

# Political commitments and ideologies: A diachronic transitivity analysis of Philippine presidents' inaugural speeches

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## Abstract

This study analyzes the transitivity processes in the inaugural speeches of Filipino presidents from 1899 to 2016. Using Halliday's (1985) transitivity system model, this study aims to examine what process types are present in the inaugural speeches of these Filipino presidents, how these inaugural speeches differ in a diachronic scale, and how these processes are employed in the corpus. Findings revealed that all processes were evident in the inaugural speeches of the Filipino presidents, while the semantic aspect of the diachronic inquiry presented a significant variation of themes. It was further revealed that among these process types, the material process was the most frequently used by the Filipino presidents in presenting solutions to current problems, depicting a new government under their administration, and pertaining to God as divine providence in running the government. It was followed by the relational process, which was employed in explaining concepts, accentuating the prime responsibility of the government and the people, and describing the challenges the government faces; while the mental process was mainly used by the Filipino presidents in expressing their dispositions and political beliefs, manifesting their desire for the welfare of people, and inspiring the public to be part of nation-building. This study mainly puts forward the notion that transitivity processes play a distinct role in the inaugural speeches of Filipino presidents in persuading and informing the public as regards their ideologies and commitments.

**Keywords:** Inaugural speeches, language and politics, Philippine presidents, political discourse, transitivity analysis

## 1. Introduction

Language is undoubtedly the most important component of human survival. From its perpetuating role in almost all facets of human lives, it made itself an unending bridge that efficiently connects people to a purposeful means to communicate their ideas—a tool for social practice in expressing their intentions, maintaining societal relations, and reflecting cultural identity and world consciousness (Adjei et al., 2015; Fairclough, 2001; Salvaleon, 2019). This makes any word or language people speak a heavy-loaded human element since its mere existence is “never neutral, transparent, or innocent” (Kondowe, 2014, p. 174). Apart from its role in cultivating cultural identities, and social and cultural communication and

mobilization, language likewise has found itself as part of nation-building, quest for political independence, and the propagation of political power and ideologies (Anastassov, 2018).

This concept makes an interesting inquiry on the relationship between language and politics, for language offers a good orientation for and a critical component of understanding various ideologies conveyed within the realm of politics by investigating the attitudes, beliefs, and values that shape the perceptions of people and their reality (van Dijk, 2006, as cited in Kondowe, 2014). As Fairclough (2001) avers, this notion brings a concrete example in examining political speeches used by politicians in arguing, reasoning and asserting their claims, maintaining power, imposing rules, and propagating their political views and perspectives to the public, thus utilizing speech as a powerful platform for politicians in communicating their political goals (Medhurst, 2010, as cited in Adjei et al., 2015). This, in turn, gives rise to the study of political discourse, widely known as ‘political discourse analysis’ (PDA), that pertains to the analysis of political discourses “defined as the text and talk of politicians within overtly political contexts, or to a political, i.e., critical, approach to discourse analysis... [and] is [further] concerned with understanding the nature and function of political discourse” (van Dijk, 1997, as cited in Dunmire, 2012, p. 736).

A plethora of studies have examined the political discourses of several leading and prominent politicians in the recent decades (Adjei & Ewusi-Mensah, 2016; Adjei et al., 2015; Balog, 2019; Bustam, 2011; Kondowe, 2014; Salvaleon, 2019; Sharndama, 2015; Wang, 2010; Yujie & Fengjie, 2018), which have focused on analyzing the critical and functional components of such discourses. One interesting example of a political speech is the inaugural address of a leading and prominent politician, usually the head of state, president, or prime minister. Such a speech is a good source for corpus analysis given that its salient features serve as a platform for politicians to convey their plans and initiatives in managing a government. This political address is part of the inauguration ceremony of newly elected presidents, which is aptly called the inauguration speech (Rossiter, 1960, as cited in Kondowe, 2014). An inauguration ceremony is celebrated after the election of a new leader who will lead a new government of a country, which highlights the transition or transfer of power from the incumbent president to the new one (Cheng, 2006).

An inaugural speech becomes an instrument for a new leader to communicate with citizens (Ragsdale, 1984) although it does not require immediate feedback (Chung & Park, 2010). Furthermore, this speech is used by presidents-elect to: (a) speak how they should run the government by their own lens (Kondowe, 2014), (b) point out their positions and views on politics, and (c) express their policies publicly (Yujie & Fengjie, 2018). Pertinently, an inaugural speech sets an avenue for a new commitment between a president-elect and citizens as it gives a new pledge to be fulfilled by both parties (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990, as cited in Rush, 2007). This also serves as a way to remember a previous government, to visualize the future, and most significantly, to set the tone for the government while dealing with present challenges (Sigelman, 1996, as cited in Kondowe, 2014). Yujie and Fengjie (2018) underscore that an inaugural speech has an essential role to inspire people, for it allows them to realize vital political values through this speech.

Salvaleon’s (2019) study analyzed Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte’s 2016, 2017, and 2018 State of the Nation Addresses (SONAs) to identify how the President’s utterances would affect his political promise of change to the country. The results revealed that President Duterte mainly used the material process in the three SONAs. Furthermore,

the quantitative data would suggest that President Duterte emphasized himself as the “prime mover of major developmental plans for the country” (pp. 46-47) in putting an end to corruption, lessening the crime rate, alleviating the poverty rate, eliminating the menace of illegal drugs, and attaining peace and order throughout the Philippines. Specifically, in terms of transitivity analysis, the verbal process distantly followed as second in the years 2016 and 2017; while in 2018, the relational process ranked second. On the other hand, the behavioral (in 2016-2018) and the existential (in 2018) processes were rarely employed in the analyzed corpus.

Similarly, the material process was dominant in Philippine Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago’s privilege speeches based on Balog’s (2019) study. It was found that Senator Defensor-Santiago mainly used the material process to point out the actions of people who engaged in illegal activities and the prejudiced treatment of women in the workforce, and to give solutions to specific problems encountered. Second in rank was the relational process, followed by the existential and the behavioral processes. An almost-parallel results were found in the study of Yujie and Fengjie (2018), which analyzed the presence and the essence of transitivity in the inaugural address of President Donald Trump of the United States of America. In the said speech analysis, it was revealed that the material process had the highest representation among the process types, and this process would convey the entrusting of power not to the party but to the people of America to control and rule their government. The relational process placed second, followed by the existential and the behavioral processes.

Kondowe (2014) conducted a similar study and dealt with how the Malawian president, Bingu wa Mutharika, used his rhetoric to convey and promote his political ideologies. The study revealed that President Mutharika likewise frequently utilized the material process to commend the government’s past achievements and emphasize challenges the previous government or administration faced. Additionally, the preponderance of the material process implies the valuing of stakeholders who worked in his first term and in the previous elections. On the one hand, the relational process came in second; whereas, the behavioral process was found to be relatively insignificant among the process types, a similar finding revealed in most studies on transitivity analysis of political speeches.

