



# Exploring Controversial Issues: Discursive Devices in Duterte's Speeches

Elvie Lyka L. Duran, Ph.D.

Department of General Teacher Training, North Eastern Mindanao State University, Philippines

Received: 04 Mar 2023; Received in revised form: 01 Apr 2023; Accepted: 12 Apr 2023; Available online: 18 Apr 2023  
©2023 The Author(s). Published by Infogain Publication. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

**Abstract**— *The qualitative study examined the discursive devices in President Duterte's speeches on controversial issues using Critical Discourse Analysis. This study looked at ten controversial speeches given by President Duterte between 2016 and 2019, including a hardline stance against drugs and criminality, an end to graft and corruption in the government, a despotic policy against drug pushers, making brash off-the-cuff remarks, extreme bravery, stepped-up attacks against the rebels, and intense love for his country. The study results revealed that President Duterte used different discursive devices such as dysphemism, directness, alliteration, anaphora, metaphor, epiphora, and expressive values to evoke affiliative responses from his audiences, offend groups of people, give rhythm to the speeches, and emphasize, influence, encourage, and persuade others. The findings may be utilized further to provide valuable insight to the people to become good listeners and properly discern a particular discourse's real and fundamental meaning.*

**Keywords**— *Controversial issues, Discursive devices, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

President Duterte is known as a populist leader who has faced numerous challenges and controversial issues that torpedoed other presidents. His misogynistic remarks, charges of sexual assault and human rights violations, and a ruthless crackdown on narcotics that has resulted in tens of thousands of Filipinos' deaths have all drawn heated opposition and criticism (Bernstein, 2020) [1].

He made global headlines due to his unpredictable policy shifts, direct, blunt, and offensive statements, and the extrajudicial killings, which often included people being shot dead on the streets by unidentified men. These issues provoked criticism and condemnation on a global scale (BBC, 2022) [2]. He is the type of president whose exercise of power and unprecedented cruelty go against democratic norms (Bonnet, 2018). [3]

Despite President's Duterte mounting criticism and offensive remarks deviating from the respectful

communication norms, he uncovers the crowd's frustration on the surface. He may not have the most specific policy, but he presents the sincerest expression of sympathy. Duterte's gutter and vulgar language signify his urgency to save the nation (Timberman, 2019). [4]

Politicians often use discursive devices in expressing their intentions and making a message stand out from the surrounding talk. These techniques are good for getting audiences to laugh and applaud. The audience's cheers and laughter are strong indicators of how well the devices worked to get their attention and acceptance. Through this, they make their words more impactful and persuasive to an audience (Hosman, Huebner & Siltanen, 2002). [5]

As revealed by Blanco (2021) [6] in her study, President Duterte used promises, chiasmus, positive self-representation, lexical repetition, deductive and inductive reasoning, and implicit and explicit threats in his speeches. He interacted with the public with his ideas so that his audience could understand his feelings and emotions. His language stylistically demonstrates his ideals, values, and

body of knowledge, which attracted much attention on the local and even international scene.

The study is focused on exploring the discursive devices utilized by President Duterte in his speeches on controversial issues. Through this, hidden meanings beyond words spoken are revealed, and people would be able to reconceptualize and shift their focus from their literal meaning. The study is also highlighted since a limited number of studies dealt with controversial issues during his presidency. Other discursive devices are still to be discovered because they are not yet identified in other studies.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study utilized the qualitative design and employed critical discourse analysis to explore President Duterte’s discursive devices in his speeches on controversial issues and understand how he used the language in real-life situations. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) studies a spoken language according to its social context.

The ten speeches that Duterte made from 2016 to 2019 on contentious topics served as the corpora for this study. The Presidential Communications Operation Office, MindaNews, and Inquirer.net were the sources for the speeches’ official transcripts. These websites were considered to be in the public domain already. The ten transcripts of PRRD’s speeches only address contentious topics, such as a hardline stance against drugs and criminality, an end to graft and corruption in the government, a despotic policy against drug pushers and critics, making brash off-the-cuff remarks, extreme bravery, and courage, stepped-up attacks against the

rebels, intense love for his country, a loathing of abusive and extortionate police, and the insurgency in Mindanao.

In analyzing the data, the researcher read the speeches multiple times to identify the discursive devices grounded in Fairclough’s theory supported by Finegan’s ideas and used coding to identify the controversial issues, similarities, and differences in Duterte’s speeches. Coding was also done on the articles, phrases, and sentences for a more straightforward interpretation and data summary. The first speech was coded as PRRDS1 and the last as PRRDS10, followed by the paragraph number. The analyses were provided in tabular style with quotes from the speeches to provide a clear overview of the result of the study. Finally, conclusions were formed to address the study issues.

## III. FINDINGS

Discursive devices or rhetorical devices or rhetorical strategies are used in political speeches to convey meaning or persuade the audience on a particular argument the politicians are leaning on. It is a technique used to evoke emotion by the hearers or audience. Speakers use many rhetorical devices in their speeches to achieve specific effects. The effect of discursive devices in political speeches often results from combining them.

This part presents the discursive devices found in the speeches of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte on controversial issues. These include dysphemism, directness, alliteration, anaphora, metaphor, epiphora, and expressive values.

