



## Transitivity analysis of selected privilege speeches of Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago

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### Abstract

Politicians use language to express ideologies, manifest power, and persuade people. In this regard, linguists have been interested in studying how language, power, and ideology interplay in political discourse. Several researchers have examined the political rhetoric of some world leaders and politicians. However, results of these studies indicate that there is a dearth of research examining women's political discourse in the Philippines. The presence of female politicians in leadership positions is limited, which may explain why women's political discourse is not given much attention. Using Halliday's (1994) transitivity model, this study seeks to analyze how Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago used transitivity processes to manifest social problems, inequalities, and power abuse in delivering her privilege speeches. Findings revealed that Senator Defensor-Santiago frequently employed material processes, followed by relational and verbal processes. She used material processes to emphasize the actions of people involved in illegal activities, discrimination of women in the workforce, and solutions to certain problems. Furthermore, relational processes were utilized to explain some concepts, attack someone's credibility and character, and express the state of affairs of the country and women in society. Senator Defensor-Santiago also used verbal processes to strengthen her claims regarding some issues discussed in her privilege speeches.

**Keywords:** Language and power, Philippine politics, political discourse analysis, privilege speeches, transitivity

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### 1. Introduction

Language serves as machinery for politicians to achieve their political goals and ambitions. It is a useful tool to regulate society (Machin & Mayr, 2012) and change how people feel and

think about some pressing issues in a country. Language and society are interrelated because they both shape each other (Caballero, 2015). Because of this interrelatedness, linguists such as van Dijk, Fairclough, Kress, Wodak, and van Leeuwen have been interested in studying how language manifests inequalities, problems, and social issues (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Politicians use language to express ideologies, manifest power, and persuade people. In this regard, linguists have been interested in studying how language, power, and ideology interplay in political discourse. Based on this view, the present study investigates how the late Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, a political icon in the Philippines, who was “best known for the unique brand of charismatic leadership that media refer to her as ‘Miriam Magic’” (Senate of the Philippines 16<sup>th</sup> Congress, n.d., para. 20), used language to incorporate power and ideology in her privilege speeches.

Privilege speeches play a significant role in the country’s sociopolitical arena. Senators use privilege speeches to influence other legislators in passing or rejecting bills. During senate sessions, senators are given a certain period to discuss and highlight pressing issues in the country (De Leon, 2011). Thus, they take this opportunity to inform and persuade their audiences. On the other hand, not all privilege speeches are persuasive in nature. Indeed, some senators used privilege speeches to inform and to entertain (Cruz & Bernardo, 2015). Hence, for the purpose of this study, only persuasive privilege speeches were analyzed.

Critical discourse analysis investigates how social powers and issues such as abuse and discrimination manifest in language (Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 1993; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Because of the growing interest in analyzing how language manifests power and ideology, several researchers have examined the political rhetoric of some world leaders and politicians such as Rotaru (2010) and Caballero (2015). Rotaru (2010) examined how Queen Elizabeth II’s speech prevented a constitutional crisis in the UK. Her televised speech was used as the corpus of the study. The study revealed that Queen Elizabeth II used the personal pronoun “I” to show her involvement and presence in the speech. The queen used it to state her position in Diana’s death, to “call for national unity,” and to bridge the gap between her and her subjects (p. 46). Rotaru (2010) concluded that the queen’s choice of words helped her to project an image that altered the public mood.

Caballero (2015) conducted a study on how Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago used language, power, and ideology in her speech. Caballero (2015) studied the linguistic, discursive, and ideological patterns in Senator Defensor-Santiago’s speech delivered on December 4, 2013 titled “Navigating the crimes of the plunder mastermind.” The researcher used Fairclough’s (1989) Three-Dimensional Model to examine the power and ideology incorporated in Senator Defensor-Santiago’s privilege speech. The results of the study revealed that the Senator used “verbal manipulation” to attack Senator Enrile and to express her ideologies (p. 22). She used hyperbole, appeal to pity, and image of utopia in her speech. She incorporated different terminologies and rhetorical devices to express her views regarding the issue. She employed modalities, evidentialities, and direct and indirect speech to boost her claims. The senator also used “*argumentum ad misericordiam* or appeal to pity” to get the support of listeners (p. 18). In conclusion, these linguistic, discursive, and ideological patterns helped her show her ideologies and sound more persuasive.

In the field of critical discourse analysis, linguists analyze how certain people create meaning and manifest ideology through their language use. One of the ways in studying how language manifests power and ideology is by applying transitivity processes (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Several researchers have used Halliday's (1994) transitivity model in analyzing political speeches. One of them was Wang (2010), who analyzed two presidential speeches of Barack Obama to show how Obama used power in his political rhetoric to persuade people. Political rhetoric is a political speech used to persuade people and express ideology. Wang (2010) explored how language, power, and ideology interplay in political speeches. She focused on transitivity and modality. According to Wang (2010), President Obama utilized material process mostly in his speeches to show the achievements of his administration and to gain the support of the American people.

Correspondingly, there were other researchers who employed the same theoretical framework in examining Barack Obama's political rhetoric. They were Alvi and Baseer (2011) and Sharififar and Rahimi (2015). Alvi and Baseer (2011) examined Obama's three speeches to identify how he used language in his political rhetoric to persuade people. The results showed that Obama predominantly used material processes in his speeches, followed by mental and relational processes. According to Alvi and Baseer (2011), Obama's use of material, mental, and relational processes helped him motivate and gather people, arouse the emotion of the audiences, and project a positive image. This indicated that transitivity analysis can be used to show how a politician uses language to persuade people and show ideologies. In this regard, the goal of the present study is to analyze how Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago used language to manifest social problems, inequalities, and power abuse in delivering her privilege speeches.

