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An Analysis of the Social Aspects of President Duterte's Controversial Speeches

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Abstract:

The study used a qualitative design to examine the social aspects of President Duterte's speeches on controversial issues that may be valuable to the Filipino people. By using critical discourse analysis in analyzing his 10 speeches dated from 2016-2019, the results of the study revealed that candidness, Drug-fee Philippines, strong and fearless leader, dauntless bravery, strong and trustworthy national defense system, audaciousness, defender of the poor, weak, and helpless, and servant leadership are the valuable social aspects of his speeches to the Filipino community. This signifies that he can persuade his audience and significantly impact the people – their beliefs and perceptions – as he conveys and seeks appropriate support for his ideas. Moreover, the results demonstrate that the language employed by a speaker can convey significant meaning to the listener. This depends on the speaker's interaction with the audience and the language he employs. As a speaker, one can exert influence and control over their audience through language.

Keywords: social aspects of speeches, president duterte's speeches, controversial issues

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Introduction

Presidents deliver vital messages to the nation and the people through their addresses. They are frequently used to persuade and influence the audience's principles and belief systems. They allow for introducing their political agenda (Al-Faki, 2014) and disclosing the nation's current condition, problems, and solutions. (Rubic-Remorosa, 2018).

Presidential speeches are the best resource for analyzing how presidential rhetoric affects policy and the general public. They are used to improve the president's standing and increase public support for his policies (Miranda & Bringula, 2021). The president's ability to speak with authority is crucial for politics and administration. The President's most visible and effective political tool in his speeches to the nation, particularly on controversial issues. This is a great way to research how the president's speeches affect the country (Cart, 2014).

President Duterte receives a lot of support and is vehemently protected by notable individuals. People perceived him to be hardworking, decisive, diligent, and genuine. (Ranada, 2021). He represents and serves the people. He is also sincere, honest, hardworking, and compassionate for the impoverished and disadvantaged (Obordo, 2016). Despite his harsh language and unpolished demeanor, he remains widespread across the Philippines' socioeconomic spectrum due to his strategic thinking and planning. Due to his drug policy, rising nationalist sentiment, and enthusiasm for federalism, he is popular among the poor (You, 2018).

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According to Malmgren (2019), Duterte's supporters are fond of him because of his personality, his background, his image as a non-traditional politician, and his ability to make people feel like they are seen. These have significant impact on them. Also, he is very determined, as shown by his fight against drugs and other crimes, his search for game-changing ideas, and the sound changes he has been making.

This study analyzed the social aspects of President Duterte's speeches on controversial issues, which may be valuable to Filipino audience speeches. By identifying so, people can understand why Filipinos believed in and highly regarded President Duterte during his reign. This study is also focused on since a few studies only assess the common effects of President Duterte's speeches on the Filipino community. Furthermore, by examining presidential rhetoric, researchers can use data to identify more salient features of President Duterte as a president.

Review of Literature

Critical Discourse Analysis

The foundation of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lies in Roger Fowler's work at the University of East Anglia in the 1970s, as well as in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (Fair Clough, 1992; Fair Clough, 1999). Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Linguistics rejected two widespread notions in linguistics at that time: the treatment of language systems as autonomous and independent of the use of language and the separation of meaning from style or expression (Lawson, 2008).

Critical discourse research must adequately meet various requirements sufficiently to realize its targets. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) highlighted the central tenets of CDA, which are the following: CDA focuses on social issues; power relations are discursive; discourse constitutes society and culture; discourse performs ideological work; discourse is historical; the link between text and society is mediated; discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory; and discourse is a form of social action.

Political Discourse

Politics is a social activity that can be defined, first and foremost, as a struggle for power between those who are in power and those who are not but would like to be, although it can also be defined as a set of cooperation strategies carried out by some social institutions to solve some social conflicts (Chilton, 2004). Inherent properties of politics are a clash of interests, persuasion, manipulation, and imposition of opinions as commonsensical, defining allies and opponents. According to van Dijk (1998), discourse describes all political or political discourse genres. In politics, discourse is a socially constituted set of genres associated with a social domain or field. Political speech is a genre of political discourse and is part of public discourse. Also, Fairclough (1995). Jalali (2014) argued that political discourse analysis pays attention to the reproduction of

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political power, abuse of power or dominance, and is founded on a variety of discursive forms of dominance.

