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Leveraging Secondary School Heads' State of the School Address (SOSA): A Content Analysis

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Abstract

Government schools in the Philippines are headed by school administrators who are generally called School Heads. These school heads carry out the State of the School Address every year to showcase the accomplishment of the school and its future directions. This study analyzed the content and form of the secondary school heads' written speeches. Stratified random sampling was used to determine the sample size. A qualitative content analysis was conducted to find out the aspect of the SOSA that was given more prominence, the percentage allotted to key messages related to the School-Based Management, the local and global errors made, and the intertextual figures employed in the written speeches. Results showed that school heads gave more prominence to resource management in their SOSA and only 13.46% of the entire SOSA was allotted to key messages related to SBM. They made local errors in morphology, syntax, and lexicon and global errors in idea and organization of information. School heads employed quotation and plagiarism as intertextual figures in their written speeches. The study concluded with the findings that the State of the School Address did not have a clear framework on which to anchor the content of the SOSA. The State of the School Address did not have proper speech guidelines for school heads to follow. School heads needed to enhance their writing proficiency, thus, the adoption of the ideal framework of the SOSA and the implementation of the special writing training program for secondary school heads produced in this study are recommended.

Keywords: State of the School Address; school heads; content analysis; Philippines.

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1. Introduction

Government schools in the Philippines are headed by school administrators who are generally called school heads. Republic Act 9155, known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, provides the legal basis of the governance of basic education. The cited law outlines the powers, duties, and functions of a school head. The law considers school heads as instructional leader and administrative manager [1]. Communication skill, particularly writing skill, proved to be very useful to school heads in carrying out their daily tasks. In a day, school heads take notes during class observations, write reports and memoranda, and address various audiences in different community and school assemblies. In some cases, school heads deliver speeches that contain local and global errors which often become the subject of gossips and endless tell-tales. Although these school heads are not perfect, this does not excuse them from paying careful attention to how they write. Internal and external stakeholders look up to the school heads not only as an administrative manager but also as an instructional leader. Therefore, they must also strive to improve their writing skill. One of the major assemblies conducted by school heads is the State of the School Address where they present to the stakeholders the accomplishments of the school and its future directions. Since the SOSA is a highlight for school heads every year, the researcher conducted a qualitative content analysis of the written speeches to find out the aspect of the SOSA that was given more prominence, the percentage allotted to key messages related to the School-Based Management, the local and global errors made, and the intertextual figures employed in the written speeches. The study would be beneficial most especially to school heads since findings of the study would serve as basis for them to improve their State of the School Address and to enhance their writing skill. Findings of the study led the researcher to develop an ideal framework of the State of the School Address and a special writing training program for secondary school heads to enhance their writing skill. Pursuant to DepEd Order No. 83, s. 2012 on the Implementing Guidelines on the Revised School-Based Management (SBM) Framework, Assessment, Process and Tool, the Department of the Education pushes the conduct of the State of the School Address (SOSA) in all elementary and secondary schools in the country. This practice started in year 2012 when the abovementioned DepEd Order was put in place. It was directed that the school principal of the public elementary and high school must deliver the SOSA during commencement exercises. The SOSA served as an avenue for the school heads to inform the school's stakeholders on how financial resources received by the school, including the allotted maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), were spent. It also served as an opportunity to foster transparency and accountability and to let the school-based community know how things were going for the school, including plans and improvements. The State of the School Address was conducted twice in SY 2017-2018. It was conducted on September 2017 and April 2018. The written speeches that were analyzed in this study were those that were delivered on September 2017 since it was at this time when the former Schools Division Superintendent ordered all school heads, through a Division Order, to submit to the Division Office a signed copy of their SOSA. How these speeches were delivered during the conduct of the State of the School Address was not part of the scope of the study. Only speeches written in the English language were studied and analyzed.

2. Materials and Methods

This study used stratified random sampling to determine the sample size. There were nine (9) written speeches

analyzed in this study. These nine speeches represented the nine school districts of the Division of Cagayan de Oro City. In order to secure copies of the SOSA, the researcher wrote a letter to the Schools Division Superintendent copy furnished to the Assistant Schools Division Superintendent, School Governance and Operations Division Chief, Education Program Supervisor, and to the respective Public Schools District Supervisors. The study employed qualitative content analysis to analyze the data. In qualitative content analysis, content are both manifest (that is, actual words in the artifact) and latent (symbolic content within the physical content). In this study, only manifest content was analyzed. There are two general types of content analysis: conceptual analysis and relational analysis. The study used conceptual analysis. Conceptual analysis establishes the existence and frequency of concepts most often represented by words or phrases in a text. The researcher utilized two strategies to validate the data: peer debriefing and reflexivity. Peer debriefing provides an external check of the research process” [2] and involves systematically talking through the research experiences, findings, and decisions with non-involved professional peers for a variety of purposes--catharsis, challenge, design of next steps, or legitimation, for example [3]. There were two non-involved peers who took part in the city. They provided guidance and assistance to the researcher in every step of the research process. They provided insights on the implications of the results. They were also very instrumental in the development of the ideal framework of the State of the School Address and the special writing training program which are products of this study. The researcher also utilized reflexivity which is a continuous process of reflection by researchers on their values [3] and of recognizing, examining, and understanding how their “social background, location and assumptions affect their research practice” [4]. The researcher articulated her views about the importance of writing proficiency to school heads to aid in bracketing her experiences and perspectives during the study.