The aforementioned previous studies have focused only on analyzing Obama's speeches. In contrast, other scholars such as Sharififar and Rahimi (2015) made a comparative study of Obama's and Rouhani's United Nation's political rhetoric. They mainly focused on the linguistic spin in the political rhetoric of the two presidents. They used transitivity and modality to analyze how Obama and Rouhani, the seventh president of Iran, incorporated power and ideology in their speeches. The transitivity analysis showed that the two presidents mainly used material process, which highlighted their administrations' achievements, activities, and plans. According to Sharififar and Rahimi (2015), Obama employed more material processes than Rouhani. The use of material processes gave Obama an image of an action leader who was determined to promote peace in the world. In this regard, the present study aims to explore the implied meanings indirectly stated in Senator Defensor-Santiago's speeches using transitivity processes.

Furthermore, several researchers examined the speeches of other political leaders such as Liping's (2014). In this study, the researcher examined the experiential function in Sir Winston Churchill's speech. The researcher used Halliday's (1994) systemic functional grammar focusing on transitivity in analyzing Sir Winston Churchill's political discourse. The results showed that the material process was employed the most in his speech. It was followed by relational, mental, and verbal processes. Material process helped Churchill to sound more objective and logical in expressing his ideology and determination to defeat

Hitler, whereas relational process helped him explain some political concepts and power relationships. Liping (2014) concluded that material and relational processes could help politicians make their political speeches powerful and persuasive. Liping's study is deemed related to the present study, which draws from its objective and theoretical framework.

Another researcher analyzed the transitivity processes in the speeches of a former Malawian president. Kondowe (2014) examined how Bingu wa Mutharika used language to boost political ideologies in his second inaugural address. The findings revealed that the most dominant transitivity process in his speech was the material process, followed by relational and verbal processes. He used the material process to highlight his achievements in his first term and to share his political and economic views in his second term. His use of the relational process showed his undemocratic leadership style and the economic challenges his country was facing (Kondowe, 2014). He also used this process to improve his image. Moreover, Bingu employed the verbal process to arouse the emotion of listeners. Kondowe (2014) concluded that Bingu's use of mental, relational, and verbal processes, and the way he identified himself as the main actor were probably the reasons behind his downfall. The way he manipulated language to enhance his ideologies depicted him "as a leader with autocratic and dictatorial leadership ideologies" (Kondowe, 2014, p. 174). The theoretical framework and results in this research are deemed related to the main objective of the present study.

Al-Faki (2014) examined the linguistic spin in the political speeches of some African leaders to contribute to the field of critical discourse analysis and to discover how African presidents from 1981 to 2013 employed linguistic elements to reveal their stance and ideologies. He employed Halliday's (1994) transitivity model to examine the speeches. The study revealed that the African leaders used "rhetorical and metaphorical devices" and "pronouns and lexical choices" to influence and persuade people (p. 197). They also used the inclusive pronoun "we" to persuade. The researcher concluded that the linguistic elements employed in the political speeches of some African leaders are useful persuasive devices to influence people.

Similar to the previously cited study by Al Faki (2014), the speeches of two other African presidents were the subject of Adjei, Ewusi-Mensah, and Okoh's (2015) and Adjei and Ewusi-Mensah's (2016) transitivity analysis. Adjei et al. (2015) analyzed Pres. John Evan Attah Mills' first State-of-the-Nation Address (SONA) to discover the major transitivity process types employed in his speech. The findings revealed that material process dominated the SONA. It indicated that Mills and his administration were the main actors in attaining and accomplishing their achievements, projects, and plans for Ghana. Relational process ranked second. Mills used this process to explain "the political and economic state of the nation" and to create a positive image (p. 28). The study also showed that Mills minimally used mental process in his address. The minimal use of this process indicated that the president was not really giving assurances to his countrymen about the future of their country. The researchers concluded that hidden meanings and ideologies can be manifested through language structures. With the use of transitivity analysis, the researchers were able to reveal the ideologies subtly manifested in Mill's address.

Similarly, Adjei and Ewusi-Mensah (2016) employed Halliday's (1994) transitivity model in analyzing the use of language in Pres. J. A. Kufuor's farewell address to Parliament in Ghana. The analysis revealed that material processes dominated the speech. Kufuor used material processes to highlight and use his achievements as useful recommendation for the incoming administration. Moreover, the study showed that Kufuor identified himself as the main actor indicating his achievements by using the pronoun *I*. The president also used verbal processes in shifting topics, expressing gratitude, stating proposals, and giving recommendations. Kufuor referred to himself as the main *sayer* of verbal processes by using the first-person pronoun *I*. Adjei and Ewusi-Mensah's (2016) study is related to the present study because the same theoretical framework was employed in analyzing the use of language in Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago's speeches.

The transitivity processes in Joko Widodo's speech at the APEC CEO Summit were investigated by Harwiyati (2016). The researcher reported that the most frequent transitivity processes were relational. Joko Widodo utilized relational processes to highlight what Indonesia could offer to the world.

Most of the studies and research analyzed in relation to the present study focused on analyzing the transitivity processes in the political rhetoric of different male world leaders. Further, based on the literature review, it seems that only Naz, Alvi, and Baseer (2012) analyzed the transitivity processes in a female politician's rhetoric. In the study of Naz et al. (2012), the researchers examined Benazir Bhutto's political discourse. Using Halliday's (1994) transitivity model, they explored how Benazir Bhutto, the former female prime minister of Pakistan, used language and power to persuade her countrymen. Their study revealed that the former prime minister used material, mental, relational, and behavioral processes to help her achieve her goals. The use of mental process helped her show her relentless determination to restore democracy and to influence the way people think. This process gave her an image of a lady in action (Naz et al., 2012). Furthermore, to soften her image and win the support of the people, she used relational and behavioral processes in her speeches. The present study also employed Halliday's (1994) transitivity model to analyze how a Filipino senator incorporated language and power in her speeches.