Table 1: Discursive Devices in PRRD’s Speeches on Controversial Issues

Controversial Issues	Discursive Devices	Excerpts from PRRD’s Speeches
Brash manner of speaking/ making brash off-the-cut remarks	dysphemism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>ang mga y*** na ito --- bread and wine pa</i> PRRDS1-P39</li> <li>• <i>...itong mga obispo na mga u***</i> PRRDS2-P33</li> <li>• <i>Akala siguro ng mga buwang kasi eh, ang Pilipinas... Nagkulang ang mga g*** eh</i> PRRDS9-P90</li> </ul>
Hardline stance against drugs and criminality	Directness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>...huhulihin talaga kita</i> PRRDS1-P86</li> <li>• <i>Papatayin talaga kita.</i> PRRDS1-P115</li> <li>• You criminals, kidnapers, gun-for-hire whether soldiers or civilians, or whatever animal you are, go out of this city or I will kill you. And as very specific to those who are into drugs, and you are now destroying a generation of Filipinos, go out because I will kill you. PRRDS9-P30</li> </ul>

	Alliteration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>patay sila dito, patay doon pati 'yung mga criminal.</i> PRRDS6-P12</li> </ul>
Challenging his detractors	Directness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And I said that I will kill you if you do drugs in this country, I will do it and I don't give a s***. I will do it. If you destroy the next generation or compromise their future, I will do it. Period. PRRDS9-P30</li> <li>• If you have a gripe or complaint against the Philippines or personally sa akin, go to the United Nations, ventilate your gripe or your grievance then ask for a motion that it be sent to the proper organ or agency under the United Nations. PRRDS9-P58</li> </ul>
Cessation of graft and corruption in the government	Directness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will arrest you and place you inside the prison and I will see to it that you will not get out for the longest time. PRRDS1-P29</li> <li>• You commit corruption, you threaten people, you destroy people PRRDS1-P41</li> <li>• Sabi ko, I will fight corruption and I am going to do it. PRRDS9-P65</li> </ul>
	Anaphora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And so what I can say is that: <i>In this government</i>, there will be no corruption. <i>In this government</i>, it will be clean, as in clean and <i>this government</i> will promise you law and order. PRRDS9-P41</li> <li>• Now again, I would repeat, <i>I will not allow</i> my country to be destroyed. <i>I will not allow</i> my country — the next generation to be compromised. <i>Maski ano gawin ko.</i> And <i>I will not allow</i> corruption to destroy my government. PRRDS9-P54</li> </ul>
Amped up attacks against the left/ rebels/ communists	Directness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have talked to the communists and I would like to thank Norway. I have talked to Murad, the leader of the MILF, one of the bigger factions in this secessionist movement. PRRDS9-P7</li> <li>• <i>Kayong mga komunista</i>, you are just wasting your time. You cannot prevail over Government of the Republic of the Philippines neither can you find a sanctuary under a communist rule. <i>Huwag na tayong magbolahan.</i> <i>Iyan ang mangyayari sa inyo.</i> PRRDS8-P41</li> <li>• But I am warning the leaders whom I have released and who are now talking to the representatives of my government: Do not attempt to come home. I will arrest all of you and throw you to the slammer. PRRDS8-P44</li> </ul>
	Anaphora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a lot of them... There are a lot of them and in some places in Mindanao, aplenty. PRRDS9-P15</li> </ul>
	Metaphor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>...okay lang 'yang mga bata pero kanang matatanda, ang inyong bibliya ang utok ni Sison.</i> PRRDS2-P95</li> </ul>
Insurgency in Mindanao	Anaphora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Walang gustong mamatay dito, pati 'yang mga Moro diyan. Walang gustong sumali sa salpukan ng kamatayan.</i> PRRDS6-P14</li> </ul>
	Epiphora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will... If you go down, I go down. But for this martial law and the consequences of martial law and the ramifications of martial law... PRRDS6-P46</li> </ul>
	Directness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have to fight everyday until this conflict is dissolved. I could only pray for you, pray for my policemen that they will be, there will be a deliverance from harm, <i>na sana wala masyado tayong tama.</i> PRRDS6-P18</li> </ul>

Abhorrence of Abusive and extortionist police	Directness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pero ang utos ko naman sa tropa is lahat ng tao na hindi authorized ng gobyerno na magdala ng baril at lumaban, patayin ninyo. Ubusin na lang ninyo.</i> PRRDS6-P28</li> <li>• <i>Iyong police, hanggang karami pang kalokohan, you better shape up because I will rise and fall sa issue ng corruption. Ang police maraming atraso. P***** i** kayo. Sinabi ko na sa inyo, tama na eh.</i> PRRDS3-P37</li> <li>• <i>But I think yung nag-sige kidnap, kidnap dito (those who always do the kidnapping), either it’s the ninja police or ito talagang scalawags. So the good practice maybe sa (in) ninja cops, I will now raise the amount of five million per ninja cop. If you bring him to me dead, I’ll give you 500,000, no questions asked o three million.</i> PRRDS3-P38</li> </ul>
Extreme bravery and courage	Expressive values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I know that we continue to lose men. We will just have to bite the bullet and fight for our country because this is the only country that we have.</i> PRRDS8-P93</li> </ul>

**3.1. Dysphemism**

This is the use of a harsh, more offensive word instead of one considered less harsh and is often contrasted with euphemism. PRRD is known for making brash off-the-cut remarks, and one way of using it is by saying disparaging or offensive expressions in dealing with the different controversial issues in the country. He employs this device as a form of humiliating or degrading the priests/bishops, criminals, and those criticizing his form of government.

*3.1.1. Brash manner of speaking*

The following lines express dysphemism...

*ang mga y\*\*\* na ito --- bread and wine pa*  
PRRDS1-P39

these f\*\*\*\*\* b\*\*\*\*\*--- with bread and wine still

*...itong mga obispo na mga u\*\*\** PRRDS2-P33

...these bishops who are u\*\*\*

*Akala siguro ng mga buwang kasi eh, ang Pilipinas,...*

These stupid persons thought that Philippines eh,...

*Nagkulang ang mga g\*\*\* eh* PRRDS9-P90

These g\*\*\* missed something eh

In PRRD’s first line, the offensive word is y\*\*\* which means devil. He used this term to express his disappointments to the priests. He wants to emphasize to the public that they live in abundance because of the people’s offerings. However, despite this, there are numerous instances where they become the subject of criticism. They become selfish and self-serving, and they fail to value the welfare of the people.