3. Results

1. What aspect of the secondary school heads’ State of the School Address was given more prominence-- key performance indicators, resource management, financial transparency, or school programs and projects?

Table 1: Total word count for each aspect of the SOSA

Aspects of the SOSA	<i>n</i>	%
Key Performance Indicators	135	18.49
Resource Management	406	55.62
Financial Transparency	60	8.22
School Programs and Projects	129	17.67
TOTAL	730	100.00

The table reveals that the secondary school heads gave more prominence to resource management in their State of the School Address. This could imply that school heads were much concerned with managing human and non-human resources entrusted to them as well as ensuring that the allocated fund of the school were spent

accordingly in accordance to government procurement system. However, it is very important to note that these four aspects of the State of the School Address are anchored on the four (4) principles of the School-Based Management namely, Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Learning, Accountability and Continuous Improvement, and Management of Resources. These principles have assigned percentage weights on the basis of their relative importance to the aim of the school which is improved learning outcomes and school operations. The following is the assigned percentage:

Principle 1 Leadership and Governance/Key Performance Indicator	-30%
Principle 2 Curriculum and Learning/School Programs and Projects	-30%
Principle 3 Accountability and Continuous Improvement/ Financial Transparency	-25%
Principle 4 Management of Resources/Resource Management	-15%

Given this breakdown of percentage, it is ,therefore, expected that secondary school heads give more prominence to Key Performance Indicators/Leadership and Governance and School Programs and Projects/Curriculum and Learning in their State of the School Address since these aspects are assigned heavier weight percentage in the School-Based Management.

2. How much percentage of the entire State of the School Address of the secondary school heads was allotted to key messages related to School-Based Management?

Table 2: Percentage of the entire SOSA allotted to key messages related to SBM

SOSA No.	Total no. of words	no. %	No. of words allotted to key messages	
				%
1	1116	10.91	111	8.06
2	735	7.19	89	6.46
3	1374	13.43	401	29.12
4	696	6.80	26	1.89
5	1569	15.34	123	8.93
6	1052	10.29	89	6.46
7	780	7.63	58	4.21
8	1414	13.82	126	9.15
9	1492	14.59	354	25.72
TOTAL	10,228	100.00	1377	100.00

The table shows that the SOSA of the secondary school heads vary in length as seen in the total number of words. Based from the table, SOSA 5 had the highest number of words with 15.34% of the total number of words, followed by SOSA 9 with 14.59% and SOSA 8 with 13.82%. On the other hand, SOSA 4 had the shortest written speech with 6.80% of the total number of words followed by SOSA 2 with 7.19% and SOSA 7 with 7.63%.

The data reveals that only **13.46%** of the entire State of the School Address was allotted to key messages related to the School-Based Management. During the conduct of the State of the School Address, school heads ensure attendance of barangay officials, GPTA Officers, School Governing Council, Religious Organization, and 100% attendance of parents. The conduct of the State of the School Address is a perfect venue for school heads to recognize stakeholders who have been very supportive in all the programs and projects implemented by the school. The SOSA is also a perfect venue for school heads to encourage external stakeholders to take part in their learner’s holistic development and to participate in all school programs and activities. Thus, it is very important for school heads to deliver key messages related to the School-Based Management during the conduct of the SOSA.

3. What are the language errors secondary school heads made in their State of the School Address?

3.1 Local errors

3.2 Global errors

Table 3: Local errors made by secondary school heads in their SOSA

Local Errors	<i>n</i>	%
Morphological Errors	44	12.83
Syntactic Errors	286	83.38
Lexical Errors	13	3.79
TOTAL	343	100.00

Table 3 shows that secondary school heads made local errors in morphology, syntax, and lexicon in their State of the School Address. Errors in morphology included errors in plural formation, errors in genitive case, errors in verbal inflection, errors in compounding, and errors arising from wrong use of prefixes. Syntactic errors consists of errors in capitalization, punctuation, number, verb tense consistency, subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference, auxiliary, run-on sentence, spelling, prepositions, and conjunctions. Lexical errors involved errors in wrong word choice. The table tells us that secondary school heads made the highest errors in syntax with 83.38% followed by morphological errors with 12.83% and lexical errors with 3.79%. The total of the local errors made was 343.