The literature review shows that women's political discourse has not been given much attention, particularly in the Philippines. Perhaps, this is because of the fact that the presence of female politicians in leadership positions in the country is limited (Escartin, 2014, p. 3). Women are underrepresented in national and local elective offices, particularly in high-ranking posts, i.e., president, senate president, and house speaker, "which allow them to be directly involved in making important decisions and setting directions" (Tayao-Juego, 2018, para. 5). So far, the Philippines has had two female presidents (i.e., Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Corazon Aquino) and one female house speaker (i.e., Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo). Despite the fact that the Philippines has had several female politicians both in the local and the national levels, data still show that women are underrepresented in leadership positions (Tayao-Juego, 2018). This could be the reason why there is a dearth of research focusing on women's political discourse in the Philippines.

Most of the existing studies focused on analyzing the speeches of male political leaders. Only a few analyzed women's political rhetoric. The present study is similar to the study of Caballero (2015) because it also analyzes the privilege speeches of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago. However, it is different in several respects because Caballero (2015) utilized only one privilege speech as her corpus; whereas, the present study used seven privilege speeches as corpora. Correspondingly, the present study employed Halliday's (1994) transitivity model in analyzing how the senator used language to manifest social problems, inequalities, and power abuse in delivering her privilege speeches. On the other hand, Caballero (2015) utilized Fairclough's (1989) Three-Dimensional Model in analyzing Senator Defensor-Santiago's privilege speech.

### 1.1 Important Insights About Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago was born in 1945 and raised in Iloilo. She was a consistent honor student from elementary to college. She graduated valedictorian in elementary and high school; graduated magna cum laude from the University of the Philippines, Visayas with a degree in Bachelor of Arts in Political Science; and graduated cum laude from the University of the Philippines, Diliman with a Bachelor of Laws. She was a record-setter both at the University of the Philippines, Visayas and the University of the Philippines, Diliman. Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago became the first female editor-in-chief of the *Philippine Collegian*, a renowned student newspaper in UP. Ever since she was a student, she had been a great debater. She became the first-ever female debater who won the annual debating contest between UP Diliman and UP Manila.

After getting married, Senator Defensor-Santiago studied at the University of Michigan Law School and earned the degrees Master of Laws and Doctor of Science of Jurisprudence. Again, she became a record-setter in that university. Because of her excellent scholastic record, she became the first graduate-school student who was given the opportunity to pursue special programs at the University of Michigan Law School; that is why she earned her master's and doctoral degrees in less than two years. Several years later, she took postdoctoral studies in law at Oxford University, Cambridge University, Harvard University, Stanford University, University of California Berkeley, and Academy of Public International Law at The Hague, Netherlands. Senator Defensor-Santiago was a lawyer, a theologian, and an author as evidenced by several textbooks in law and social sciences she wrote (About Miriam, n.d.).

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago had been one of the most successful judges, politicians, and senators of the Philippines. She held several positions in different branches of the Philippine government, and she also worked as a legal officer of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. With her campaign against corruption, she was given the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Government Service, an award given in Asia that is equivalent to the Nobel Prize. Her numerous awards for judicial excellence and her accolades for anticorruption made her the most decorated trial judge and the most awarded Philippine government official. Several local and international magazines such as *The Australian* have

featured Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, and many titles were given to her such as the Iron Lady of Asia, the Dragon Lady, the Platinum Lady, and the Undisputed Campus Heroine. In 1996, Senator Defensor-Santiago was named as one of “The 100 Most Powerful Women in the World” by the *Australian* magazine. The Senator was the first Filipino and Asian to be elected in the United Nations as judge of the International Criminal Court. However, she declined it because of her health condition (About Miriam, n.d.). Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago had been a consistent top-performer in the Senate. Despite her sickness, she filed 1,324 bills and resolutions based on the June 19, 2015 report of the Senate (Senate of the Philippines 16<sup>th</sup> Congress, n.d.).

At the Senate, Senator Defensor-Santiago played an active role in passing resolutions, direct-and-cross-examining personalities involved in high-profile illegal cases, and delivering privilege speeches. In this sociopolitical environment, Senator Defensor-Santiago argued and shared ideas with different legislators who played a pivotal role in passing and rejecting bills. This milieu also served as a platform to express her ideas and opinions about different social issues evident in the privilege speeches used in this study.

With the credentials, achievements, and recognitions she received, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago exemplified how a female political figure could use her discourse to address different societal issues and to influence people in the Philippines.

## 1.2 Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago’s Appeal to the Masses

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago’s unique brand of leadership, popularly known as the “Miriam Magic” (Senate of the Philippines 16<sup>th</sup> Congress, n.d., para. 20), truly made a great impact to the masses. Many people, especially female law students, depicted her “as an epitome of women empowerment, scholastic competence, and professionalism” (Miriam Defensor-Santiago, n.d., para. 12). Because of her efforts to fight graft and corruption in the country, many Filipinos admired and loved her. People watched and listened to her interviews and speeches because her national and political insights always had significant impact in Philippine society (Caballero, 2015). However, Senator Defensor-Santiago also received some criticisms. Her critics thought that she was mentally disturbed because of her unstable behavior correlated to her high intelligence (Sta. Romana, 2015). Nevertheless, despite these criticisms, the masses still enjoyed watching her on television whenever she lambasted personalities involved in illegal activities. One of the most recent and notable television appearances of the senator was when she delivered her privilege speech attacking Senator Enrile (Caballero, 2015). Her exposé paved the way for the arrest of Senator Enrile and two other legislators. Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago always got the attention of the masses whenever she gave her opinions about different issues in society, thus making her one of the Philippines’ most powerful women (Romero, 2015). She was not afraid to express her beliefs and ideologies, to question irregularities in the government, and to drop names of people involved in graft and corruption. Because of this, she was hailed as the “Iron Lady of Asia,” a title that truly fit her strong personality.

In addition, the Senator knew how to stay relevant in the modern world (Abunda, 2012, para. 7). In fact, she published books that contain her famous one-liners and jokes attacking corrupt government officials. Her one-liners and social-media presence helped her stay connected and popular to several people, especially among young voters (Sy, 2015,). That is why when the senator passed away in 2016, the entire nation mourned. Celebrities, politicians, personalities, and the masses paid tribute to the late Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago. According to Serran (2016), the senator's demise is "a loss not only to Philippine politics but also for every Filipino who has been touched by her brilliance and feisty brand of public service. Netizens hail her as the 'best president we never had,' a true testament to her legacy" (para. 1). Until now, people miss her in the Senate, especially when there are some big national and political issues. Indeed, her charisma and appeal to the masses were undeniably great.