In the analysis of the 2007, 2010, and 2011 speeches of King Abdullah II, Al-Haq and Al-Sleibi (2015) examined the four persuasive strategies of political discourse used by the king. First, King Abdullah II employed creative expressions in showing the reality his country was facing, which resulted in an unfavorable impression of the state of affairs in his term. Second, he used intertextuality to persuade his American audience to agree with his ideas through quoting utterances from American presidents. Third, by emphasizing specific issues, such as the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, the role of Americans in the said event, and the campaign for the international community to work hand-in-hand to prevent untoward circumstances, he employed the circumlocution strategy. Lastly, it was found that in order to accentuate the aforementioned issues, he utilized the reference strategy by using the first-person pronoun.

Using Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) framework on cohesion, Al-Majali’s (2015) critical discourse analysis (CDA) investigated the different linguistic features found in the speeches of several ousted Arab presidents during the Arab Spring Revolution (ASR). The political speeches delivered during the ASR were different from those of the presidents who had delivered speeches before the said revolution, as it was found that these ousted Arab

presidents employed lexical features, such as repetition and hyponymy, in their speeches to strategically convey and promote their ideologies.

Most political discourse studies in the recent decade (e.g., Adjei & Ewusi-Mensah, 2016; Adjei et al., 2015; Balog, 2019; Kondowe, 2014; Salvaleon, 2019; Sharndama, 2015; Wang, 2010; Yujie & Fengjie, 2018) have been limited to one period or event, thus synchronic in nature. Investigations on the diachronic scale of political discourse into such extent have received less-to-no attention, an area in the literature which has not been given enough attention by scholars. Using Halliday's (1985) transitivity model, the present study aims to analyze the inaugural speeches of 16 Filipino presidents from 1899 to 2016, especially on how they utilized language to communicate their political ideologies and emphasize their commitment for social mobilization, reformation, and change. Specifically, the present study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What transitivity process types are present in the inaugural speeches of Filipino presidents from 1899 to 2016?
2. How do the inaugural speeches of Filipino presidents differ diachronically in terms of the most dominant thematic application(s) of most frequent transitivity process type(s)?
3. How are the transitivity processes employed in the inaugural speeches of Filipino presidents?

### **1.1 Filipino Presidents from 1899 to 2016**

From 1899 to 2016, there have been 16 Filipinos who assumed the presidency (see Table 1) in the Malacañang Palace, the official residence of the president of the Republic of the Philippines located in Manila. Being the highest position in governmental hierarchy, the President of the Philippines is constitutionally vested to lead the executive branch of the government as stipulated in Article VII, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. The President is known as the head of the state and of the government. The President also functions as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and is vested to supervise and control all government departments, bureaus, commissions, and offices under the executive branch (The Official Gazette, n.d.).

From 1899 to 2016, there were five generations of the Philippine Republic. The First Philippine Republic, commonly known as the Malolos Republic, was established through the Malolos Constitution in 1899 and ended in 1901 with former President Emilio F. Aguinaldo as its first and last president. It was followed by the Commonwealth Government in 1935 with Manuel L. Quezon as its first governing president. Afterward, the Second Philippine Republic was established in 1943 as part of the provisional government during the three-year Japanese occupation in the Philippines<sup>1</sup> with Jose P. Laurel as its first and last chief executive.

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<sup>1</sup> In the roster sequence of Philippine presidents before, the list typically started with President Quezon, then succeeded by Osmeña as the second president, until Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo and Jose P. Laurel were recognized and added in the official roster of Philippine presidents in the 1960s, making President Aguinaldo as the first, President Laurel as third, President Quezon as second, and President Osmeña as fourth in the presidential list.

It ended in 1945 after the American forces had reclaimed the majority of the archipelago from the Japanese forces. In the same year, the United States granted the Philippines its independence, and the Third Republic was established. The Third Republic ended when former President Ferdinand E. Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972. When the Martial Law ended in 1981, former President Marcos introduced the Fourth Republic in the same year and was later abolished in 1986 after the first People Power Revolution. The following year, former President Maria Corazon C. Aquino inaugurated the Fifth Republic after the 1987 Philippine Constitution was ratified, which is now considered the longest republic generation in Philippine history (Nery, 2013; The Official Gazette, n.d.).

**Table 1**  
*List of Philippine presidents from 1899 to 2016*

| <b>President</b>             | <b>Party</b>               | <b>Office Term</b>       |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Emilio F. Aguinaldo          | Independent                | 1899 to 1901             |
| Manuel L. Quezon             | Nacionalista               | 1935 to 1944             |
| Jose P. Laurel               | KALIBAPI                   | 1943 to 1945             |
| Sergio S. Osmeña             | Nacionalista               | 1945 to 1946             |
| Manuel A. Roxas              | Liberal                    | 1946 to 1948             |
| Elpidio R. Quirino           | Liberal                    | 1948 to 1953             |
| Ramon F. Magsaysay           | Nacionalista               | 1953 to 1957             |
| Carlos P. Garcia             | Nacionalista               | 1957 to 1961             |
| Diosdado P. Macapagal        | Liberal                    | 1961 to 1965             |
| Ferdinand E. Marcos          | Nacionalista, KBL          | 1965 to 1986             |
| Maria Corazon C. Aquino      | UNIDO                      | 1986 to 1992             |
| Fidel V. Ramos               | Lakas-NUCD                 | 1992 to 1998             |
| Joseph E. Estrada            | LAMMP                      | 1998 to 2001             |
| Gloria M. Arroyo             | Lakas-NUCD-UMDP, Lakas-CMD | 2001 to 2010             |
| Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III | Liberal                    | 2010 to 2016             |
| Rodrigo R. Duterte           | PDP-Laban                  | 2016 to (Incumbent) 2022 |

Based on the consolidated information about the 16 Filipino presidents, former President Aguinaldo was the youngest to assume the presidency in the midst of managing a revolutionary government at age 28, whereas the incumbent President Duterte is so far the oldest president elected at age 71. Further, former President Osmeña served the shortest tenure in Philippine presidential history; he stayed in office for only one year and 10 months or 665 days after the sudden death of former President Quezon in 1944. On the other hand, former President Marcos had the longest serving term in the history of Philippine presidency, which lasted for 21 years (Szczepanski, 2019). The Philippine presidency from 1899 to 2016 was occupied mostly by natives from the Luzon island (12 or 75%); whereas, the incumbent President Duterte is the first president-elect from Mindanao (Gavilan, 2016).

