the word 'she' indicates individualization, singling out the identity of one person, VP Sara Duterte.

Example 10: It's about time she quit as Education secretary.

Example 11: She wanted the Defense portfolio; it was chosen for her by the president.

example 12: She wasn't ideal for the Education portfolio, as reflected by her many controversial pronouncements as DepEd secretary.

Functionalization and Relational Identification

Functionalization is under categorization, while relational identification is a subcategory of identification. Functionalization and identification are the key types of categorization. Categorization refers to social actors who have definite functional roles. In functionalization, the author is identified by the function or activity he or she performs; identification, on the other hand, refers not to the function or what a person does but to who they are. It can be relational or physical. Relational identification is when the function is mentioned to classify a person and, most of the time, shows possessiveness. Physical identification refers to physical attributes that identify the social actors.

Comparing functionalization and identification, both editorials have more clauses presenting functions or functionalization and fewer on identification. That implies that VP Sara and her act of resignation are attributed based on her functions, which are significant in her portrayal to show the intensity of the action—resignation.

Let us see the examples of clauses in the 'Daily Tribune' editorials, where functionalization is described by the prestige of her function as DepEd secretary and that her absence will bring negative and positive consequences.

Example 13: Sara's decision to step down has sparked a significant debate regarding its impact on the Department of Education (DepEd) and raised questions about its potential consequences on the education sector.

Example 13 did not mention her position but the impact of the resignation, which is a manifestation of the integrity of her function in the office. The writer used the verb 'has sparked a significant debate' to signify the weight of the consequences of the resignation.

Example 14: Moreover, Sara Duterte's resignation may help reduce political interference in the affairs of the DepEd, allowing the agency to operate more independently and effectively.

This clause shows the direct connection of VP Sara to the office, making it functionalized. Now that she has left, that function does not serve her anymore, and she can no longer hold power or have control over it. In another editorial, functionalization is described differently. It is classified as functionalization since the writer focused on VP Sara's function, which best identifies her and classifies her as the head of a national office.

Example 15: She wasn't ideal for the Education portfolio, as reflected by her many controversial pronouncements as DepEd secretary.

Example 16: More importantly, these showed how she never really became familiar with the role of educators and her own role as Education secretary, no matter how hard she tried.

The clauses are consistent with their portrayal of VP Sara, unlike the other editorial where there is balance in the presentation. It is more subtle with the use of passive voice in the clauses.

Semiotic Analysis of Editorial Cartoons Using Barthes Semiotic Analysis

The Freeman's 'It is about Time'

Denotation

The first editorial cartoon is from 'The Freeman' titled 'It is about Time'. The picture is quite small, and it is placed at the center of the frame. There are two characters in the picture—the educator and DepEd. The educator is in a cart, either being pulled or pushed by DepEd. VP Sara is not the one riding in the cart, as the text reads 'next secretary,' and the next secretary, as may be suggested, must be an educator, as the text shows. The cart is transported to the other side of the cliff on a piece of wood, and the person doing it is named DepEd.

Connotation

The image is symbolic of the transition DepEd is going through with the resignation of the department's secretary. This shows the initial action of the department in order to continue what was left hanging after the abrupt resignation of the head of the department. During the transition, the department must continue to provide services and guidance to the whole department, including the thousands of teachers and millions of students. The broken bridge allocates for the vacuum caused either by the leadership of the former head or by her abrupt resignation. The piece of wood that serves as the temporary bridge indicates hope on the other side of the cliff.



Figure 1: *It is about Time.*

Note. From "EDITORIAL — It's about time," by The Freeman, 2024, Philstar

Daily Tribune's 'Sara's DepEd Exit: Boon or Bane?'

Denotation

The second editorial cartoon is from the Daily Tribune's issue on June 25, 2024, titled 'Sara's DepEd Exit: Boon or Bane?' The illustration is very simple. The logo of DepEd serves as a structure with an exit. It shows the vice president, represented by a green shirt with the name 'Sara' on it (her identity), intentionally opening the door herself, carrying all her belongings.

Connotation

The picture does not suggest any implication for VP Sara's resignation, unlike the first editorial cartoon where the outcome is predicted. The second editorial cartoon, however, describes the manner of the vice president's resignation. Based on the action (the act of leaving), the resignation is sudden and quick, and it shows that the vice president did not show concern for any backlog it could create in the department after leaving the office. The baggage symbolizes no intention of returning to the office, leaving behind the responsibility she once held. We can see, based on the size of the character, that the office/department is too huge for her to manage with all its complexities. This hugeness symbolizes pressure of all kinds beyond her capacity to handle.

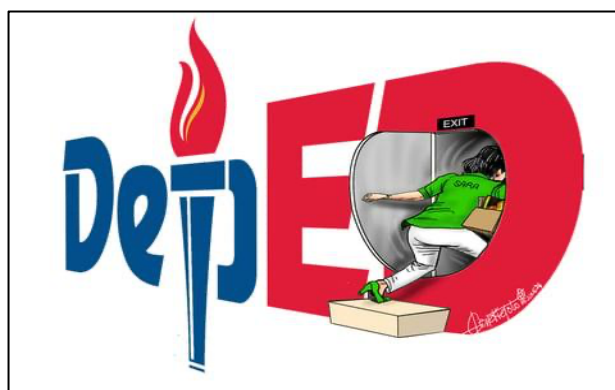


Figure 2. Sara's DepEd exit: boon or bane?