### 1.3 Research Questions

This study seeks to analyze how Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago used language to manifest social problems, inequalities, and power abuse in delivering her privilege speeches. Specifically, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What transitivity processes are evident in Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago's privilege speeches?
2. How are the transitivity processes incorporated in the privilege speeches of Senator Defensor-Santiago?

### 1.4 Theoretical Framework

In order to address the research questions in this study, Halliday's (1994) transitivity model adopted from Machin and Mayr (2012) was used.

Halliday (1994, as cited in Wang, 2010) introduced Systemic Functional Grammar or Systemic Functional Linguistics, which became the main theory underpinning Critical Discourse Analysis. Halliday (1994, as cited in Kondowe, 2014) believes that language has three metafunctions: "ideational," "interpersonal," and "textual" (p. 175). Ideational metafunction's main purpose is to convey information and content that are unfamiliar to listeners and to represent reality (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015). This metafunction comprises "transitivity and voice" (p. 255). The two other metafunctions include interpersonal, which focuses on how a speaker maintains interaction with a listener (Kondowe, 2014); and textual, which focuses on the coherence and organization of ideas in a text (Wang, 2010).

The present study focuses on the ideational metafunction of language. As discussed earlier, transitivity comprises the ideational metafunction. According to Machin and Mayr (2012), transitivity system can manifest and promote certain discourses and ideologies unknown to listeners.



The study employed Halliday's (1994) transitivity model adapted from Machin and Mayr (2012). Transitivity system consists of six processes: material, mental, behavioral, verbal, relational, and existential. These six processes are explained in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
*Transitivity and verb processes adopted from Machin and Mayr (2012, p. 104)*

Process	Description	Example
Material	Material processes are the “process of doing.” The two main participants of these processes are the actor and the goal. Actor is the doer of the action, whereas the goal is the receiver of the action. Sometimes, these processes do not have a goal like intransitive verbs.	Arrest, Demolish, Found, Attack, Demand <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They <i>attack</i> the kingdom.</li></ul> Arrive, Advance, Move <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• She <i>arrived</i> on time.</li></ul>
Mental	Mental processes are known as the “process of sensing.” They are composed of three classes: cognition, affection, and perception.	Understand, Like, See <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The president <i>understands</i> the situation.</li></ul>
Behavioral	Behavioral processes indicate “psychological and physical behavior.” Behavioral processes are a combination of material and mental processes.	Taste, Dream, Breathe, Laugh, Smile, Look, Watch <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• She <i>laughs</i> loudly.</li></ul>
Verbal	Verbal processes are verbs that are synonymous to the verb “to say.” Verbal processes have three participants: sayer (speaker), receiver (addressee), and verbiage (statement).	Explain, Claim, Mention, Announce, Proclaim <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• He <i>announced</i> the result of the test.</li></ul>
Relational	Relational processes are expressed by the verb “to be” and “to have.” They express “possession, equivalence,” and attributes.”	Become, Mean, Define, Symbolize, Has, Have <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It <i>symbolizes</i> peace and unity.</li></ul>
Existential	Existential processes normally use the verb “to be” and other synonymous words such as “exist, arise or occur.” They usually show the existence of some phenomena.	To be, Exist, Arise, Occur <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There <i>are</i> many trees.</li></ul>

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This research employed a mixed-methods design where descriptive qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to answer the research questions. The descriptive qualitative approach was done by analyzing how Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago used transitivity processes in her privilege speeches; whereas, the quantitative approach was adopted by determining the frequency and percentage distributions of the different transitivity processes present in her rhetoric.

### **2.2 Corpus/Sources of Data**

Seven privilege speeches were used as the corpus of this study. The speeches were downloaded from the Senator's official website (<http://miriam.com.ph/newsblog/>) and the Senate's website ([www.senate.gov.ph](http://www.senate.gov.ph)). For the purpose of this study, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago's privilege speeches were used as corpus because her privilege speeches were deemed to be her most persuasive set of speeches where she manifested her power and ideologies in her political rhetoric in order to persuade the other senators at the Senate. Another reason is that, by limiting the corpus to privilege speeches, the analysis and discussion could focus on how the Senator used language in her political rhetoric. In this regard, there could be an in-depth discussion on how Senator Defensor-Santiago used language in manifesting social problems, inequalities, and power abuse in her privilege speeches. Based on the researcher's collected data, only ten privilege speeches were available in the official website of the Senator. As discussed earlier, not all privilege speeches are persuasive (Cruz & Bernardo, 2015). Out of the ten privilege speeches in the Senator's website, only seven were deemed to be persuasive in nature. The goal of privilege speeches was considered in determining which speech was persuasive. These speeches were determined and validated with the help of two intercoders. The other three privilege speeches were excluded because they were merely informative in nature, i.e., Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago simply gave lectures about the importance of the Constitution. The following are the speeches under study (see Table 2):

**Table 2**  
***Privilege speeches of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago***

<b>Title of Privilege Speech</b>	<b>No. of Words</b>
PS1. Revoke Martial Law in Maguindanao	1,340
PS2. The Avatar of Corruption	3,562
PS3. DILG + PNP = JUETENG	2,877
PS4. Night Work Prohibition for Women is Unconstitutional	2,165
PS5. Navigating the Crimes of the Plunder Mastermind	4,818
PS6. Unconstitutional and Other Aspects of 2015 Budget	1,624
PS7. Privilege Speech on the 2016 Budget	1,754
<b>Total No. of Words</b>	<b>18,140</b>
<b>Average No. of Words per Speech</b>	<b>2,591.42</b>