## 1.2 Theoretical Framework

The present study is mainly anchored in Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). The main feature of this theory is that it is pivotally based on the grammatical usage and description of languages, making the entirety of the concept functional in its own right. Known as the *Hallidayan linguistics*, SFG posits that the relationship between language and its functions plays significant roles within varied social and cultural settings (Nordquist, 2019a). The notion foregrounds that humans have the linguistic choice in construing their world experiences by producing linguistic utterances and texts of any language, making a representational network as its system that is determined by different social environments and cultural contexts (Adjei et al., 2015; Salvaleon, 2019; Yujie & Fengjie, 2018).

Halliday (1994) argues that any human language and its perceived properties, shaped by social and cultural demands, have three distinct metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Ideational metafunction is primarily concerned with the substantial role of language in representing the reality available to the human experience, awareness, cognition and perception, and the overall linguistic ability of speaking and understanding, involving two main systems such as transitivity and ergativity. It is also responsible for providing content and meaning to transfer and communicate information clearly and efficiently (Adjei & Ewusi-Mensah, 2016; Bustam, 2011; Wang, 2010). On the other hand, interpersonal metafunction is concerned with the embodiment of all uses of language in expressing, establishing, and maintaining interactions and social relations among interlocutors (Adjei & Ewusi-Mensah, 2016; Yujie & Fengjie, 2018). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) explicate that interpersonal metafunction is maintained and is functionally existent when interlocutors within communication fully pertain to the expression of "our appraisal of an attitude towards whoever we are addressing and what we are talking about" (p. 29); whereas, textual metafunction describes language as an element used to signify written and spoken discourse, i.e., developed into a coherent and living passage related to its perceived contextual setting (Salvaleon, 2019). To this extent, only the ideational transitivity system and its processes are the main foci of this study. Further, the present study focuses on how meaning is communicated and expressed in the inaugural speeches of 16 Filipino presidents from 1899 to 2016 through transitivity within the clauses, which is a fundamental part of the ideational metafunction.

### 1.2.1 Transitivity System

Transitivity is a semantic category that pertains to the fundamental element of the ideational metafunction, which is part of a broader scope of the SFG. In expounding this notion, Halliday (1985) explicates that the way humans accommodate reality reflects the representation of human beings in building a mental picture, i.e., composed of a "manageable set of process types" consisting of three distinct components: "a process unfolding through time, the participants involved in the process, [and] circumstances associated with the process" (Yuqiong & Fengjie, 2018, p. 71), which pertain to the nature and characteristics of transitivity.

Transitivity mainly refers to the way speakers express and/or represent their experiences in the real world or in their own world of consciousness through the processes of doing, sensing, being, saying, behaving, and existing that are expressed within the structure of clauses as part of the conceptual system of language (Halliday, 1971, as cited in Adjei & Ewusi-Mensah, 2016). The transitivity system primarily includes six process types, namely material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential, in which “the term ‘process’ is used here in an extended sense to cover all phenomena and anything that is expressed by a verb; this can be an event, whether physical or not, state, or relation” (Kondowe, 2014, p. 176).

Material process (MaP) deals with the processes of ‘doing’ and ‘happening’ carried out by the ‘doer’ called Actor or Agent, which expresses physical actions and certain events through the use of different verb forms (e.g., *elect, get, give, choose*); whereas, another participant(s) that represent(s) the state of being and serve(s) as an optional element(s) affected by the process is called Goal (Adjei et al., 2015; Kondowe, 2016; Yujie & Fengjie, 2018). Mental process (MeP), on the other hand, is concerned with how language encodes meanings represented by different verb forms. This involves human senses (e.g., *see, hear, feel*), disposition (e.g. *like, love, admire*), cognition (e.g., *think, believe, know*), and desideration (e.g., *want, need, intend*). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, as cited in Kondowe, 2014) put forward the notion that mental process involves a Senser who actualizes the process that occurs only in mind; while Phenomenon is a representational entity, i.e., mentally perceived by the Senser.

**Table 2**  
*Summary of the six transitivity processes (Adopted from Halliday, 1985, p. 131)*

| Process    | Category Meaning | Participant               | Sample Verbs                          |
|------------|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Material   | Doing            | Actor, Goal               | elect, give, choose                   |
|            | Happening        | Actor, Affected           | get, expose                           |
| Mental     | Perception       | Senser, Phenomenon        | see, hear, notice, feel, taste, smell |
|            | Affection        | Senser, Phenomenon        | like, love, admire, miss, fear, hate  |
|            | Cognition        | Senser, Phenomenon        | think, believe, know, doubt           |
|            | Volition         | Senser, Phenomenon        | want, need, intend, desire, hope      |
| Verbal     | Saying           | Sayer, Receiver, Verbiage | say, tell, pledge, express, address   |
| Relational | Attribute        | Carrier, Attribute        | to be, linking verbs                  |
|            | Identifying      | Token, Value              | to be, equal, signify, define         |
|            | Possessive       | Possessor, Possession     | have, has, possess, own               |
| Behavioral | Behaving         | Behaver                   | smile, look, sniff                    |
| Essential  | Existing         | Existent                  | to be                                 |

Verbal process (VP), as the name implies, is the process of saying (accompanied

by verb forms such as *report*, *pledge*, *address*) that expresses “ideas constructed in human consciousness” and their relationship to the “ideas enacted in the form of language,” and is typically found within the scope of mental and relational processes (Thompson, 2004, as cited in Kondowe, 2014, p. 176). This process involves three key participants, namely Sayer, Receiver, and Verbiage. In this process, the Sayer produces the utterance. The Receiver serves as the addressee or the receiver of the message, while the Verbiage represents the actual message addressed by the Sayer.

Another type of transitivity system is the relational process (RP). This process is concerned with the being of relations with the abstract world. The state of action carried out by one of the participants in this process is somewhat analogous to the condition portrayed by the material process. However, a participant in this process does not affect nor influence the other participant(s) in any physical state since the relationship between these entities is abstract in nature (Kondowe, 2014; Salvaleon, 2019). The relational process has three categories, namely Attribute, Identifying, and Possessive. Attribute refers to the ‘qualities’ given to objects or entities, and the one being described is called Carrier. Identifying, according to Halliday (1994), refers to two independent participants who express two identical and equal properties of units called Token (one that is to be defined) and Value (one that defines the token by providing its necessary descriptions). One last category of the relational process is called Possessive. This category involves two participants, which are often associated to the relational attributive process, only that relational possessives show ‘possession’ of objects or attributes being carried out by one of the participants called ‘possessor’.