Table 4: Global errors made by secondary school heads in their SOSA

Global Errors	<i>n</i>	%
Over-all Content	0	0.00
Idea	7	44.74
Organization of information	11	55.26
TOTAL	18	100.00

Table 4 shows that the secondary school heads did not make any error in over-all content which means that all information presented in the SOSA were all relevant to the aspects suggested. The table shows secondary school heads made global errors in idea and organization of information. Errors in idea refer to ambiguous statements that cause confusion to readers. Errors in organization of information refers errors in ordering or arranging ideas and arguments.

4. What intertextual figures did secondary school heads employ in their State of the School Address?

Table 5: Intertextual figures employed by secondary school heads in their SOSA

SOSA No.	Intertextual Figures					
	Allusion	Quotation	Calque	Plagiarism	Translation	Pastiche
1		1				
2		1				
3		2		1		
4		1				
5		2		1		
6		1				
7		1				
8		1				
9		1		2		
TOTAL	0	11	0	4	0	0

Table 5 shows that secondary school heads employ quotation and plagiarism as intertextual figures in their State of the School Address. Quotation is really the most common intertextual figure used by school heads in their speeches. They also committed plagiarism for not citing the author in the quotation they quoted. Moreover, the non-involved peers mentioned during the peer debriefing sessions that school heads are not familiar with the other intertextual figures and are not very concern about using literary devices in writing.

5. What intervention can be designed to leverage the content and form of the secondary school heads' State of the School Address?

This study produced an ideal framework of the State of the School Address for secondary school heads that addressed the differences observed in the SOSA they have previously written. In the ideal framework developed, the content of the SOSA will be anchored on the four principles of the School-Based Management since it is the SBM that is the basis of its implementation. The ideal framework followed the weight assigned to each SBM principle and so the ideal framework shows the number of words allotted for each principle.

This study also produced a special writing training program for secondary school heads in which the overall objective is to provide secondary school heads learning opportunities to enhance their writing proficiency by learning the dynamics of the writing process. The training plan applied the five phases of the ADDIE model namely Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. It consists of ten (10) training contents which are identified based from the findings of the study.

4. Discussion

The secondary school heads gave more prominence to resource management in their State of the School Address. In the School-Based Management, the assigned weight percentage of resource management is 15%. School heads should emphasize key performance indicators and school programs and projects since both of these aspects are assigned 30% weight. The researcher observed from the written speeches that school heads did not have the same aspects to anchor the content of their SOSA. Others followed what was stipulated in the Division Order while others followed the four principles of the School-Based Management. The content of the State of the School Address should follow the four principles of SBM. Secondary school heads should also follow the assigned weight percentage of each principle in their SOSA.

Only 13.46% of the entire State of the School Address of the secondary school heads is allotted to key messages related to School-Based Management. The conduct of the State of the School Address is a perfect opportunity for school heads to remind stakeholders of their role in achieving the targeted outcome. The SOSA is a venue for school heads to recognize stakeholders who have been very supportive in all the programs and projects implemented by the school. It is also a perfect venue for school heads to encourage external stakeholders to take part in their learner's holistic development and to participate in all school programs and activities. Therefore, in their State of the School Address, school heads should emphasize key messages related to the four principles of the School-Based Management.

Secondary school heads made local and global errors in their State of the School Address. In terms of local errors, secondary school heads made errors in morphology, syntax, and lexicon. Morphological errors include errors in plural formation, errors in genitive case, errors in verbal inflection, errors in compounding, and errors arising from wrong use of prefixes. SOSAs of secondary school heads contain syntactic errors in capitalization, punctuation, number, verb tense consistency, subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference, auxiliary, run-on sentence, spelling, prepositions, and conjunctions. Lexical errors were errors in choice of words. Global errors

made were errors in ideas and organization of information. Secondary school heads employed quotation and plagiarism in their State of the School Address.

5. Conclusions and Implications

Considering the findings of this study as strong points for evaluating this research, the following conclusions and implications were drawn:

The State of the School Address did not have a clear framework on which to anchor the content of the SOSA. The State of the School Address did not have proper speech preparation guidelines for school heads to follow. School heads needed to enhance their writing skill.

6. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions and implications, In the light of these findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Adopt the ideal framework of the State of the School Address produced in this study. The aspects of the SOSA in the ideal framework are anchored on the four principles of the School-Based Management namely Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Learning, Accountability and Continuous Improvement, and Management of Resources. The ideal framework follows the assigned weight percentage of each SBM principle, thus, the SOSA that will be written by secondary school heads will have the same aspect to focus. The ideal framework also requires secondary school heads to present all information in the SOSA in sentence form.
2. Implement the special writing training program for secondary school heads. The training program will provide learning opportunities to enhance their writing skill by learning the dynamics of the writing process. The local and global errors made by secondary school heads in their SOSA and other literary devices aside from intertextual figures are part of the training content. Thus, in the training program, school heads are taught key concepts related to writing and use this knowledge gained from the training in writing a well-written State of the School Address.

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