### **2.3 Data Analysis**

The analysis of transitivity processes was done using Halliday's (1994) transitivity model adopted from Machin and Mayr (2012). The six transitivity processes, i.e., material, relational, mental, behavioral, verbal, and existential, were identified and categorized based on the process categorizations and definitions discussed in Halliday's framework. The unit of analysis was done by examining only the main clause to determine the process types. To guarantee that the data were analyzed with a high degree of accuracy, the intercoding process was done by assigning two independent coders who both have a master's degree in English and who are knowledgeable in the field of study. The intercoders have been in the teaching profession for eight years at the time of the study and have experienced doing research on the same topic. Only 30% of the data was subjected to the intercoding process. The intercoders were oriented as regards to the framework for coding and were provided clear instructions on how to do the analysis. The researcher likewise conducted trial sessions with the intercoders prior to giving them two weeks to complete the given task independently. Afterward, a meeting was set with the two intercoders to analytically compare and discuss the similarity and difference in the coding. In cases when problems (i.e., difference[s] in the coding) occurred in the intercoding process, a thorough discussion among the coders was held by reanalyzing the questionable data until they arrived at a consensus as regards the results and interpretation of the said data.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

In this section, the transitivity processes evident in Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago's privilege speeches are presented. Additionally, it shows the findings on how the Senator used different transitivity processes in her rhetoric.

The overall frequency of transitivity processes evident in the privilege speeches of Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
*Overall frequency of transitivity processes in Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago's selected privilege speeches*

Transitivity Process	Frequency	Percentage
Material	539	52.33
Relational	304	29.51
Verbal	108	10.49
Mental	65	6.31
Existential	12	1.17
Behavioral	2	0.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,030</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 presents the overall transitivity processes evident in the selected privilege speeches of Senator Defensor-Santiago. It shows that the most frequent in the entire corpus were **material processes**, followed by **relational** and **verbal processes**. Transitivity analysis helps listeners decipher and understand the discourses and ideologies hidden in a certain text or rhetoric (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Hence, the analysis of this study revealed the implied meanings in the selected privilege speeches of Senator Defensor-Santiago. The results of the present study are similar to the study of Liping (2014) in which the two most frequent transitivity processes were material and relational. According to Liping (2014), the use of material and relational processes helped Sir Winston Churchill sound more powerful and persuasive in his speech. These two transitivity processes have the same effect in the privilege speeches of Senator Defensor-Santiago.

### 3.1 Material Processes

Similar to Churchill, Senator Defensor-Santiago frequently employed material and relational processes in her privilege speeches to manifest power and to persuade her listeners. Material processes were the most evident in the corpus. As stated by Liping (2014), material processes are usually the most frequently-used transitivity process in political speeches because they could objectively and logically present facts, reasons, and feelings. They could make political rhetoric persuasive, which is important in a privilege speech because senators have to manifest their power and ideology in their language to persuade people. Known as the process of doing, material processes are comprised of two main participants: *actor*, and *goal* or *beneficiaries* (Machin & Mayr, 2012). By analyzing these participants, it could reveal who the doer is and who the receiver of the action is, thus determining who has the power

in a text. Moreover, according to Adjei and Ewusi-Mensah (2016), the choice of actors and their roles in a sentence is “ideologically motivated” (p. 42). It means that there is a hidden ideological message or meaning in choosing the actor and the goal in a sentence. In the present study, Senator Defensor-Santiago used material processes in different ways. She used them in emphasizing some actions of people involved in illegal activities and discrimination among women in the workforce, and in recommending some solutions to certain problems. These can be seen in the examples below.

### **Emphasize some actions of people involved in illegal activities**

- (1) *...which he uses (material process) to manipulate people, perceptions, and even the results of elections. (PS2)*
- (2) *...he embedded (material process) himself in the camp of Fidel Ramos, and honed (material process) his skills at the dagdag-bawaas (extra deduction) as operator of the Sulo Hotel Operations Group. (PS2)*
- (3) *He signed (material process) a contract, but of course it does not include the kickback that he made for himself. (PS2)*
- (4) *...he even used (material process) public funds for a TV ad campaign, preparatory to his self-declared intention to run for vice-president. (PS3)*
- (5) *Thorough NBI investigation has led (material process) the Department of Justice to file formal charges of plunder against the first batch of suspects, led by no less than the Senate President at that time, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile. (PS5)*
- (6) *In all, Enrile reportedly gave (material process) P641.65 million from his pork barrel funds to dummy corporations founded by Napoles. (PS5)*

Senator Defensor-Santiago’s use of material processes in the first and second extracts showed Ronaldo Puno’s involvement in electoral fraud. She referred to the electoral fraud that happened during the presidential elections in which Ramos defeated her. According to the Senator, the victory of Ramos then was questionable, and she firmly believed that Ronaldo Puno played a big role in manipulating the results of the elections. In the third and fourth extracts, Senator Defensor-Santiago used material processes to show Ronaldo Puno’s connection to corruption. She stated in her speech that Ronaldo Puno had a special ability to persuade then President Ramos to give him access to large financial resources that he could use in his illegal activities. Senator Defensor-Santiago presented Puno as the main actor of the material processes, and he appeared to be the main person responsible for illegal actions such as corruption and electoral fraud. Moreover, her use of the active voice in presenting Puno’s activities helped her manifest power abuse in her rhetoric. By doing so, the Senator was able to project Puno as the avatar of corruption.

In addition, the fifth and sixth extracts show how material processes highlighted the illegal actions of Senator Enrile. As can be seen in the fifth extract, the Department of Justice filed plunder charges against the suspects, including Senator Enrile. In this example, it showed that the Department of Justice was powerful enough to file charges against the individual who committed crimes even if that person was a senator. The Department of Justice was the main actor of the material process in this extract to show its power and authority in implementing justice, while Senator Enrile was presented as the receiver of the action to emphasize that even though he was a senator, he did not have the immunity for such charges. The sixth extract emphasized Senator Enrile's direct involvement in the pork barrel scam. In this example, Senator Defensor-Santiago presented him as the main actor of the material process *gave* to highlight that he gave a huge amount of money to Napoles's dummy corporations. In this regard, she accused Enrile of plunder. Presented below are sample extracts that demonstrate how Senator Defensor-Santiago used material processes in showing discrimination among women in the workforce.