Behavioral process (BP) describes both physiological and psychological behaviors that are situated and known to humans. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), the behavioral process is the least frequent among the process types in the transitivity system and is found within the scope of the material and the mental processes. It includes a participant called Behavior, which carries out verb forms (e.g., *smile*, *look*, *sniff*) that manifest “outward materializations of inner thoughts, the acting out of processes of awareness and physiological conditions” (Salvaleon, 2019, p. 43). The last process type under the transitivity system is the existential process (EP). This process is concerned with the manifestation and representation of existence and happenings. It is typically accompanied by ‘be’ verbs and is usually paired with the demonstrative pronoun ‘there,’ which serves as a subject of a sentence, although it does not really have any functions in the sentence in representing a subject (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study employed the explanatory sequential mixed methods research design. It is a design that involves two interacting phases of quantitative and qualitative data. In this design, the first phase involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data where specific results are identified; the second phase, on the other hand, utilizes qualitative data to interpret and explain the said results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Subedi, 2016). The quantitative



data in the present study were obtained from the consolidated frequency and percentage distributions, and rankings of the different transitivity processes examined in the inaugural speeches of Filipino presidents, while the qualitative data were analyzed by interpreting how the Filipino presidents used these transitivity processes in the said speeches.

## 2.2 Sources of Data

Sixteen (16) inaugural speeches of Filipino presidents from 1899 to 2016 were obtained from the website of the *Official Gazette*, the official journal of the Republic of the Philippines ([www.officialgazette.gov.ph](http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph)) (see Table 3). These inaugural speeches were used as study corpus to determine how the Filipino presidents employed such discourse as a platform to convey their political commitments (e.g., plans, promises) and ideologies.

## 2.3 Data Analysis

The inaugural speeches of the 16 Filipino presidents were analyzed using Halliday's (1985) transitivity model. The transitivity processes in each inaugural speech were classified via manual coding through Microsoft Word, and the analysis was carried out for three weeks. The code schemes employed in classifying each transitivity process type are as follows: MaP for the material process; MeP, mental process; RP, relational process; VP, verbal process; BP, behavioral process; and EP, existential process (see the extracts in 3.3 showing how the analysis was done employing these code schemes). After the manual classification of process types, the data were tallied and computed using Microsoft Excel, while clauses containing similar process types were further examined for thematic classifications. Thematic classification refers to the systematic identification of themes or patterns within a set of qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

**Table 3**  
*Inaugural speeches of Philippine presidents from 1899 to 2016*

| Code and President's Name | Year of Inauguration | Number of Words |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| IS1 Emilio F. Aguinaldo   | 1899                 | 601             |
| IS2 Manuel L. Quezon      | 1935                 | 1,684           |
| IS3 Jose P. Laurel        | 1943                 | 4,105           |
| IS4 Sergio Osmeña         | 1944                 | 2,042           |
| IS5 Manuel A. Roxas       | 1946                 | 4,387           |
| IS6 Elpidio Quirino       | 1949                 | 2,912           |
| IS7 Ramon Magsaysay       | 1953                 | 1,618           |
| IS8 Carlos P. Garcia      | 1957                 | 2,788           |
| IS9 Diosdado Macapagal    | 1961                 | 1,924           |
| IS10 Ferdinand E. Marcos  | 1965                 | 1,972           |

Table 3 continued...

| Code and President's Name      |                              | Year of Inauguration | Number of Words |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| IS11                           | Corazon C. Aquino            | 1986                 | 211             |
| IS12                           | Fidel V. Ramos               | 1992                 | 2,064           |
| IS13                           | Joseph Estrada               | 1998                 | 1,898           |
| IS14                           | Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo      | 2001                 | 1,066           |
| IS15                           | Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III | 2010                 | 2,054           |
| IS16                           | Rodrigo R. Duterte           | 2016                 | 1,484           |
| <b>Total:</b>                  |                              |                      | <b>32,810</b>   |
| <b>Mean (Word per Speech):</b> |                              |                      | <b>2,050.63</b> |

Note: Former Presidents Arroyo and Marcos had a series of inaugural speeches as they assumed the presidency. Former President Arroyo had her second term in 2004, while former President Marcos had his succeeding terms in 1969, 1981, and supposedly in 1986. In this study, only the first inaugural speeches of both former presidents (i.e., Arroyo in 2001 and Marcos in 1965) were included in the corpus.

As described by Halliday (1985), transitivity can be best analyzed through simple sentences or clauses with simple structures. However, the analysis does not merely end there. As an important linguistic category that has been controversial for several decades, Hopper and Thompson (1980) put forward the notion that transitivity is a matter of degree, which ranges from high to low, and that it shows prototypical effects. However, the attempt to define an event as prototypically transitive elicited disagreement among several linguists provided the fact that its nature is nonrestrictive. However, as traditionally defined, it is considered as a dynamic event where an agent that acts volitionally on a patient is directly affected and/or caused by such an event. Rozas (2007) emphasizes that "... the canonical notion of transitivity seems to rely on the traditional definition stating that in a transitive clause 'the action passes from an agent onto a patient'" (pp. 18-19), with the agent acting consciously and volitionally (cf. Ashild, 2007). However, prototypical semantic properties of the canonical construction of transitivity clauses that individuates the character of the prototypical object does not come up to a full agreement as Delancey (1987) and Tsunoda (1985, as cited in Rozas, 2007) negate the notion that volition is a parameter of such properties of the transitive construction.

In line with this, it should be noted that most of the inaugural speeches are composed of compound and compound-complex sentences, not to mention the composition of transitivity clauses with varying degrees of transitivity. Thus, the scope of analysis of this study covers not only the transitivity clauses with traditionally composed participants (e.g., actor, patient, sender) but also those participants or actants with prototypical effects.

The researchers also consulted with two intercoders to independently code 30% of the corpus. These two intercoders have been teaching and specializing in language education for more than six years at the time of the study. They likewise had experienced working on the same nature of the present study, not to mention that both of them hold graduate degrees in language education. Before the coding process, the two intercoders were oriented about the framework and the code schemes to be employed in the analysis. A two-day pilot online consultation was conducted to ensure that the coding would run smoothly. The intercoders

were given three weeks to complete the given task. After which, it was found that 905 (24.35%) of transitivity process types were coded differently based on the researchers' and the intercoders' analyses. To address this concern, a thorough discussion and consultation among the coders was conducted by reanalyzing the questionable data until they arrived at a consensus as regards the categories of the said data.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Transitivity Process Types in the Inaugural Speeches of Filipino Presidents

A total of 3,721 transitivity process types were found in the inaugural speeches analyzed (see Table 4). The material process dominated all the other process types with 2,221 (59.69%), followed by the relational (885 [23.78%]) and the mental process (361 [9.70%]), respectively. The existential and the behavioral process were found to be the least occurring process types, with a combined frequency of 79 (EP: 43 [1.16%]; BP: 36 [0.97%]). These findings are congruent with those in previous studies that have focused on analyzing political discourse in the recent decade (Adjei & Ewusi-Mensah, 2016; Adjei et al., 2015; Balog, 2019; Kondowe, 2014; Yujie & Fengjie, 2018; Yuqiong & Fengjie, 2018; Zhang, 2017).