PRRD also utilizes the offensive word u\*\*\* (ulol) to describe the bishops. He is reproaching them, for they cannot stop the evil practices of the priests and fellow bishops. They had physically and sexually abused male children and even had illicit relationships with women. In the platform, as if they are devout but outside or inside the convent, their profession and deeds do not speak of their personality. This issue has also become a problem for the pope.

Another offensive term used by President Duterte in his line, “*Akala siguro ng mga buwang kasi eh, ang Pilipinas*” is buwang, which refers to idiots. PRRD thought criminals could do anything, especially since government officials and employees did refractory deeds. He will have no exemptions, but everyone involved in criminal acts shall answer. Lastly, he used the term g\*\*\* (fool) to describe his critics, who kept condemning him, disregarding the context of his speech. These critics are not just ordinary people but have high positions in business or private firms.

**3.2. Directness**

In the speech, directness is the quality of being straightforward and concise, which means stating a main point clearly without embellishments or digressions. President Duterte is also known for his frankness and bluntness in speaking. He says things honestly, and he is straightforward in attitude and speech. PRRD is unafraid to expose everything he knows and even mentions the names of the persons involved in controversial issues.

*3.2.1. Hardline stance against drugs and criminality*

The following lines show PRRD’s use of directness in discussing this issue.

...*huhulihin talaga kita* PRRDS1-P86

...I will capture you

*Papatayin talaga kita.* PRRDS1-P115

I will really kill you

You criminals, kidnappers, gun-for-hire, whether soldiers or civilians, or whatever animal you are, go out of this city or I will kill you. And as very specific to those who are into drugs, and you are now destroying a generation of Filipinos, go out because I will kill you. PRRDS9-P30

PRRD accentuates his hardline stance against drugs and criminality by addressing his message straightforwardly to his listeners, particularly those who go on a drinking spree or just by standing. He wants them to refrain from staying on the streets in the wee hours of the night. PRRD directly addresses another line to the people who are peddling shabu or cocaine that ruin the minds and future of the sons and daughters of the country. As part of providing the youths with a very comfortable life free from harm and danger, he stresses that he will not hesitate to kill them. Furthermore, he also speaks his thoughts directly to all the criminals, violators, and culprits of all forms of crimes in the country. He advises them to abandon the city, stop doing their business, and stop destroying a generation of Filipinos; otherwise, he shall kill them if they choose to stay and continue their business.

### 3.3. Challenging his detractors

The president constantly warns the people responsible for the proliferation or distribution of drugs in the country to stop, for he will kill them. He is very stern about this matter. As stated by the President that he will exhaust all means to end this problem and will continue until the last drug lords and pushers are out in the streets. He does not want to destroy the future of today's generation of Filipinos. Moreover, he points out those who have complaints against his policy and his personality. He challenges them to file a motion to elevate their grievances to the United Nations. He clarifies that he is undaunted in answering the complaints against him because he is only concerned about the Filipino people. PRRD expresses these ideas in the following lines.

And I said that I will kill you if you do drugs in this country, I will do it and I don't give a s\*\*\*. I will do it. If you destroy the next generation or compromise their future, I will do it. Period. PRRDS9-P30

If you have a gripe or complaint against the Philippines or personally sa akin, go to the United Nations, ventilate your gripe or your

grievance then ask for a motion that it be sent to the proper organ or agency under the United Nations. PRRDS9-P58

#### 3.3.1. Cessation of graft and corruption in the government

PRRD is straight to the point concerning his concerns about widespread graft and corruption. Consider the given lines.

I will arrest you and place you inside the prison and I will see to it that you will not get out for the longest time. PRRDS1-P29

You commit corruption,  
you threaten people,

you destroy people PRRDS1-P41

Sabi ko (I said), I will fight corruption and I am going to do it. PRRDS9-P65

I said, I will fight corruption and I am going to do it.

PRRD is unafraid to personally arrest the violators of graft and corruption in the government. He emphasizes that he will see to it that these culprits will stay very long in jail to suffer for the wrong deeds they have done. By so doing, he wants others to learn a lesson and see the consequences of doing it. He does not also hesitate to divulge the persons involved in corruption. These corrupt individuals are threatening and destroying the future of the Filipino people; thus, the President engages in a tedious process to get dishonest public officials out of power. Though he wants to eliminate graft and corruption in the Philippines, it is becoming pervasive already. For him, corruption continues and enervates the courage needed to sustain the moral recovery initiatives of the nation.

#### 3.3.2. Amped up attacks against the left/rebels/communists

Directness as a discursive device is also evident in PRRD's speeches on this controversial issue. Some excerpts from his speeches deal with the issue of lefts/rebels/communists.

I have talked to the communists and I would like to thank Norway. I have talked to Murad, the leader of the MILF, one of the bigger factions in this secessionist movement. PRRDS9-P7

*Kayong mga komunista*, you are just wasting your time. You cannot prevail over Government of the Republic of the Philippines neither can you find a sanctuary under a communist rule. *Huwag na tayong magbolahan. Iyan ang mangyayari sa inyo.* PRRDS8-P41

You communists, you are just wasting your time. You cannot prevail over the Government of the Republic of the Philippines neither can you find a sanctuary under a communist rule. Let us not deceive ourselves anymore. That will happen to you.

But I am warning the leaders whom I have released and who are now talking to the representatives of my government: Do not attempt to come home. I will arrest all of you and throw you to the slammer. PRRDS8-P44

President Duterte publicly mentioned the name of the organization/name of the person behind the success of the negotiation agreement between the two parties. He informed everyone that he had already made a negotiation with Joma as well as the other rebel groups. The negotiation agreement was done in Oslo, Norway, between the government and the communist groups. He agreed to conduct this panel to end up the insurgency problem. This agreement is advantageous to both parties. He thanked the Norway government for allowing the negotiation or peace talks. He had also talked to Murad, the MILF leader, about the peaceful negotiation. He is very supportive of the BBL Law so that a peace agreement would be achieved.