#### **Discrimination among women in the workforce**

- (1) *...these prohibitions prevent (material process) women from obtaining employment...(PS4)*
- (2) *This perfectionist effect of the night work prohibition further marginalizes (material process) women's access to resources and restricts (material process) their economic participation. (PS4)*
- (3) *...the Philippine Labor Code Article 130 prohibits (material process) night work for women. (PS4)*

The excerpts given show the problems women face in today's society. Senator Defensor-Santiago was able to manifest these women's issues by using material processes in her privilege speech. Based on the sample extracts, the prohibitions and Labor Code of the Philippines impede the capacity of women to have equal opportunities with men in the workforce. Senator Defensor-Santiago cited these prohibitions to show that the night work bill for women was unconstitutional. The verbs used such as *prevent*, *marginalize*, *restrict*, and *prohibit* indicate that the Labor Code did not give women equal opportunities in the workforce. Based on the analysis, it can be assumed that material processes helped Senator Defensor-Santiago in manifesting the inequalities and problems women faced because of the unconstitutionality of the bill. The following examples illustrate how Senator Defensor-Santiago used material processes in giving recommendations:

### **Recommend some solutions to certain problems**

- (1) *The Senate should not approve (material process) the budget unless the offensive redefinitions are removed. (PS6)*
- (2) *The Senate should also compel (material process) government agencies to comply with the reportorial requirements in Section 91 of the general provisions. (PS6)*

Material processes were not only used to present some problems in society; they were also used to recommend some solutions. This result supports the study of Adjei and Ewusi-Mensah (2016), which revealed that President J.A. Kufuor used material processes to recommend solutions and policies to the incoming administration. Similar to President Kufuor, Senator Defensor-Santiago also used material processes to recommend some solutions to certain problems mentioned in the above extracts. In these extracts, she used the Senate as the main actor to emphasize its power in approving the budget. By doing so, she was able to give a solution regarding the dangerous threats hidden in the proposed budget.

### **3.2 Relational Processes**

Relational processes were the second most frequent transitivity processes in the corpus. These processes are used in highlighting the states of being (Machin & Mayr, 2012). According to Liping (2014), relational processes are generally used to explain political concepts. These help politicians define terminologies in explaining their views regarding the different issues in a country. The results of the present study revealed that Senator Defensor-Santiago employed relational processes to define some concepts, associate some personalities with *jueteng (illegal numbers game)* corruption and pork-barrel scandal, express the state of affairs of the country and women, and show some problems that may transpire because of gambling, as reflected in the following extracts:

#### **Explain some concepts**

- (1) *...the term “savings” means (relational process) sums of money saved on a regular basis, often by means of economizing. (PS7)*
- (2) *Martial Law is (relational process) in the public right of self-defense against a danger threatening the orders of the existence of the state. (PS1)*

In the first extract, she used relational process to highlight the meaning of the word *savings*, thus giving her colleagues a clear definition of this term to solve the issues in the proposed budget. The senator believed that there was a need to make the meaning of the word “*savings*” clear because she believed that the new meaning of “*savings*” in the 2015 proposed budget was too broad. Moreover, based on the second extract, Senator Defensor-

Santiago used relational process to give the meanings and objectives of Martial Law. She highlighted the definition of this concept to show and prove to her colleagues that there was no need to proclaim Martial Law in the province of Maguindanao. By doing so, she was able to show her ideologies regarding the issue, i.e., she totally opposed the proclamation. The findings of this analysis also support the study of Liping (2014). According to Liping (2014), Sir Winston Churchill employed relational processes in explaining some political concepts, which was also done by Senator Defensor-Santiago. On the other hand, the following extracts show how Senator Defensor-Santiago incorporated relational processes in attacking the credibility of other people:

#### **Attack someone's credibility and character**

- (1) *An avatar is (relational process) an embodiment of an idea, as in, Ronaldo Puno is (relational process) the avatar of corruption and electoral fraud in the Philippines. (PS2)*
- (2) *Punong Magikero (main manipulator) is (relational process) the jueteng (illegal numbers game) king. (PS3)*
- (3) *...he is (relational process) the mastermind of the plunder. (PS5)*
- (4) *...Enrile was (relational process) the biggest recipient of pork barrel, amounting to a total of P1.189 billion. (PS5)*

Senator Defensor-Santiago utilized relational processes to directly link Ronaldo Puno to corruption, and it can be seen in the above first and second extracts. The Senator used singular linking verb *is* to associate Puno to words and phrases such as *avatar of corruption* and *jueteng king*. In this regard, Senator Defensor-Santiago was able to manifest her power and ideology in her language by presenting Puno as a corrupt person. In addition, based on the third and fourth extracts, Senator Defensor-Santiago used relational processes in projecting Senator Enrile as the plunder mastermind. In these extracts, she directly accused Senator Enrile as the mastermind of the pork-barrel plunder. The results of this analysis indicate that relational process could be used to attack a person's credibility and character.