The preponderance of the material process implies the notion that this process type has a significant contribution to the inaugural speeches under consideration. The material process enabled the Filipino presidents to communicate their ideologies and intentions in their speeches. It can be assumed that the use of the material process added value to their persuasive appeal as they intended to shape public perception and instill the idea that their government would bring action and change.

Apart from its frequent use in political discourse, the material process was also prevalent in other areas of discourse such as literature pieces (Landa, 2016; Salayo & Lontoc-Macam, 2019; Song, 2013), newspaper headlines and editorials (Miranti, 2014; Ong'onda, 2016; Valeriano & Lintao, 2016), and songs (Alvaro, 2013; Harbi et al., 2019), and these findings support the notion that the material process is one salient transitivity process type evident in any natural language, for it represents certain actions that enable an idea being construed to be meaningful within a certain continuum (Halliday, 1994).

**Table 4**

*Frequency and percentage distributions of transitivity process types in the inaugural speeches of Filipino presidents*

| Transitivity Process Type | Frequency | Percentage | Rank |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|------|
| Material                  | 2,221     | 59.69      | 1    |
| Mental                    | 361       | 9.70       | 3    |
| Verbal                    | 175       | 4.70       | 4    |
| Relational                | 885       | 23.78      | 2    |

Table 4 continued...

| <b>Transitivity Process Type</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Rank</b> |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Behavioral                       | 36               | 0.97              | 6           |
| Existential                      | 43               | 1.16              | 5           |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>3,721</b>     | <b>100.00</b>     |             |

### 3.2 Diachronic Inquiry into the Most Frequently Used Transitivity Process and Its Dominant Thematic Application

A diachronic inquiry into a language enables one to analyze and investigate “a particular language in its entire history” (Chemssi, 2015, para. 2) as “it describes any [linguistic] work which maps the shifts and fractures and mutations of languages over the centuries” (Harris, 1993, as cited in Nordquist, 2019b, para. 4). As one engages in a diachronic investigation of a language, the inquiry should account the various aspects of language change. According to Aitchison (2001), these aspects of change(s) in language may generally cover the spectrums starting from syntactical, lexical, phonological, to semantical changes, accompanied by different sociolinguistic (external) factors. Apart from presenting the most frequent transitivity process type(s) evident in the corpus, a diachronic inquiry would enable one to describe and fully understand how the most frequent process(es) found in the inaugural speeches of Filipino presidents represent(s) these aspects of language change. Furthermore, presenting the most frequent transitivity process(es) would allow this diachronic inquiry to shed light on how the speeches under study were shaped by such process(es).

As evident in Table 5, the material process is the most frequent in each of the inaugural speeches of Filipino presidents. This result confirms the pervasiveness of the material process not only in political discourse (e.g., Balog, 2019; Kondowe, 2014; Salvaleon, 2019) but also in several other areas of discourse as well as reported in 3.1. In this case, this diachronic inquiry presents no significant variation in the syntactic aspect of language use.

However, this representation of the most frequently employed transitivity process in each inaugural speech interestingly indicates the diachronic properties of language in the semantic aspect. It should be noted that each transitivity process is accompanied by a number of thematic applications<sup>2</sup>. In this case, after classifying the themes in all transitivity processes, it was found that the material process was used by the Filipino presidents in their inaugural speeches in a number of ways such as: (1) presenting solutions to the problems of the nation, (2) depicting a new government under their respective administration, and (3) pertaining to God as divine providence in running the government (see 3.3 for the thematic applications of the other transitivity processes). However, as shown in Table 5, only the first two themes, i.e.,  $n=9$  (56.25%) and  $n=7$  (43.75%), respectively, were found to be the most frequently used in each inaugural speech.

<sup>2</sup> The term ‘thematic application’ is associated with the technical term ‘thematic classification,’ which refers to the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this case, the term ‘thematic application’ (in section 3.2, Table 5) refers to the frequently employed/used/applied theme represented by the most frequent transitivity process in each period.

**Table 5**

*Percentage distributions and dominant thematic applications of the most frequent transitivity process type in the inaugural speeches in each period*

| <b>Presidency Period</b>                         | <b>MFP (Percentage)</b> | <b>Frequently Used Theme</b>                          |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| Pre-World War (1899 to 1913)                     |                         |   |
| Emilio F. Aguinaldo                              | MaP (38.78)             | Depicting a new government under their administration |
| World Wars I and II (1914 to 1945)               |                         |   |
| Manuel L. Quezon                                 | MaP (58.11)             | Depicting a new government under their administration |
| Jose P. Laurel                                   | MaP (62.25)             | Presenting solutions to the problems of the nation    |
| Sergio Osmeña                                    | MaP (65.78)             | Presenting solutions to the problems of the nation    |
| Post-World War (1946 to 1985)                    |                         |   |
| Manuel A. Roxas                                  | MaP (57.94)             | Depicting a new government under their administration |
| Elpidio Quirino                                  | MaP (49.32)             | Presenting solutions to the problems of the nation    |
| Ramon Magsaysay                                  | MaP (61.11)             | Depicting a new government under their administration |
| Carlos P. Garcia                                 | MaP (70.53)             | Presenting solutions to the problems of the nation    |
| Diosdado Macapagal                               | MaP (60.70)             | Presenting solutions to the problems of the nation    |
| Ferdinand E. Marcos                              | MaP (60.83)             | Presenting solutions to the problems of the nation    |
| People Power Revolutions I and II (1986 to 2000) |                         |   |
| Corazon C. Aquino                                | MaP (66.67)             | Presenting solutions to the problems of the nation    |
| Fidel V. Ramos                                   | MaP (64.61)             | Depicting a new government under their administration |
| Joseph Estrada                                   | MaP (59.84)             | Depicting a new government under their administration |
| Post-People Power Revolution (2001 to present)   |                         |   |
| Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo                          | MaP (58.82)             | Presenting solutions to the problems of the nation    |

Table 5 continued...

| Presidency Period            | MFP (Percentage) | Frequently Used Theme                                 |
|------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III | MaP [64.17])     | Depicting a new government under their administration |
| Rodrigo R. Duterte           | MaP (48.60)      | Presenting solutions to the problems of the nation    |

Note: MFP (Most Frequent Process); MaP (Material Process)

While each inaugural speech represents a unique historical account, it was found that there are at least five distinct periods of Philippine presidency that have emerged, namely Pre-World War (1899 to 1913), World Wars I and II (1914 to 1945), Post-World War (1946 to 1985), People Power Revolutions I and II (1986 to 2000), and Post-People Power Revolution (2001 to present). These periods were premised on significant historical events that transpired in the Philippines from 1899 to 2016. In line with this historical account, as part of the diachronic inquiry into the inaugural speeches of Filipino presidents, the researchers argue that while the material process was found as the most frequently used in the corpus, its perceived uses and applications in the speeches would vary based on themes, which connotes the semantic aspect of language change. That is, while each period between 1899 to 2016 did not present such evolution of the transitivity processes syntactically, the uses and applications of the ‘most frequently used transitivity process type’ interestingly present the semantic aspect of language change, which depends on different sociolinguistic factors such as historical events or circumstances where such discourses were premised.