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte

PRRD is the sixteenth President of the Philippine Republic. He was the first president to come from Mindanao, the second largest island in the Philippines, and the eldest individual to be elected president of the Philippines. With his first six months in office, over 6,000 people were killed in his "war on drugs." A fraction of those deaths occurred during police operations. The overwhelming majority were extrajudicial killings by death squads. Human rights organizations and Roman Catholic officials blatantly condemned this policy. However, Duterte refuted and argued that some of the significant economic and social challenges for the Philippines are drug dealing and addiction. Despite overwhelming criticism from the opposition group, Duterte became the most trusted official in the Philippines since 1999 after gaining the confidence of 91% of Filipinos, according to Pulse Asia.

Critical Elements of a Good Communicator

According to Aristotle, three (3) elements must be present in a good communicator or public speaker. These components are interconnected, and they reinforce the other components. They are the Ethos, the Pathos, and the Logos. Aristotle notes that three elements enter into the ability to persuade: (1) the speaker's character (ethos), (2) the audience's emotions (pathos), and (3) the rationality of the speech's arguments (logos) (Beiner, 1983) cited in Bajracharya (2018). Persuasive speech must present the right impression of the speaker's character, work on the audience's emotions, and prove the statement's truth. The speech is organized in such a way as to positively cause the audience to accept all or part of the expressed view.

Methodology

The study used a qualitative design and employed critical discourse analysis to investigate the social aspects of President Duterte's speeches that may be of value to the Filipino audience. From the perspective of CDA, Fairclough claims that through analyzing language, the ultimate purpose of raising people's consciousness towards exploitative social relations is achieved.

The corpora utilized in the study include 10 of President Duterte's speeches on various controversial issues from 2016 up to 2019. They were downloaded from online websites, namely MindaNews, and Inquirer.net. and Presidential Communications Operation Office. Meanwhile, the researcher read the corpora correctly and used coding to identify the common themes among the texts. Insights were then generated based on the findings of the study.

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Findings

Social aspects here of speeches refer to themes generated from the different addresses of PRRD on controversial issues, particularly on the impacts or effects of PRRD's speeches on the Filipino community.

Straightforwardness: candidness. President Duterte is known for his straightforwardness which denotes candidness. Candidness is a free expression of one's true feelings or the quality of being honest and straightforward in attitude, speech, and opinions. PRRD delivers his messages straightforwardly. This means that he speaks in an easy and uncomplicated manner where his audience can understand him loudly and clearly and feel his utmost sincerity as he tackles different issues in the country. He tells in black and white the reality to the people about the lifestyles of the priest, where the money spent for this comes primarily from the gifts/offerings of the churchgoers.

One of the leadership characteristics that describe a good leader is honesty. PRDD is responsible for his people, and he considers the quality of being straightforward as an essential characteristic of a leader (Schooley, 2019). People keep looking for an honest person with strong leadership skills above all else (Jones, 2007). Honesty is the top-named quality people (Saad, 2007). However, leaders with a solid character--straightforward, dutiful, and disciplined--often run into trouble being an effective president, Rubenzer, Faschingbauer & Ones (2000). According to Dingfelder (2004), the tendency to lie can harm a president's shot at being considered historically significant.

Drug-free Philippines. One of the primary goals of the ongoing anti-illegal drugs campaign under President Duterte's administration is to keep the Philippines a drug-free nation. Building a Drug-free Philippines means eradicating or reducing illegal drug use and drug addiction in the country. PRRD wants to establish a nation where the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited. He has repeatedly declared that it is his dream to see a drug-free Philippines; hence, he works continuously to build a drug-free Philippines in his administration as part of his uncompromising stance against drugs and criminality.