In PRRD's second line, "*Kayong mga komunista, you are just wasting your time. You cannot prevail over the Government of the Republic of the Philippines neither can you find a sanctuary under a communist rule. Huwag na tayong magbolahan. Iyan ang mangyayari sa inyo,*" he admonishes the communist group to stop, for they cannot overthrow the government of the Philippines. For him, communism has no place, and nobody will cuddle it. He is also deadly serious in his campaign to end terrorism and insurgency in the Philippines. It serves as an ultimate warning for them. According to PRRD, if he had conceded before on this matter by freeing the prisoner, now it would be different. He will recall his order to arrest them again once they return to the communist group.

In his third line, "*But I am warning the leaders whom I have released and who are now talking to the representatives of my government: Do not attempt to come home. I will arrest all of you and throw you to the slammer,*" he further gives a stern warning to the terrorist/rebel leaders who were given a pardon and released from their prison cells. He does not want them to do negotiations again with the government officials. In addition, he cautions Jose Maria Sison and other rebel leaders not to come to the Philippines because he will put them back in prison.

### 3.3.3. Insurgency in Mindanao

In confronting this issue, PRRD expressed directness in the following lines.

I have to fight everyday until this conflict is dissolved. I could only pray for you, pray for my policemen that they will be, there will be a deliverance from harm, *na sana wala masyado tayong tama* (that we will have less casualty.

PRRDS6-P18

*Pero ang utos ko naman sa tropa is lahat ng tao na hindi authorized ng gobyerno na magdala ng baril at lumaban, patayin ninyo. Ubusin na lang ninyo.* PRRDS6-P28

But I command the troops that everyone who is not authorized by the government to carry a gun and fight back, kill them. Just finish them all.

President Duterte directly assures the soldiers and uniformed men that he will fight every day until the conflict is completely dissolved. He expressed his sincerity as he said that he is praying for the safety of his police officers from harm and further wishes that few casualties will happen to his men. He also directs his men to arrest those who bring guns/weapons not authorized by law and those who go against them. He further directs valiantly to kill them if they resist. His order is to crack down on anti-criminality in the country.

### 3.3.4. Abhorrence of abusive and extortionist police

President Duterte further delivers his messages on this issue to the crowd straightforwardly. This can be seen in the following lines.

*Iyong police, hanggang karami pang kalokohan, you better shape up because I will rise and fall sa issue ng corruption. Ang police maraming atraso. P\*\*\*\*\*i\*\* kayo. Sinabi ko na sa inyo, tama na eh.* PRRDS3-P37

Those police who until now have lots of bullshits, you better shape up because I will rise and fall in the issue of corruption. (The policemen have done many wrong things. You p\*\*\*\*\*i\*\*. I told you to stop, that's enough.

But I think *yung nag-sige kidnap, kidnap ditto*, either it's the ninja police *or ito talagang scalawags* (these scalawags truly). So the good practice maybe *sa ninja cops*, I will now raise the amount of five million per ninja cop. If you bring him to me dead, I'll give you 500,000, no questions asked *o three million.*

PRRDS3-P38

But I think those who always do the kidnapping, either it's the ninja police these scalawags truly. So the good practice maybe in *ninja cops*, I will now raise the amount of

five million per ninja cop. If you bring him to me dead, I'll give you 500,000, no questions asked or three million.

The president directly condemns the police officers for the many foolishness they are involved like drugs, kidnap for ransom, corruption, and many other crimes. He instructs them to make themselves commendable and show the people the true image of a police officer. He further mentioned that once they engaged in this malpractice, the name of the President was also dragged along with it. Thus, he always encourages them to stop, or else he will be compelled to file an administrative case or terminate them.

In addition, PRRD is fed up with the alleged involvement of these officials, the ninja cops, or scalawags in illegal drug shakedowns, protection rackets, and kidnapping. For this reason, he raised the reward money for those who can bring him a ninja cop directly involved in the crime cited above and for every erring Ninja cop killed by law enforcers.

### 3.4. Alliteration

This refers to repeating the same consonant sounds at the beginning of words close to each other. This repetition of sounds brings attention to the lines in which it is used and creates a more aural rhythm. Many public speakers also use alliteration as a discursive device to produce a specific effect when they convey their speeches, and PRRD is one of them.

#### 3.4.1. Hardline stance against drug and criminality

Consider the given line of PRRD during his visit to the 2nd Mechanized Infantry (Magbalantay) Brigade.

*..patay sila dito, patay doon pati  
'yung mga criminal.* PRRDS6-P12

*..they were killed here, they were  
killed there including the criminals*

President Duterte uses this element to give rhythm to his speeches and to make his speech memorable. In his statement, PRRD repeatedly used 'they were killed' as words that have alliteration and are not adjacent to each other, for there are some other words between them. PRRD repeatedly uttered these words to grab the audience's attention in highlighting these criminals who were killed in different locations and involved in a series of crimes in our country. He emphasized that because of this, most of their corpses were not identified anymore. Others were stolen and were not even given a decent burial.

### 3.5. Anaphora

An anaphora is a rhetorical device in which a word or expression is repeated at the beginning of several sentences, clauses, or phrases. Politicians also utilize this discursive device in their speeches.

#### 3.5.1. Cessation of graft and corruption in the government.

President Duterte employs anaphora in his speeches on the issue of corruption in the Philippines. Consider the given lines of PRRD during the 42<sup>nd</sup> Philippine Business Conference (PBC) And Expo Concluding Ceremony "Giant Steps 2016 and Beyond".