### 3.3 Uses of Transitivity Processes in the Inaugural Speeches of Filipino Presidents

This study likewise examined how transitivity processes were employed in the inaugural speeches of Filipino presidents. Each process type enabled the Filipino presidents to convey their thoughts and influence people through their political values and ideologies. This becomes possible through the themes elicited from the process types found in the corpus, which are shown in the succeeding parts.

#### 3.3.1 Material Process

As the most evident process type in the corpus, the material process serves several functions in the inaugural speeches. Given its nature to represent the process of action through the Actor participant, (the doer) who performs the action, and with the Goal participant, i.e., the one that receives the action, the material process signifies that the source of perceived political power has much opportunity to influence and persuade people (Balog, 2019; Zhang, 2017). The material process primarily gives an impression of collective power to the audience, which may be an effective way to manifest ideologies and describe actions in a discourse. In the present study, the Filipino presidents employed the material process in their inaugural speeches for the following purposes: depicting a new government under their administration, presenting solutions to the problems of the nation, and pertaining to God as divine providence

in running the government. These uses of the material process are exemplified and explained in each set of extracts presented below.

### **Presenting solutions to the problems of the nation**

- (1) “But we can and we should shape (MaP) the forces of our environment and education so that the propagation of health and intelligence may outrun (MaP) the reproduction of disease and ignorance.” [IS3]
- (2) “We must produce (MaP) here, by and for ourselves, enough to provide for the fundamental needs of life—food, shelter, and clothing.” [IS8]
- (3) “We shall give (MaP) impetus to industries that will provide clothing for our population at reasonable prices.” [IS9]

Acknowledging pre-existing problems of the country becomes more appealing and engaging when solutions to these problems are underscored by someone who is in the seat of power such as the president. This theme was evident in the analyzed inaugural speeches, which is a similar finding revealed in the studies of Adjei and Ewusi-Mensah (2016) and Balog (2019) where the material process was used in political speeches to present policies and solutions to the problems the incoming administration would face. This holds true especially when former President Laurel became the president in the midst of World War II. As he tried to surmount the impacts of war in the country, he addressed several societal issues that had lingered that time such as the revival of agricultural production, health, and education as shown in extract 1. Extract 2 from former President Garcia likewise addressed this issue by pertaining to the government’s aim to provide the fundamental needs of people. This resulted from his plan to revitalize the Filipino enterprise and commercialization, which advanced his campaign called the *Filipino First Policy* that prioritized Filipino-owned businesses and products made by Filipinos in the late 1950s. Extract 3 analogously construes the objective of giving consideration and motivation to different industries and sectors to contribute to the economic transformation of the country during the administration of former President Macapagal in the early 1960s.

### **Depicting a new government under their administration**

- (4) “We shall build (MaP) a government that will be just, honest, efficient, and strong...” [IS2]
- (5) “I will not place (MaP) my Government in the position of accusing the United States Congress of willingly conspiring to cheat us of our birthright.” [IS5]
- (6) “... my Government will work (MaP) hand in hand with non-government organizations and people’s organizations.” [IS12]

Further, one salient point of delivering an inaugural speech is to persuade the public as the new president assumes the power to supervise and lead a country. Unlike any other speeches, an inaugural speech is a symbolic deliverance of motivation and social mobilization for the public. It conservatively represents the presidential enactment of fundamental political values and principles that are meant to influence people to support the new administration

(Liu, 2012,). As a way to make their respective administration an enterprise for social change and mobilization, the Filipino presidents described what their government would be in the course of their presidential term. The use of the material process also suggests that power does not only come from those who run the government but also from the people or constituents, thus implying a collective power. Based on extracts 4-6, most of the Filipino presidents would tend to depict their government as a social model built for the people and their welfare while maintaining independence or sovereignty, i.e., free from any foreign or external controls.

**Pertaining to God as divine providence in running the government**

- (7) "... God never abandons (MaP) a people who ever follows (MaP) His unerring and guiding Hand." [IS2]
- (8) "... God has bestowed (MaP) for his well-being, effectively provide (MaP) for his needs and transform (MaP) our country at an early time into land of abundance not only for a favored few but for each and every Filipino." [IS9]
- (9) "... Divine Providence has willed (MaP) that you and I can now translate this faith into deeds." [IS10]

Given the symbolic gesture brought by an inaugural speech, Zhang (2017) puts forward the notion that since time immemorial, this ceremonial inauguration can be likened to a ritual of covenants mirrored by cultural orientations. Apart from being a platform to express and promote ideologies, and exercise or manifest power, an inaugural speech becomes a monumental document for several Filipino presidents to express their faith and trust to God as divine providence and benevolence, a theistic concept deeply rooted in the Filipino culture (see the above extracts 7-9). This cultural orientation has been around since the pre-Spanish era and has been richly cultivated by Catholicism, which is the dominant religion in the country.

### **3.3.2 Relational Process**

Next to the material process, the relational process ranked second. Politicians such as presidents primarily utilize this process to explain their political concepts and views on different national issues (Balog, 2019; Zhang, 2017). In terms of the inaugural speeches analyzed, it was found that most of the Filipino presidents employed the relational process in explaining their political concepts, accentuating the prime responsibility of the government and the people, and describing the challenges the government faces, as exemplified in each set of the following extracts.



### **Explaining concepts**

- (10) “This means (RP) that we have to rehabilitate and plan out our national economy...” [IS3]
- (11) “No government is (RP) so helpless, it cannot prosecute criminals, especially when the criminals are (RP) officials operating in the open.” [IS13]
- (12) “Traditional politics is (RP) the politics of the status quo.” [IS14]

The Filipino presidents used a combination of verb forms in highlighting the obligation of the government to its people, which generally pertains to guaranteeing the public’s overall welfare as indicated in extracts 10 and 11. On the other hand, extract 12 represents the use of the relational process in construing views on the political condition of the country; thus, the relational process serves as the prime conduit for the Filipino presidents to convey their political concepts and principles.