Much media attention has been paid to President Duterte's war on drugs. The study analysis showed that drug-related crimes and violence escalate, diverting resources initially allocated for social services into law enforcement and the criminal justice system. Another contributing societal burden is the negative consequence of drug use that the youth may experience during their most productive years. Therefore, investing in efforts to dissuade people, especially the young ones, from using illegal drugs would greatly benefit society. The goal of PRRD for his nation is in consonance with the idea that drug abstinence can increase life expectancy, healthier families, more productive workers, safer neighborhoods, and improved learning outcomes. (PADS, 2018). His war on drugs refers to coordinated campaigns by

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governments to enforce the prohibition of drugs primarily through the coercive suppression of production and criminalization of drug use, possession, and supply (Soros, 2019). The Drug-Free Program strengthens partnerships to promote citizen involvement in efforts to reduce drug abuse, improve coordination and prevention efforts, and spread knowledge of successful programs (Sanders, 2017)

Table: 1

Social Aspects of the Speeches that may be of Value to Filipino Audience

Controversial Issues	Social Aspects	Excerpts from PPRD's Speeches
Brash manner of speaking/ making brash off-the-cut remarks	Straightforward: candidness	• *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 Pilipina,…Nagkulang ang mga g**** *eh* PRRDS9-P90 (These stupid persons thought that Philippines eh,…These g*** missed something eh) • *Matanda na ako tapos araw-araw may ganito. Paano ko habulin itong p****** *i*** *kaloko…* PRRDS3-P16 (Im'm already old yet everyday, there is like this. How do I chase this f****** s*** fool) • *Masyado ka namang bobo.P***** *i*** *papasok ka ng ganun tapos magiging g**** *ka.* PRRDS3-P68 *(You're too stupid. f****** s*** you come in like that and you'll be an a******).*
Hardline stance against drugs and criminality	Drug-free Philippines	• 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 • 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
Despotic policy against drug pushers and critiques	Strong and fearless leader	• 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-P21 • Kaya sinasabi ko sa mga kalaban ng gobyerno, p***** i** kayo huwag ninyong isipin na kayo lang ang marunong magtanim ng evil, kasamaan. Kung kaya mo, kaya ko rin. Kasi 'pag sige lang tayo dito na defensive-defensive, imbes na ganun… You go out, you kill them. Period. Ako ayaw ko ng surrender-surrender. Papakainin pa kitang p***** i** mo. Tapos babalik ka rin. PRRDS4-P21 (So I'm telling the opponents of the government, f****** s***, please don't think that you are the only ones who can cultivate evil, evil. If you can, so can I. Because if we will always stay defensive, instead of that… You go out, you kill them. Period. I don't want those who decide to surrender for the mean time. I'll feed you f****** s*** a little bit more. Then you'll still return to it.)
Cessation of graft and corruption in the government	dauntless bravery	• 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 • *Basta wa nay corruption, walay kawat, unya ang kwarta gyung proyekto, pag ingon ug 100 million, sakto gyung 100 million.* PRRDS5-P229 (As long as there is no corruption and no stealing, the amount allotted for projects will really be the same amount spent for the entire project. So if a project is allotted with 100 million, then it will really be 100 million.)
Amped up attacks against the left/ rebels/ communists	Strong and trustworthy national defense system	• 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 • *Sana itong mga NPA, do not mess up kasi pati kayo nakikinabang. Huwag kayong makialam at maghingi ng taxation kasi mas malalo tayong lalayo nang lalayo nang lalayo sa solusyon natin. Huwag kayong makialam kasi election to.* (Hopefully these NPAs, don't mess up because you benefit also from this. Do not intervene and ask for taxation because we go further and further away from our solution.)Do not terrorize and I will tell the Armed Forces and the police not to interfere if you are not deputized by the Comelec. PRRDS3-P202 • *But be that as it may, itong ISIS na 'to* (this ISIS) is part of a global insurgency. *Lahat dito may tama. Ke ma-China, ke ma --- basta 'yung --- Malaysia, Indonesia, araw-araw 'yan. Hindi lang nababalita malayo eh*. *Tayo. Ngayon, we are the center of --- 'yung [braditas?] ngayon is us kasi may nangyari.* PRRDS4-P18 (All of these are affected. China, Malaysia, Indonesia, everyday. It is just not reported in the media because it's far. We, right now are the center of [braditas?] now it's us because something happened)
Insurgency in Mindanao	audaciousness	• *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.) • *Kasi para sa mga kapatid nating Moro… Kayong mga Moro huwag kayong ma-ano sa akin ha, Maranao ang lola ko. Kaya makinig lang kayong lahat. Ayaw ko ng away kasi ako isang kaliwat ng Moro pud*. PRRDS4-P9 (Because for our Moro brothers ... You Moro don't be upset with me ha, My grandmother is a Maranao. So all of you just listen to me. I do not want to fight because I am also a descendant of Moro.
Abusive and extortionist police	Defender of the poor, weak and helpless	• *Iyong police, hanggang karami pang kalokohan*, (Those police who until now have lots of bullshits) you better shape up because I will rise and fall *sa issue ng* (in the issue of) corruption. *Ang police maraming atraso*. *P****** i** kayo. Sinabi ko na sa inyo, tama na eh.* PRRDS3-P37 (The policemen have done many wrong things. You p******i**. I told you to stop, that's enough). • Giingnan nako ang police, "Naa pa gani'y tanim bala diha, kamo tanan diha hawa mo. Hawa mo diha. Pangita mo'g laing trabaho." Mao na. Mao na'y akong warning kay maluoy ko sa pobre kay wala'y kadaganan eh. Eh 'di musumbong gyud na. PRRDS3-P37 (I told the police, "If there will be still cases of planting bullets, all of you will be fired. Find another job." That's it. This is my warning because I feel sorry for the poor because they don't have somebody to run/lean on. That is why, they will surely complain about it)
Intense love to his country	Servant leadership	• 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 • But if I get there, I would like to leave government in the hands of Filipinos who simply love their country. Ang importante kasi, ang different intensity pati love. While others get swayed away with lahat na. PRRDS3-P9 (What matters is the