And so what I can say is that: In this government, there will be no corruption. In this government, it will be clean, as in clean and *this government* will promise you law and order. PRRDS9-P41

Now again, I would repeat, I will not allow my country to be destroyed. I will not allow my country — the next generation to be compromised. Maski ano gawin ko. (No matter what I do). And I will not allow corruption to destroy my government. PRRDS9-P54

The president keeps on repeating the phrase 'this government' in order to persuade his audience to believe him as he assures them of eradicating or minimizing graft and corruption, starting from the highest branch of government to the lowest one and promising the whole nation in maintaining law and order at all times. The president himself spearheads the fight against graft and corruption. He puts his best foot forward in attaining peace and order always. Moreover, he reiterates the phrase 'I will not allow' to appeal to the audience's emotions and spark his concern for the country and the Filipino people by providing them with a good life and future. He would not allow the Philippines to be destroyed by drugs, terrorism, or crime. He would not allow these things to compromise the next generation of Filipinos.

#### 3.5.2. Amped up attacks against the left/rebels/communists

As a rhetorical device, anaphora is also used by PRRD for emphasis. He highlights that there are plenty of groups in Mindanao that he fails to communicate with personally and convince for a peaceful negotiation because they are groups of scholars representing their religion. These groups are the elite groups of their religion who are responsible for planning a terrorist attack. The president could not force them to punish them because of the freedom of religion as cited in the constitution. This idea is expressed in his line below.

There are a lot of them... There are a lot of them and in some places in Mindanao, plenty.

PRRDS9-P15

### 3.5.3. *Insurgency in Mindanao*

Another line of PRRD that uses anaphora is presented below.

*Walang gustong mamatay dito, pati 'yang mga Moro diyari. Walang gustong sumali sa salpukan ng kamatayan.* PRRDS6-P14

Nobody wants to die here, even the Moro there.  
No one wants to join the death clash.

President Duterte repeatedly highlights the idea that nobody wants death. However, there is a formidable enemy –ISIS, where they are described as the only individuals influenced by the criminal act of butchery and killing. This is where Islam religion is also incorporated, including their influences from the terrorists' activities from other countries. Others are considered disgruntled followers, and other groups are also members of non-winning politicians. This is why they dare to join in the power clash.

### 3.6. Metaphor

This is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. Political actors like President Duterte also use this analogy in their speeches. Consider the following line taken from the speech of PRRD during the 49<sup>th</sup> Charter Day Celebration of Mandaue City.

*...okay lang 'yang mga bata pero kanang matatanda, ang inyong bibliya ang utok ni Sison.*

PRRDS2-P95

...it's okay for the kids but for those old people, your bible is Sison's brain.

The president uses metaphor to express indirectness in his speech. He is comparing the younger and older minds in terms of choosing their ideology. According to PRRD, the vulnerability of the younger generation as to their choice of ideology or idealism can be considered mainly when they accept or follow some idealisms which they believe are genuine and realistic. However, as they grow older, they should have thought already what should be continued or stopped because they are already capable of weighing things well and understanding the ideology. President Duterte underscores the negative effect brought by following still the ideology of Sison (i.e., communism). He further accentuates the idea by setting China as an example where its people have

abandoned communism as their ideology because they were not able to enjoy their freedom.

### 3.7. Epiphora

This is also known as epistrophe, a stylistic device in which a word or a phrase is repeated at the end of successive clauses. PRRD also uses this discursive device in order to create rhythm and cadence. Consider the excerpt from one of his speeches on the insurgency in Mindanao.

I will... If you go down, I go down. But for this martial law and the consequences of martial law and the ramifications of martial law... PRRDS6-P46

The president repeatedly utters "go down" and "martial law" to highlight his message to the uniformed men that he is always behind their backs in times of war. He assures them that he is always at their side in every undertaking. He is responsible for all of these regarding Martial law and other related matters. His use of repetition makes the lines more memorable.

### 3.8. Expressive Values

This pertains to the speaker's meaningful delivery of the message. PRRD uses this to highlight his resolute courage and dauntlessness as he faces the dilemma of the existence of rebels, radicals/terrorists. He employs further expressive values in his speeches to influence, encourage and convince his audience to believe his side of the argument. Through this, his speech becomes more potent in stirring people's attention. This is evident in his line below.

I know that we continue to lose men. We will just have to bite the bullet and fight for our country because this is the only country that we have. PRRDS8-P93

He uses the line, 'We will just have to bite the bullet,' to express his thoughts on enduring the painful experience during the Marawi siege meaningfully. He encourages the people, particularly those who are affected, to be brave in such a difficult situation as many civilians in Mindanao were killed, pervasive destruction of homes and property happened, and numerous soldiers lost their lives during the battle of Marawi between the Philippine military and militants allied to the armed group calling itself ISIS.

Moreover, the battle in Marawi causes agonizing pain to PRRD. Many soldiers have died and suffered life-changing injuries during combat operations. With this experience, President Duterte encourages everyone to remember their sacrifice and service. Through their efforts, they have made that country more secure. Everyone must

protect the country and fight for freedom and the future as concerned citizens of this nation.

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte employs various discursive devices or rhetorical devices in his speeches on controversial issues to get people's attention and support in all his actions. Moreover, he uses them to persuade, convey ideas meaningfully, and evoke emotion on the part of the audience.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

It is essential to know how politicians use discursive devices to convince an audience of their plans (Kashiha, 2022). [7] According to Kaewrungruang and Yaoharee (2018), [8] the effect of rhetorical strategies in political speeches often results from combining them. Pantao (2021) [9] argues that the ability to convey the message that the speaker and listener want the same thing plays a decisive role in establishing an ideology. Politicians often use symbols to foster national unity to achieve a sense of congruence between the audience and the speaker (Blumenau & Lauderdale, 2022). [10] In addition, the political leaders in their speeches intend to convince the readers based on their ideological underpinnings and orientation. They do this by selecting rhetorical tools that directly appeal to the emotions of their audience (Beqiri, 2018). [11] It also includes tone, diction, details, imagery, figurative language, humor, syntax, and anything used to create an effect (Ekawati, 2018) [12] deliberately.