### **Accentuating the prime responsibility of the government and the people**

- (13) “Philippine relief will be (RP) prompt and adequate.” [IS4]
- (14) “It is (RP) a government that acts as the guardian of the law’s majesty, the source of justice to the weak, and solace to the underprivileged, a ready friend and protector of the common man and a sensitive instrument of his advancement and not captivity.” [IS10]
- (15) “We are (RP) all part of a nation that can begin to dream again.” [IS15]

The use of the relational process also enabled the Filipino presidents to emphasize the responsibility of the government to its people and the latter’s crucial role in nation-building. Extract 13 refers to the statement from former President Osmeña when the country was in the latter stages of World War 2 where the damages brought by the war had begun to be part of the reality of several Filipinos that time. He then addressed in his speech in 1944 that the Philippine government would be in continuous support for those who suffered, accentuating the government’s effort of relief operations to help the Filipinos who were victims of the war. Pertinently, the Filipino presidents emphasized the government’s role to promote and ensure the common welfare of the Filipino people as demonstrated in extract 14, which was delivered by former President Marcos in his (first) 1965 inaugural speech. Extract 15 from former president B. Aquino, on the other hand, signifies the government’s role in protecting the welfare and the common interest of people, which likewise shows the collective or mutual responsibility of the government and the people as one nation.

More so, based on the analyzed speeches, the relational process could convey and describe the problems the government faced in different periods such as the maintenance of peace and order in some parts of the country (extract 16 from former President Quezon), crime rates (extract 17, former President Estrada), and faith and trust of the Filipino people in the government (extract 18, President Duterte).

**Describing the challenges the government faces**

- (16) “Without peace and public order, it will be (RP) impossible to promote education, improve the condition of the masses, protect the poor and ignorant against exploitation, and otherwise insure the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property.” [IS2]
- (17) “These are (RP) the crimes that I will make it my personal apostolate to punish: –low crimes in the streets by rich or poor alike; –high crimes on [sic] Ayala or Binondo; –and graft and corruption throughout the government–executive, legislative and judicial.” [IS13]
- (18) “Erosion of faith and trust in government–that is (RP) the real problem that confronts us.” [IS16]

**3.3.3 Mental Process**

Aside from the material and the relational processes, the mental process also obtained a relatively high proportion in the corpus analyzed. As discussed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, as cited in Kondowe, 2014), this process is responsible for the expression of inner activities such as cognition, perception, affection, and desideration, with Senser as the primary participant in the process. Based on the analysis, the Filipino presidents utilized the mental process in expressing their dispositions and political beliefs, manifesting their desire for the welfare of people, and inspiring the public to take part in nation-building, as indicated in each set of extracts below.

**Expressing dispositions and political beliefs**

- (19) “Our social policy will seek (MeP) to broaden the base of our democracy.” [IS10]
- (20) “I believe (MeP) that there is more to this democratic idea.” [IS12]

In every successful transition of government leadership, problems left by the previous administration are perceived to be inherited by the new government. One way to address this, as revealed in the corpus, was for the Filipino presidents to incorporate and express their political beliefs. This has become prevalent in cases when some former Filipino presidents emphasized the substantial role of democracy in the Philippine society, as shown in extracts 19 and 20 from former Presidents Marcos and Ramos, respectively.

**Manifesting desire for the welfare of people**

- (21) “We want (MeP) our people to enjoy an increasing measure of social justice and amelioration of livelihood.” [IS6]
- (22) “They must have believed (MeP) that we can provide this new outlook, and perhaps the passion for excellence–the motive force for greatness.” [IS10]

The Filipino presidents also utilized the mental process in expressing their desire to improve the welfare of people (see extracts 21 and 22). This result supports the findings

in Zhang's (2017) study of transitivity in the debate speeches of Hillary Clinton and US President Donald Trump, which revealed that through the use of the mental process, both politicians tried to influence the public to support their policies by striking "a sympathetic chord in the hearts of the audience" (p. 69).

### **Inspiring the public to be part of nation-building**

- (23) "I cannot believe (MeP) that their sense of duty would dictate to them otherwise, then to come down from the mountains and other hiding places and participate in the coming enterprise of nation-building." [IS3]
- (24) "And, lastly, I hope (MeP) to bring all Filipinos together so as to achieve that power of common purpose that will enable us to escape the crisis of our region and achieve our centennial dream." [IS13]

Furthermore, apart from persuading people to support the new administration, another application or use of the mental process in the analyzed inaugural speeches is inspiring the public to be part of nation-building as indicated in extracts 23 and 24. Former President Laurel, in extract 23, referred to the members of Huks, an anti-Japanese guerilla army established in 1942 during the invasion of the Japanese forces in the Philippines. In his inaugural speech, he addressed the Huks members to work with the new government in the pursuit of nation-building. On the other hand, extract 24 came from former President Estrada who referred to the great recession that transpired in 1997; the Philippines was one of the several Asian countries affected by this recession. Because of this economic devastation, many Filipinos were unemployed. Former President Estrada used this untoward event in his inaugural speech as a reference to remind the public about this particular lesson of the past and to emphasize that having a common purpose would lead the Filipino people in achieving common goals.

### **3.3.4 Verbal Process**

With a relatively minimal occurrence in the corpus, the verbal process was the fourth frequently used process type in the studied speeches. As a transitivity process, it represents the relationship among ideas constructed within the realm of human consciousness (Thompson, 2004, as cited in Kondowe, 2014). The verbal process utilized in the analyzed speeches can be categorized into two main themes: pledging to serve the people and lead the change, and appealing for cooperation and support from the public. The following extracts exemplify these themes:

### **Pledging to serve the people and lead the change**

- (25) "I pledge (VP) myself to rectify injustice, but I likewise pledge (VP) myself to restore the role of law and government as the arbiter of right among the people." [IS5]

- (26) “I pledge (VP) my administration to your service. I pledge (VP) that we shall extend the protection of the law to everyone, fairly and impartially—to the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlettered—recognizing no party but the nation, no family but the great family of our race, no interest save the common welfare.” [IS7]
- (27) “... I pledge (VP) that every peso worth of assistance will be spent honestly and to the best advantage.” [IS7]

#### **Appealing for cooperation and support from the public**

- (28) “I appeal (VP) to your patriotism and summon (VP) your nobility of heart so that we, may united in the common endeavor, once more dedicate ourselves to the realization of our national destiny.” [IS2]
- (29) “I ask (VP) from the nation the full and undivided support of heart, mind, and energy for the necessary tasks which await us.” [IS5]
- (30) “I therefore call (VP) upon all elements in the nation to join hands and to close ranks despite the political barriers that may separate them from one another.” [IS6]
- (31) “I therefore call (VP) upon the remnants of the Huk uprising still hiding in the hills to lay down their arms...” [IS7]

Based on the above extracts, it can be noticed that the Filipino presidents often utilized the pronoun ‘I’ as the main participant in the process, referring to themselves as the direct Sayer of this process. The verbal process aided the Filipino presidents in conveying their intentions to the public as it helped these presidents address their specific agenda in their inaugural speeches. This finding is consistent with those in Kondowe’s (2014) study, which found that the verbal process was used by politicians to appeal and pledge to the public that they would address the societal problems of the country and, at the same time, to emphasize the necessary overall support and cooperation from people. The consistent use of verbal clauses in the above extracts would accentuate these assumptions.