Furthermore, Senator Defensor-Santiago used relational processes to show Puno's connection to gambling. This can be seen in following extracts:

#### **Describe the negative effects of gambling such as *jueteng* (illegal numbers game)**

- (1) *Gambling is (relational process) immoral, because it gives false hopes to those least able to afford the financial outlay involved. (PS3)*
- (2) *Gambling is (relational process) as addictive as any drug and similarly results in anti-social behavior, financial ruin, and crime. (PS3)*
- (3) *It is (relational process) like the industries where money is made by selling firearms or dangerous drugs. (PS3)*



Based on these extracts, Senator Defensor-Santiago used the relational process *is* in associating the word *gambling* to *immoral*, *addictive*, and *like the industries where money is made by selling firearms or dangerous drugs*. In this regard, the Senator was able to present *gambling* as something diabolic, thus sending a negative message to the listeners. Relational processes, in this case, helped the Senator express her beliefs regarding gambling and show its negative effects on society. This can be gleaned from the following extracts:

### **Express the state of affairs of the country and women in society**

- (1) *The problem with the perfectionist approach was (relational process) that it prevented women from doing certain activities that were open to men. (PS4)*
- (2) *This is (relational process) unequal treatment of the sexes. (PS4)*
- (3) *...women are (relational process) weak and vulnerable to the dangers of night work including health...(PS4)*
- (4) *It has (relational process) the worst roads, airports, sea ports, most expensive and unreliable power supply and the slowest and most expensive internet connections among its neighbors. (PS7)*
- (5) *It has (relational process) the worst unemployment rates. (PS7)*

The use of relational processes helped Senator Defensor-Santiago manifest inequalities and problems in society. Based on the first three excerpts above, it can be inferred that Senator Defensor-Santiago believed that there was unequal treatment of women in the workforce as manifested by the relational processes she employed in her speech. She was able to show that the perfectionist approach embedded in the night work prohibition for women was discriminatory. In this regard, the Senator wanted to ratify it. Moreover, the use of the relational process in the third extract presented women in a negative way. It shows that women are weak and vulnerable, thus giving them a negative image in society. Furthermore, with the use of relational processes, the Senator was able to manifest the problems that the Philippines had. These can be seen in the fourth and fifth extracts. The findings of this research support the study of Adjei et al. (2015), which noted that President John Evan Attah Mills employed relational processes in his SONA to explain the political and economic state of his country. Similar to President Mills, Senator Defensor-Santiago also utilized relational processes to show the state of being of the country and women in society.

### **3.3 Verbal Processes**

Verbal processes were the third most frequent transitivity processes in the entire corpus. According to van Leeuwen (2008, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012), “verbal processes fall somewhere between mental processes and behavioral processes” (p. 126). With the use of verbal processes, people can access the inner or mental world of a speaker (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Politicians could also use verbal processes in different ways. For instance, the study

of Kondowe (2014) revealed that Bingu wa Mutharika, the third Malawian president, used verbal processes as transitional markers and a topic-shift strategy in his inaugural address. In the present study, Senator Defensor-Santiago also used verbal processes in varied ways as exemplified by the following extracts:

### **Cite different personalities and authorities to strengthen her claims**

- (1) *Marina Suñas, a whistleblower, testified (verbal process) that Napoles personally talked to the senator concerned, or the chief of staff. (PS5)*
- (2) *Suñas also testified (verbal process) that in 2012, her dummy foundation received P5 million in pork barrel funds from Enrile. (PS5)*
- (3) *Notably, the Ombudsman has admitted (verbal processes) receiving a memorandum of over 200 pages pinpointing Enrile as the plunder mastermind. (PS5)*

Based on the above extracts, Senator Defensor-Santiago used verbal processes to accuse Senator Enrile. She cited the testimony of the Ombudsman and Marina Suñas to prove that Senator Enrile was involved in the issue of pork-barrel scandal. The use of the verbal processes *admit* and *testify* strengthen the claims of Senator Defensor-Santiago against Senator Enrile. This supports the study of Caballero (2015) in which she stated that Senator Defensor-Santiago cited different articles, authorities, and personalities to strengthen her claims against Senator Enrile regarding the pork-barrel scandal. In the following extracts, on the other hand, Senator Defensor-Santiago utilized verbal processes in explaining some terminologies:

### **Discuss the meaning of some terminologies**

- (1) *...and I paraphrase (verbal process): “(a) discontinuance or abandonment of the program, activity or project... (PS7)*
- (2) *Again I paraphrase (verbal process): Savings is “non-commencement of the P/A/p within the first semester of 2015.” (PS7)*

The Senator also employed verbal processes in defining some terminologies. She defined the word *savings* to make its meaning clear to her colleagues so that they could fix the problems that the proposed 2015 budget entailed.

## **3.4 Mental Processes**

Mental processes were the fourth most frequent transitivity processes in the selected privilege speeches of Senator Defensor-Santiago. These processes are helpful in expressing someone's ideas and feelings (Machin & Mayr, 2012). By analyzing the mental processes in a text or

rhetoric, people could understand what is in the mind and heart of the speaker or writer. In addition, politicians use mental processes to express their political beliefs, expectations, and ambitions (Liping, 2014), and arouse the feelings and emotions of the audience (Adjei & Ewusi-Mensah, 2016). The following are some examples:

- (1) *The state recognizes (mental process) the role of women in nation-building...(PS4)*
- (2) *I regret (mental process) to say that SB 2701 violates this constitutional provision, although its purpose is to help women. (PS4)*
- (3) *...women want (mental process) or need (mental process) to earn income and these prohibitions prevent women from obtaining employment. (PS4)*

The implied meanings were manifested by the mental processes employed in the speech based on the extracts given above. In the first extract, the word *state* acted as the *senser* of the mental process *recognize*. Also, as indicated in this extract, the state supported women's rights in the country because it recognized the significant role of women in society. However, Senator Defensor-Santiago found it contradicting mainly because it did not follow the constitutional provision, which was to support women. This can be seen in the second extract in which the *senser* was *I* referring to Senator Defensor-Santiago. In the second extract, the Senator used the word *regret* to show her disappointment. She believed that SB 2701 did not follow the objective of the constitutional provisions. Furthermore, the third extract showed what she believed to be the inner feelings and desire of women. The use of the mental processes *want* and *need* manifested the implied strong desire of women to be part of the workforce. Nevertheless, their opportunities were being restricted because of the night work prohibition against them. Based on the analysis, mental processes could play a significant role in manifesting the implied meanings in the speech of Senator Defensor-Santiago.