##### 4.1. Dysphemism

Dysphemism is a particular application of stylistically reduced words and expressions to transmit a negative attitude or create an expression instead of using more suitable neutral words and expressions. Dysphemism constitutes insults in a positive tone which contrasts with typical conceptual dysphemistic uses (Gomez, 2012) [13]. The study's findings support Prokhorova, Chekulai, Pupynina & Bekh's claim (2019) [14] that the speaker chooses explicitly dysphemisms instead of neutral expressions to achieve a particular effect. The use of dysphemism helps President Duterte show his emotional state of character, express his attitudes and values, and even ridicule religion and everything associated with it. Its use does not mitigate, dissipate or attenuate the connotations of the forbidden word but, on the contrary, motivates and further reinforces its associations (Aytan, Aynur, Aytac, et. Al, 2021 [15]; Shakoury, 2018). [16]

##### 4.2. Directness

The assumption in traditional politeness research tends to be that the more indirect an utterance is, the more polite it

is (Brown and Levinson, 1987) [17]. Directness is therefore considered to be, in essence, impolite. It may often be considered rude in English, but it signals closeness and honesty in other languages. Brown and Levinson argued that there is a scale of politeness, ranging from going off record and avoiding speaking at the most polite end of the scale to the directness of bald on-record utterances at the impolite or least polite end of the scale. Thus, directness can be evaluated for some groups as being closer to 'necessity' and thus associated with lower-class behavior for some cultural groups (Grainger & Mills, 2016) [18]. However, this assumption appears to be based on the politeness norms of elite groups of English speakers. It becomes problematic when one looks at how directness is utilized, assessed, and understood by interactants in other cultures, communities, and contexts.

President Duterte is known for his bluntness in speaking. His use of directness in his speeches signifies simple and unsophisticated words. However, Grainger & Mills (2016) pointed out that this discursive device depends very much on the linguistic community, whether a style of speech is considered sophisticated, and whether it indicates a concern for, or an awareness of, others. Similarly, when discussing directness, it is assumed that it is primarily used for commands. One person's frankness might be considered boorishness by another; another might interpret one person's indirectness as prevarication and indecisiveness (van der Bom & Mills, 2015). [19]

Directness may be explained as matching the grammatical structure it naturally takes with the speech act. Directness requires the ability to recognize the situation, however. Being too direct when stating your opinion is sometimes perceived as an insult, especially if the hearer perceives you as someone who belongs in the lower social hierarchy (Chobanyan, 2015). [20]

Heitler (2015) [21] defines direct communication as putting into words one's feelings and explaining one's concerns. Common sayings like "Honesty is the best policy" and "The squeaky wheel gets the grease" are reflective of direct communicators, who are pretty adept at getting what they need (Joyce, 2012). [22] This is mainly because direct communicators know how to spell out their needs to those who are in a position of being able to provide. Furthermore, Heitler indicates that direct communication points to solutions while communicating thoughts and feelings indirectly via such behaviors as stinging, pouting, gesturing, or skirting around a problem with co-option words and phrases. However, it does little to resolve a problem.

Direct language is usually simpler to create and, as a result, requires less language control. The results corroborate Dobbs' (2016) [23] claim that directness adds importance to one's words to show earnest conviction in one's arguments and beliefs, making the speech more persuasive and evocative to the audience.

#### 4.3. Alliteration

This device has been used chiefly in poetry; nevertheless, politicians use this element to give rhythm to their speeches. Naturally, human beings remember things better if they are rhythmic and melodious; hence, alliteration is an excellent device to make a speech memorable or easy to remember (Bourse, 2019). [24]

Abrams and Harpham (2013) [25] define alliteration as a rhetoric device where a speech sound in a sequence of nearby words is repeated. Politicians use alliteration to deliver their political speeches and directly or indirectly address the people or audience directly or indirectly. It is a sound device to build an additional musical effect produced by the speaker's utterance. The musical effect catches listeners' attention by creating the desired political mood. The significance of this alliteration is two-fold, which includes creating rhythm and emphasizing essential points on a particular issue (Otieno, 2015). [26]

The study's findings revealed that PRRD utilized non-immediate juxtaposition contrary to immediate juxtaposition alliteration. In non-immediate juxtaposition, the words that have alliteration are not adjacent to each other. There are other words between them. It further validates Harandi & Jahantigh's (2017) [27] claim that alliteration makes the speech of PRRD memorable and evocative about the controversial issue of those criminals who were killed in different locations and who were involved in a series of crimes in our country; therefore, this facilitates the audience to recall the ideas better.

#### 4.4. Anaphora

It is the repetition of identical words at the start of succeeding phrases, clauses, or sentences, generally in conjunction with parallelism and climax.

With the findings, the researcher concurs with Zimmer's (2011) [28] proposition that using anaphora enables President Duterte to emphasize his keywords or ideas, often with great emotional pull. Moreover, it makes his lines memorable. Furthermore, it enables him to achieve rhythm and beat for his words. These were shown in the analysis of PRRD's speeches on controversial issues.

#### 4.5. Metaphor

The use of metaphor allows politicians to convert abstract political ideas into more concrete and specific ones for easier understanding on the part of the people. A metaphor is a stylistic device associating abstract ideas with concrete images Sipra (2013). [29] These conceptualize the abstract domain of politics as something related to essential human experience (Pasaribu, 2017). [30]

Metaphor is more than just a literary device because it plays a fundamental part in how people represent social reality (Rubio-Remorosa, 2018). [31] The analysis revealed that some metaphors are elusive implications of issues that need great attention and action, and other metaphors are potent and profound and emphasize recent issues. In addition, the analysis showed that PRRD used metaphors to activate the listener's emotions. Metaphors may be highly manipulative as they are highly enlightening, and the effect may be positive or negative. Metaphors manipulate verbal messages to trigger our mental image. Escudero (2011), cited in Pasaribu (2017), mentioned that the message conveyed by metaphor is compelling as it works through both auditory and visual channels simultaneously, a verbal message and a mental image. In any situation, metaphors make language vivid and alive (Vestermark, 2007). [32]