Note. From "Sara's DepEd exit boon or bane?" 2024, *Daily Tribune*

Myth/Ideological Framing

The gesture of the vice president's resignation as DepEd secretary drew a lot of speculation, especially that they have no clue at all what has happened. The two editorials presented different viewpoints that constitute the "myth" or "ideological framings" that represent the institutions' own position and the people's position on the issue.

Looking at the elements in the editorial cartoon of 'Freeman', it appears that DepEd is urgently trying to fill the position vacated by the vice president. Despite the disruption caused by her resignation, the department still must continue carrying out its responsibilities. This sense of urgency may suggest that the vice president did not fully consider how her decision would affect DepEd. Regardless of the political reasons behind her resignation, the cartoon presents the department—not Sara Duterte—as the primary victim. Thus, the focus, as shown in the editorial cartoon, is on maintaining continuity despite the disruption due to her resignation. Sara here is framed as a powerful official who created vacuums in the department after her abrupt resignation.

In line with the Daily Tribune editorial, Sara Duterte's abrupt resignation may be framed as political in nature. It suggests that she may have had disagreements or conflicts with the president, although the specific reasons were not immediately made clear. From this perspective, her resignation as DepEd secretary may signify her withdrawal from the President's direct control as head of the executive branch. It may also symbolize the collapse of the Marcos-Duterte alliance.

A second myth constructed in the same editorial concerns Sara Duterte's effectiveness as DepEd secretary. Her resignation may initially give the impression that she was unable to manage the department effectively. However, the title "Boon or Bane" presents her departure from two opposing perspectives. On one hand, her resignation may be viewed as a boon because it allows DepEd to appoint new leadership, introduce fresh perspectives, and operate with less political interference. On the other hand, it may be considered a 'bane' because her departure could disrupt ongoing programs, create a leadership gap, and affect the continuity of the department's operations. In this way, the editorial presents her resignation as an event that may bring both opportunities and challenges to DepEd.

Conclusions

Using the social action approach, the implication of VP Sara's resignation as DepEd secretary is described in light of role allocations expressed in the linguistic analysis of the editorial texts using Van Leuween's Social Actors Theory. The 'Daily Tribune' focused on the negative and positive outcomes (or beneficialization) of her resignation. Portrayal of the implication of Sara's resignation is mostly positive outcomes for the good of the department, and there is no attack on VP Sara's personality as a social actor. The Freeman used mostly activation and passivation, which portray Sara as responsible for any untoward happening in the department, which appears that her resignation is for the good of the department. Both editorial write-ups have the same concern and perspective regarding the resignation, but the approach is likely different. The individualization strategy portrays Sara's action differently from the two editorial writers. The *Daily Tribune* frames Vice President Sara Duterte's resignation as justifiable, attributing it to her political rift with the president and her perceived inefficiency as Cabinet Secretary. Conversely, *The Freeman* employs an individualization approach, framing her departure as a direct assault on her credibility. Regarding functionalization, both editorial write-ups address the key issues surrounding her resignation from her role as Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary. Overall, both publications depict the implications of her resignation as predominantly positive for the vacant office. However, the accompanying editorial cartoons represent her abrupt resignation as an act of irresponsibility, portraying her as lacking both passion and accountability.

The two (2) news editorials portray the implications of Sara's resignation in different ways. In terms of language use or choice of words, 'Daily Tribune' is more subtle in approach by using beneficialization instead of activation or subjection, so the focus is on the results of the action. The other editorial uses derogatory statements against the vice president. In terms of visual analysis, the action and the interaction of characters or social actors with other symbolic figures in the caricature describe Sara's resignation as a show of irresponsibility, something abrupt, quick, and unexpected, leaving the office in trouble.

In general, Sara's resignation as DepEd secretary is portrayed as good for the department and bad for her credibility. This was shown through analyzing the linguistic and visual aspects of the editorials. The role allocations were identified using the language structure of the text, with consideration of grammatical and syntactic elements of the language. The visual aspects gave rise to the idea of the implication of Sara's resignation using the visual elements present in the caricature.

The surprising aspect of my finding is that language use can affect how people perceive the issues. Two different authors with the same understanding of the issue may present the issue differently, and that is achieved with language use or construction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this multimodal critical discourse analysis, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance critical media literacy, inform ethical editorial practices, and guide future discourse studies:

Because news editorials wield diverse perspectives designed to influence public opinion, readers without personal safeguarding strategies risk absorbing subjective interpretations as objective reality. Equipping audiences to critically evaluate not only verbal claims but also how visual framing reinforces or contradicts them is essential. Consequently, educational institutions should organize workshops and develop teaching modules to foster media literacy among teachers and students. Simultaneously, journalists, editorial cartoonists, and media organizations must weigh the ethical implications of editorials that risk misrepresenting subjects, omitting critical contexts, or exacerbating political polarization. Newsrooms should revisit and strengthen internal guidelines addressing editorial framing and sensationalism. Finally, future researchers can extend multimodal critical discourse studies by applying Theo Van Leeuwen's Social Actors Theory. This approach can also be adapted to analyze interactive digital content—such as TikTok videos and digital editorials—and to conduct cross-cultural comparisons between domestic and international media.

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