### 3.5 Behavioral and Existential Processes

Based on the results of the study, existential and behavioral processes were relatively less frequent in the selected privilege speeches of Senator Defensor-Santiago. Existential processes are used to show that something exists or happens (Machin & Mayr, 2012), while behavioral processes are used to show the mental and physical behavior of a speaker (Wang, 2010). The result of this study is somewhat similar to the study of Adjei and Ewusi-Mensah (2016), which revealed that existential and behavioral processes were seldom incorporated in President J. A. Kufour's farewell address to Parliament. In the present study, both existential and behavioral processes were rarely used probably because they played a minor role in the classification of the transitivity system (Adjei et al., 2015); that is, their functions are merely to show the behavior of a speaker and the existence of certain situations. These functions could not evoke any persuasive power that would influence people; hence, they

may not help in making the privilege speeches persuasive. The main objective and function of the corpus used in this study was to persuade the listeners, particularly the people in the sociopolitical environment where these privilege speeches were delivered. This persuasive power is important for legislators because “it plays a key role in negotiation and political maneuvering” (Cruz & Bernardo, 2015, p. 90) at the Senate. By simply showing the existence of a particular situation and behavior of a speaker, audiences could not be persuaded to act in accordance with the goals and objectives of privilege speeches. In this regard, Senator Defensor-Santiago had to use major transitivity processes to sound more effective; therefore, existential and behavioral processes were rarely employed in her privilege speeches. The following are some examples of existential and behavioral processes found in the corpus:

### ***Behavioral Processes***

- (1) *...if I behaved (behavioral process) like a monkey who sees nothing, hears, nothing, and says nothing. (PS5)*
- (2) *...allow me to observe (behavioral process) that the new definition is unconstitutional...(PS6)*

### ***Existential Processes***

- (1) *There are (existential process) two cases of dangerous minefields in this budget. (PS7)*
- (2) *There will be (existential process) confusion between the private sector and the public sector in the Philippines. (PS7)*

The sociopolitical milieu of Senator Defensor-Santiago comprised of legislators who played a significant role in passing and rejecting bills, and in discussing different issues in the country. These legislators had to deliver their privilege speeches to inform and persuade the listeners. Privilege speeches served as an avenue for Senator Defensor-Santiago to influence and persuade the people in her sociopolitical environment. To achieve her desired political outcome, the Senator frequently employed material processes in her persuasive privilege speeches. Because the material process verb is also known as the “process of doing” (Machin & Mayr, 2012), she used this transitivity process to convince people in taking actions and solving the issues and problems cited in her privilege speeches.

It could be concluded that her use of material processes and other transitivity verbs played a significant role in making her privilege speeches effective, hence leading to bringing about some changes in policies, e.g., the signing of a bill lifting the night work prohibition for women workers (DOLE hails lift of night work prohibition for women, 2011); lifting the Martial Law in Maguindanao (Cabreza, 2012); implementing stricter rules to ensure that public funds would be properly spent and not lost to corruption (Romero, 2014); and arresting Senator Enrile and other personalities involved in the pork-barrel scam (Romero 2015; Rufo & Bernal, 2014). Her privilege speeches could be considered as instruments in

showing people problems the country was facing, thus persuading authorities to take actions resulting in some changes mentioned in the above-given examples.

The total frequency of transitivity processes reflected in Table 3 indicates that the transitivity system could help in attaining the goals and objectives of any written texts such as privilege speeches. The analysis of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago's persuasive privilege speeches showed how different transitivity processes could be used to manifest social problems, inequalities, and power abuse in her rhetoric. As shown in Table 3, she frequently used material, relational, and verbal processes. The results of this investigation validated the findings of similar studies (Adjei & Ewusi-Mensah, 2016; Adjei et al., 2015; Al-Faki, 2014; Alvi & Baseer, 2011; Harwiyati, 2016; Kondowe, 2014; Liping, 2014; Naz et al., 2012; Shariffar & Rahimi, 2015; Wang, 2010) on the use of the transitivity system and proved that the use of different transitivity processes could help politicians manifest power and ideology, and persuade people.

In addition, based on the findings of the present research, the study of transitivity analysis has several implications for Philippine political discourse, and discourse and ideology. The findings show that the use of different transitivity processes could help politicians incorporate ideology and power in their political discourse. In this regard, it would be beneficial for future politicians to learn the proper use of different transitivity processes. Perhaps, language teachers and curriculum experts could collaborate in designing the curricula of political science, legal management, and any other law-related degrees to incorporate lessons on the use and importance of transitivity processes in any written texts. Learning the proper use of different transitivity processes could help students develop their critical-thinking skills in analyzing arguments and in making sound decisions and judgments. Hence, if these students decide to enter politics in the future, they are already equipped with knowledge about transitivity system they could use in writing their speeches.

#### 4. Conclusion

Overall, the results of the study revealed that the most evident transitivity process in the selected privilege speeches of Senator Defensor-Santiago were material processes, followed by relational and verbal processes. The Senator frequently employed material processes to manifest power and persuasiveness in her rhetoric. She used them in emphasizing the actions of people involved in illegal activities and discrimination among women in the workforce, and in recommending some solutions to certain problems. Furthermore, relational processes were employed to define some concepts, attack someone's credibility and character, and express the state of affairs of the country and women in society. She also used verbal processes to strengthen her claims regarding some issues she raised in her privilege speeches. Moreover, the study showed that existential and behavioral processes were relatively less frequent in the privilege speeches of Senator Defensor-Santiago. These processes played a minor role in the transitivity system (Adjei et al., 2015). In this regard, Senator Defensor-Santiago had to use major transitivity processes to sound more persuasive in her privilege speeches.

It is important for her to use major transitivity processes such as material and relational processes to manifest power, ideology, and persuasiveness in her political rhetoric. By doing so, she could persuade and change the way people feel and think regarding some issues in the country. In addition, the results of this study revealed that transitivity processes were useful in revealing the problems, threats, and inequalities in society. In this regard, people could see that there is a need for them to take actions to address these problems in order to make the society a better place to live in. By analyzing the linguistic spin in political rhetoric, people could understand the implied meaning and ideology embedded in the language used by a speaker.

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