President Duterte employs metaphor in his speeches as a powerful tool to stir public consciousness; that is, the system changes the people's basic ideas about themselves, their country, and their role in its development. The speaker aims to achieve persuasiveness through language (Stojan & Novak, 2019). [33] Since the use of metaphor has a persuasive impact on the public's attitude, politicians like PRRD use it to facilitate and speed up the process of communication (Jimenez, 2017). [34]

#### 4.6. Epiphora

It is the term used to describe repeating the same word or phrase at the end of successive clauses or sentences. It is sometimes called epistrophe and antistrophe. This strategy is used as a rhetorical device throughout the arts, literature, and famous speeches. PRRD utilizes Epiphora to deliver his speeches on contentious issues, such as the insurgency in Mindanao, for it uses repetition to emphasize his keywords and phrases. With repetition falling at the end of clauses or sentences, epiphora draws words and ideas together to create a focal point of sound and meaning (Dlugan, 2015). [35]

This device effectively emphasizes a concept, idea, or situation. Since the emphasis is on the last word(s) of a series of sentences or phrases, epiphora can be dramatic and easy to understand, creating melody and rhythm (Zimmer, 2011). [36]

#### 4.7. Expressive Values

Compellingly powerful words can modify one's judgment, arouse emotions, and influence one's decisions. Expressive values can be used to craft emotional descriptions and representations to arouse emotional reactions (Macagno & Walton, 2014). [37]

In political discourse, expressional shades depending on the purpose of their use for giving these or those semantic characteristics, can vary from friendly and familiar to slightly sarcastic (Kenzhekanova, 2015). [38] According to Mazayev (2005) [39], politicians' discourse has been permanently colored by emotional character as the purpose of such performances is to convince the listeners that imply certain language features of political discourse.

The emotive meaning can be defined as a trend in the language directly related to feelings and the psychological attitude of the speaker when expressing something; this, in turn, may produce affective responses in people towards the matter addressed (Al-Hamad, 2011). [40] The study revealed that PRRD used emotion-laden words to generate emotional appeal as he expressed his message to the crowd with extreme bravery and courage. He used expressive values or emotive expressions to convey his feelings and attitudes on a controversial issue in a robust manner. It reiterates Al-Hamad's (2011) findings that speakers emotively manipulate language to win their audience's approval, and using emotive expressions enhances political speech and gives it a kind of power. Emotiveness aims to direct listeners toward a particular matter (Shunnaq, 2017). [41] President Duterte uses emotive expressions to provoke the feelings of an audience, which may help gain their satisfaction and support for what is spoken (Al Suod & Al-Matari, 2017). [42]

#### V. CONCLUSION

The study examined and analyzed the discursive devices used by President Duterte in his speeches on controversial issues during his presidency. PRRD's intentions, goals, and strategies used to gain the audience's attention and trust were identified using Critical Discourse Analysis.

The present study revealed that PRRD achieves discursive practices in his political discourse by employing specific discursive devices or rhetorical strategies such as dysphemism, directness, alliteration, anaphora, metaphor, epiphora, and expressive values. Results entail that speakers like PRRD rely on rhetorical devices and strategies to evoke affiliative responses from their audience. He uses them to offend a particular group, give

rhythm and cadence to the speeches, and emphasize, influence, encourage, and persuade others. Despite using brash words in his speeches, he still shows solid values and love for the people and the country.

Hence, the researcher may utilize the abovementioned findings to provide valuable insight to the people to become good listeners and adequately discern the real and fundamental meaning of a particular discourse. Scholars can improve their ability to process and convey information while strengthening their persuasive skills. They could further analyze each rhetorical device as a specific tool in constructing an argument or making an existing argument more compelling.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Bernstein, R. (2020). 'The Paradox of Rodrigo Duterte.' *The Atlantic*. 22 February. Available at <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2020/02/philippines-rodrigo-duterte-china/606754/> (Accessed 8 March 2020).
- [2] Rodrigo Duterte profile: The provocative but popular Philippines strongman. (2022, May 9). *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-36659258>
- [3] Bonnet, F.X. (2018). Portrait of Rodrigo Duterte - President of the Philippines. Retrieved from <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/analysis/portrait-rodrigo-duterte-president-philippines>
- [4] Timberman, D. G. (2019). Philippine politics under Duterte: A midterm assessment. Retrieved from <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/01/10/philippine-politics-under-duterte-midterm-assessment-pub-78091>
- [5] Hosman, L. A., Huebner, T. M., & Siltanen, S. A. (2002). The Impact of Power-of-Speech Style, Argument Strength, and Need for Cognition on Impression Formation, Cognitive Responses, and Persuasion. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 21(4), 361-379. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026192702237954>
- [6] Blanco, C. (2021). A critical discourse analysis of President Rodrigo Duterte's speech in Covid-19 pandemic. *EPR International Journal of Research and Development*. Volume 6 (Issue 10). <https://eprajournals.com/IJSR/article/6098>
- [7] Kashiha, H. (2022). On persuasive strategies: Metadiscourse practices in political speeches. *Discourse and Interaction*, 15(1), 77-100. <https://doi.org/10.5817/di2022-1-77>
- [8] Kaewrungruang, K. & Yaoharee, O. (2018). The use of personal pronoun in political discourse: A case study of the final 2016 United States presidential election debate. *eFLectons* 25(1)
- [9] Pantao, A. (2021). Linguistic Features of Kakawing Speeches: A Critical Discourse Analysis. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 4(3), 227-238. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2021.4.3.26>
- [10] Blumenau, J. & Lauderdale, B.E. (2022). The variable persuasiveness of political rhetoric. *American Journal of Political Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12703>
- [11] Beqiri, G. (2018). Ethos, pathos, logos: 3 pillars of public speaking and persuasion. Retrieved from