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different intensity as well as love. While others get swayed away with everything.)

Strong and fearless leader. PRRD is a strong and fearless leader. Being strong means possessing a strong will, a commanding presence, and a personality that reflects his strength, determination, and resoluteness. He is renowned as a fearless leader in facing the alleged extrajudicial killing issue and standing firm in combatting the insurgency and criminality in the Philippines, knowing well the potential cost to him. He embodies strengths such as being knowledgeable of the laws of the land, being a lawyer, and possessing an excellent record of running a city for 22 years before becoming president. He also displays his unquestionable discipline as a leader and unleashes a raft of reforms for the nation's progress.

There are many types of leaders and leadership, but rare is it to find leaders like President Duterte, who operates from a fearless standpoint (Fisher, 2003). Filipinos have witnessed a leader who is confirmed with a unique personality. He acts decisively and is determined to implement reforms and fundamental change to make Filipino society more law-abiding and peaceful and the Filipino economy more inclusive for all Filipinos (Malmgren, 2019).

Dauntless bravery. Dauntless bravery means being brave and confident and not easily frightened by any circumstances or incapable of being intimidated or subdued. PRRD also shows dauntless bravery as he faces the challenges in his presidency. He is courageous as he fights against the widespread graft and corruption in the government and military. He is undaunted by the criminals. He is fierce and firm in making orders or commands not to destroy the country through graft and corruption.

Courage is simply the quality that highly distinguishes great leaders from excellent managers. Courageous leaders like President Duterte takes risks that go against the grain of their organizations. He makes decisions with the potential for revolutionary change in his administration. His boldness inspires his administration, energizes the people and his co-officials, and positions himself as a leader in societal change (George, 2017). PRRD is perceived as an effective leader who dares to see difficult situations through to the end and accept responsibility for the outcomes of his own decisions (Voyer, 2011).

Strong and trustworthy national defense system. The country has a strong and trustworthy national defense system because the Philippine constabulary is ready to serve and protect the people in an attempt to end all lawless violence and armed conflicts which jeopardize and threaten national survival. PRRD fully supports law enforcement and the police force.

Accordingly, the core mission of the Philippine military is to protect and defend the nation. This means dissuading potential assailants and, if dissuasion fails, fighting and winning

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wars. Therefore, reliable national security is essential for a country to be peaceful and prosperous (Inboden, 2016). The study revealed that PRRD has strong faith and complete trust in the capacity of policemen and military forces to perform their tasks and responsibilities. The key to national defense would be a robust and traditional military. It should have a robust, resilient, and comprehensive defense system. National defense is centered on the assumption that strengthening the military will build a safer world, a peaceful environment, and a more robust defense system for this country (RepublicanViews, 2015).

Audaciousness. PRRD possesses audaciousness. This means that he displays aggressive boldness or sheer impudence in facing controversial issues under his administration. He is bold or daring and greatly disregards conventional thought or restrictions. His solutions are usually audacious and tend to break the existing conventions. He is also valiant as he discusses issues on land conflicts. He wants to correct the historical distortion brought about by the misallocation of lands that resulted in social injustice and a stagnant rural economy.