#### **3.3.5 Existential Process**

The existential process was one of the least occurring process types in the corpus following the behavioral process. As one that represents existence and happenings, the existential process was utilized by the Filipino presidents in their inaugural speeches to highlight their ascension to the power, emphasizing the inauguration itself as a symbolic opportunity for change, as shown in the following extracts:

- (32) “... there is (EP) here, finally, a national spirit, which unites and forges together all Filipino hearts into a single idea and single aspiration to live independent of any foreign yoke in the democratic shadow of the Philippine Republic.” [IS1]

- (33) “There will be (EP) no violent changes from the established order of things, except such as may be absolutely necessary to carry into effect...” [IS2]
- (34) “There is (EP) a dire need for the reappraisal of human values, for the perfection of human industry as an art and science, for the exaltation and dignification of the human personality.” [IS3]

### 3.3.6 Behavioral Process

As the least occurring process type, the behavioral process was minimally used in the analyzed inaugural speeches. In fact, in recent studies on political discourse, some speakers did not often exemplify their behavior, which is similar to the function and use of the existential process in the said discourse (Adjei et al., 2015; Balog, 2019). Given its limited occurrence in the corpus, the behavioral process “could not [really] evoke any persuasive power that would influence people” (Balog, 2019, p. 60) as compared with the other process types frequently used in political discourse.

#### **Directing the public to envision a better future**

- (35) “... let us march (BP) together towards the dream of greatness.” [IS10]
- (36) “... we should look (BP) after the individual welfare of the poorer elements who constitute the bulk of our population...” [IS3]
- (37) “Our citizens shall be heard (BP), and the application of these measures shall be relaxed where stability, stability, and the common good so demand.” [IS6]

Interestingly, albeit low in frequency, the behavioral process in the speeches helped convey the attempt of some former Filipino presidents to direct the Filipino people in envisioning a better future as exemplified in extracts 35-37. Correspondingly, it can be inferred from these extracts that the behavioral process in the inaugural speeches of some former Filipino presidents serves as a form of call to the public to have shared goals, which often pertain to national interests.

Through the presented themes under each transitivity process, it can be assumed that the Filipino presidents were able to convey their political commitments and ideologies. Themes revealed in the three most frequent process types, e.g., ‘presenting solutions to the problems of the nation,’ ‘accentuating the prime responsibility of the government and the people,’ ‘describing the challenges the government faces,’ ‘expressing dispositions and political beliefs,’ were inclined to convey and promote the political ideologies of the Filipino presidents. On the other hand, themes found in the least occurring processes, e.g., ‘pledging to serve the people and lead the change’ and ‘appealing for cooperation and support from the public,’ would tend to manifest the political commitments expressed in the analyzed inaugural speeches.

#### 4. Conclusion

Using Halliday's (1985) transitivity system model, the present study found that all transitivity process types were employed in the inaugural speeches of Filipino presidents. The material process was used by the Filipino presidents to present solutions to the current problems of the nation, depict a new government under their respective administration, and pertain to God as divine providence in running the government. The relational process was employed to explain concepts, accentuate the prime responsibility of the government and the people, and describe the challenges the government faces. Further, the mental process helped the Filipino presidents express their dispositions and political beliefs, manifest their desire for the welfare of the people, and inspire the public to be part of nation-building. The verbal process served as a way for the presidents to pledge to serve the people and lead the change, and to appeal for cooperation and support from the public. Although the existential and the behavioral processes occurred less frequent in the inaugural speeches, they were used to achieve the purpose of directing the public to envision a better future for the country.

While the present study supports the findings of previous investigations that proved the dominance of the material process in political discourse, it further argues that the use of transitivity process types, especially the material process, in inaugural speeches depends on different sociolinguistic factors, e.g., themes, events or circumstances, where these speeches are premised, as revealed in the diachronic inquiry reported in this study. Likewise, in terms of form and structure, the use of the material process remains and will remain to be prevalent in political and any other areas of discourse such as literature pieces (Landa, 2016; Salayo & Lontoc-Macam, 2019; Song, 2013), newspaper headlines and editorials (Miranti, 2014; Ong'onda, 2016; Valeriano & Lintao, 2016), and songs (Alvaro, 2013; Harbi et al., 2019). This confirms the notion that the material process is the most salient transitivity process in any natural language, for it represents certain actions that enable an idea being construed to be meaningful within a certain continuum (Halliday, 1994). The present study, which explored the diachronic scale of transitivity analysis of Filipino presidents' inaugural speeches, could lend itself well as a good reference for aspiring presidents and for politicians in general.

Moreover, this study could be useful for political analysts, for the findings, based on the transitivity analysis, might enable them to understand how politicians, specifically presidents, construe their political ideologies and commitments. Transitivity process plays a distinct role in the political rhetoric of Filipino presidents in persuading people and conveying their ideologies and commitments to the public, and in envisioning the future they want for the country; and all these can be achieved through using language that acts as an instrument for emphasizing their plans, expressing their loyalty to serve the country, manifesting their power, and most importantly, inspiring their fellow Filipinos.

Any analysis of political speeches of presidents or heads of states should recognize the possibility that these speeches were either improved or written entirely by professional speechwriters. Therefore, the present study poses uncertainty as regards which part(s) of the inaugural speeches analyzed were originally written or conceptualized by Filipino presidents themselves. However, it can be assumed that the Filipino presidents wrote their own inaugural speeches, as public officials know that they are responsible for the words they deliver in public.

To add to the spectrum covered in the present study, future research may focus on examining the interaction between social factors and use of language, specifically on how recurring themes work with different process patterns. It is likewise suggested that future studies concentrate on how social, political, economic, and cultural factors shape the occurrence and use of transitivity process types in political discourse, particularly in inaugural speeches.

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