- <https://virtuallspeech.com/blog/ethos-pathos-logos-public-speaking-persuasion>
- [12] Ekawati, R. (2018). The use of personal pronoun as a rhetorical strategy in Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidential speech text at the United Nations General Assembly. *International Seminar PRASASTI III: Current Research in Linguistics*
- [13] Casas Gómez, Miguel. (2012). The Expressive Creativity of Euphemism and Dysphemism. *Lexis*. 7. 10.4000/lexis.349.
- [14] Prokhorova, N., Chekulai, V., Pupylnina, V. & Bekh, F. (2019). Factors contributing to dysphemistic effect types of dysphemism. Retrieved from <https://periodicos.ufpb.br/index.php/ged/article/view/49387>.
- [15] Aytan, A., Aynur, B., Hilal, P., Aytac, E., & Malahat, A. (2021). Euphemisms and dysphemisms as language means implementing rhetorical strategies in political discourse. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(2), 741-754. Doi: 10.52462/jlls.52
- [16] Shakoury, K. (2018). *Critical Discourse Analysis of Iranian Presidents' Addresses to the United Nations General Assembly (2007-2016)* (Doctoral Dissertation). Available at <https://harvest.usask.ca/bitstream/handle/10388/8577/SHAKOURY-THESIS-2018.pdf?sequence=1>
- [17] Brown, P. & Levinson, S.C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- [18] Grainger, K. & Mills, S. (2016). *Directness and indirectness across cultures*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- [19] Van der Bom, I. & Mills, S. (2015). A discursive approach to the analysis of politeness data. *Journal of Politeness Research* 11(2)
- [20] Chobanyan, N. (2015). The Interrelation between direct and indirect speech acts. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/20081738/The\\_Interrelation\\_between\\_direct\\_and\\_indirect\\_speech\\_acts](https://www.academia.edu/20081738/The_Interrelation_between_direct_and_indirect_speech_acts)
- [21] Heitler, S. (2015). Indirect communication. Retrieved from <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/indirect-communication>
- [22] Joyce, C. (2012). The impact of direct and indirect communication. *Independent Voice*. Retrieved from [http://www.uiowa.edu/~confmgmt/documents/DIRECTAN\\_DINDIRECTCOMMUNICATION.pdf](http://www.uiowa.edu/~confmgmt/documents/DIRECTAN_DINDIRECTCOMMUNICATION.pdf)
- [23] Dobb, B. (n.d.). Directness and indirectness when communicating English. Retrieved from <https://www.modernenglishteacher.com/media/2358/dobbs.pdf>
- [24] Bourse, S. (2019). Conjuring up terror and tears: the evocative and persuasive power of loaded words in the political discourse on drug reform. *Lexis Journal in English Lexicology*.
- [25] Abrams, M.H. & Harpham, G.G. (2013). A glossary of literary terms. Retrieved from [https://static.s123-cdn.com/uploads/3433317/normal\\_606f55ccdaf2b.pdf](https://static.s123-cdn.com/uploads/3433317/normal_606f55ccdaf2b.pdf)
- [26] Otieno, T.M. (2015). Linguistic description of the rhetoric: Barack Obama's political speeches. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 20(9)
- [27] Harandi, M. & Jahantigh, H. (2017). Use of Persuasive Language to Coax the Audience: A Study of John F. Kennedy and Barack Obama's Speeches. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*. 5(3). 129-136.
- [28] Zimmer, J. (2011). Rhetorical devices: Epiphora. Retrieved from <https://mannerofspeaking.org/2011/06/04/rhetorical-devices-anaphora/>
- [29] Sipra, M.A. (2013). Critical discourse analysis of Martin Luther King's Speech in socio-political perspective. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*
- [30] Pasaribu, T. (2017). Domains of political metaphors in presidential speeches. *LLT Journal*. Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 96-104
- [31] Rubic-Remorosa, R. (2018). President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's Political Speeches: A Critical Discourse Analysis. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. Volume 23, Issue 8, Ver. 2 (August. 2018) pp. 72-87
- [32] Vestermark I. (2007). Metaphors in linguistics: a study of the metaphorical personification of America in political discourse. *Lulea University of Technology*
- [33] Stojan, N. & Novak, S. (2019). Conceptual metaphors in political discourse in Croatian, American and Italian Newspapers. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*. 8. 69-76. 10.2478/ajis-2019-0007.
- [34] Jimenez, L. (2017). Trabajo de Fin de Grado Discourse analysis. Retrieved from <https://rodin.uca.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10498/20019/TFG%20ING%20LVJ.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>
- [35] Dlugan, A. (2015). Spice up your speechwriting (Epiphora). Retrieved from <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/epiphora/> Dobbs, B. (2016). Directness and indirectness when communicating in English. Retrieved from <https://www.modernenglishteacher.com/media/2358/dobbs.pdf>
- [36] Zimmer, J. (2011). Rhetorical devices: Epiphora. Retrieved from <https://mannerofspeaking.org/2011/06/04/rhetorical-devices-anaphora/>
- [37] Macagno, F. & Walton, D. (2014). *Emotive Language in Argumentation*. Cambridge University Press. 10.1017/CBO9781139565776.
- [38] Kenzhekanova, K. (2015). Linguistic features of political discourse. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol 6 No 6 S2
- [39] Mazayev, A. (2005) Political discourse: factor of addressee. Retrieved 2005 from <http://www.ostu.ru/conf/ruslang2005/trend1/mazaeva.htm>
- [40] Al-Hamad, M. Q. (2011). Emotive expressions in President Al-Assad's Political Speeches. *Onomazein*, 23(1), 149-170.
- [41] Shunnaq, A. (2017). Lexical incongruence in translation due to emotiveness. *Turjuman*, 2(2), 37-63
- [42] Al Soud, H., Al Suod, Y. & Al-Matari, A. (2017). The translatability of emotiveness in political speeches of King Abdullah II of Jordan: A critical discourse analysis. *European Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*. Vol.5, No.8