Audacity is also reflected in PRRD's personality. He propels new reforms against even tougher moneyed and potent sectors. These include the dominant political class abetted by unprecedented and unprosecuted sleaze, especially record smuggling and pork, and specific business and professional sectors blocking efforts to improve goods and services and distribute national wealth more equitably, and make the country more environmentally responsible (Saludo, 2015).

Defender of the poor, weak and helpless. PRRD also portrays the role of protecting the hapless and puny individuals and those who lack or are deprived of strength or power. He is a provider for the poor and a defender of the disadvantaged. He is pro-poor and anti-oligarchs. His deep concern for the poor and weak is evident as he delivered his speeches on different issues.

According to Ramshaw (2010), governance is the political management and exercise of control in a country or society. For the poorest and most vulnerable, the difference that excellent or appalling governance makes to their lives is profound: the incapacity of government institutions to stop conflict, provide essential safety and security, or provide basic services can have life-or-death aftermaths; lack of chance and opportunity can avert generations of poor families from lifting themselves out of poverty (DFID, 2010). The present study revealed that PRRD considered the poor, weak, and helpless individuals his top priorities. PRRD made it abundantly clear that "Malasakit, Tunay na Pagbabago" (Compassion, Real Change) defines the character and direction of his administration. He emphasized that he had articulated these battle cries during the presidential campaign on behalf of the people hungry for genuine and meaningful change. Having been elected on that basis, he deems it his mandate to pursue such change, no matter the rough ride to its realization (Ocampo, 2016).

Servant leadership. This philosophy is built on the belief that the most influential leaders strive to provide public service to all the nation's citizens instead of accruing power or

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taking control. It is a kind of leadership where services are made available to all, regardless of revenue, physical ability, or mental acuity. PRRD exhibits servant leadership primarily concerned with serving the Filipino people and is firmly committed to growth, emancipation, and community building. This is his way of showing his intense love for the country.

The result of the study reaffirms Ehrhart's (2004) description of a servant leader as someone who acknowledges his or her moral responsibility not only for the success of his current regime but also to his or her subordinates, the government's officials and employees, and other governmental stakeholders. The servant-leader is the servant first. It is manifested through the attention and care assumed by the servant (PRRD) to his/her people – first, to make sure that other people's highest-priority needs are being served; second, creating value for the nation (Greenleaf, 1997) as cited on (Lemoine, Hartnell & Leroy, 2019). It is about putting others first, helping others grow and succeed, and empowering others (Howieson, 2019).

Conclusion

It was found that the speeches of PRRD on various controversial issues greatly impacted the Filipino community. The social aspects of PRRD's speeches that may be of value to Filipino audiences, as revealed in the study, include straightforwardness: candidness, drug-free Philippines, strong and fearless leader, dauntless bravery, strong and trustworthy national defense system, audaciousness, defender of the poor, weak and helpless, and servant leadership. The speeches of PRRD imply a direct address to the officials, military, or persons concerned without dillydallying in order for his warnings and accusations to reach the persons concerned. In return, he is expecting drastic action from them. He does not consider what words were used in his speeches and how they were addressed. Moreover, the disapproval and reaction of other people do not affect him even if he is the highest political figure in the country.

Results of the study revealed that PRRD could influence the audience and positively impact the people – their beliefs and perceptions - as he conveys and looks for appropriate support for his ideas. Furthermore, the results typify that the language used by a speaker can create powerful meaning for the hearer. This depends on how the speaker converses with his audience and the type of language he uses. This implies that a speaker can have power and control over his audience through his words. In addition, it can be implied that though he is fond of using expletive language, many Filipino people still believe that he speaks with utmost sincerity and truthfulness. The use of informal language, which tends to be loose and filled with incomplete sentences, can shape his audience's thinking unexpectedly.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Since the study is only limited to the social aspects of speeches on controversial issues that may be of value to the Filipino audience, further studies may be conducted along this line

with a focus on the linguistic and discursive devices President Duterte used in his speeches. In addition, other researchers may replicate this study and concentrate on his presidential trips and debates as their corpora. Through this, the people will be able to know and understand him better and, as a result, could dig deeper into the true meaning of his expression.

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