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MODAL META-FUNCTIONS IN DUTERTISMO NARRATIVES

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ABSTRACT

As the phenomenal Filipino incarnation of governance style and political culture, the emergence of Dutertismo in the echelons of Philippine politics propelled differing and perplexing realities on development discourse among nation-builders. While the literature on Dutertismo remains fragmented, the apparent language gap among President Rodrigo Duterte, his supporters, and his critics continues to become controversial and complex having no studies that explored development discourse as lens for investigation. This discourse-based study explored how the language of development is formed, communicated, and congruent in terms modality in 15 Dutertismo narratives using critical discourse analysis. The findings revealed that President Duterte maintained a positive perspective on development and committed to deliver his development promises, the supporters established a positive allegiance to the President while the critics positively established the President as being far from the traits of a true Filipino leader. The study recommends widening the scope of Dutertismo narratives encompassing economic, social, political, cultural, educational, and scientific narratives to draw a bigger and more comprehensive picture of development discourse which can accommodate and unravel more varied discourse features, topic categories, and ideological patterns of Dutertismo narratives.

KEYWORDS: Critical Discourse Analysis; Modal Meta-Functions; Dutertismo; Philippines.

1. INTRODUCTION

Political discourse is one of the most powerful tools in shaping public opinion, constructing collective memory, and defining national identity (Wu, 2023; Yunisda & Firmansyah, 2019). Language does not merely reflect reality but actively participates in creating and sustaining it. The way political leaders communicate, through speeches, policies, and public statements, plays a critical role in legitimizing authority and mobilizing support (Nyongbet et al., 2020; Rahmani & Saeed, 2024). In many contexts, the discursive strategies employed by political actors have been shown to shape perceptions of governance, justice, and morality (Abuelwafa, 2021; Rahmani & Saeed, 2024). Examining how language functions in political discourse thus provides valuable insights into how societies negotiate meaning and power.

In the Philippines, the presidency of Rodrigo Duterte marked a distinct rhetorical and ideological era known as *Dutertismo* (David, 2016). This term encapsulates both the political philosophy and the communication style that characterized his administration. Duterte's public persona was built on populist, nationalist, and tough-talking rhetoric that resonated with many Filipinos (Duran, 2023; Teehankee, 2016). His speeches, often laced with humor, profanity, and dramatic narratives, contributed to his image as a leader who was both relatable and uncompromising (Dulay et al., 2022). At the same time, his rhetoric polarized public opinion, with critics highlighting its authoritarian undertones and its implications for human rights, especially in relation to the controversial war on drugs.

The narratives surrounding *Dutertismo* were not limited to Duterte's own words. They were shaped by a constellation of communicative artifacts, including policy statements, media coverage, and political articles, that either supported or challenged his governance. Supportive narratives reinforced Duterte's tough-on-crime image and legitimized his policy directions, while critical narratives questioned his actions and framed them as threats to democracy and human rights (Kenny & Holmes, 2020). Together, these narratives formed a contested discursive space where meaning, power, and legitimacy were continuously negotiated (Laya & Marque, 2012).

Understanding *Dutertismo* narratives through the lens of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) offers a deeper comprehension of how language constructs reality. SFL posits that language performs multiple metafunctions simultaneously, ideational,

interpersonal, and textual, each contributing to how meaning is shaped (Al-Badri & Al-Janabi, 2022; Hoang, 2021). Among these, the interpersonal metafunction is crucial for examining how speakers negotiate relationships, power, and attitudes through language. One of the most significant realizations of the interpersonal metafunction is modality, which conveys a speaker's degree of certainty, obligation, or willingness regarding a proposition (Bashir et al., 2023).

Modality functions as a linguistic resource that encodes stance and commitment (Bashir et al., 2023; Wu, 2023). Modal verbs allow speakers to express degrees of probability, necessity, and desirability (Gamage & Makangila, 2019; Lingard & Watling, 2021). These choices are never neutral. They position the speaker in relation to the listener, signaling authority, solidarity, or deference. Modality is therefore a powerful tool in political discourse, as it allows leaders to construct ideological positions, demand compliance, and invite consensus (Afridita et al., 2022; Yunisda & Firmansyah, 2019). The presence and distribution of modal verbs in political narratives can reveal how power relations and social expectations are managed discursively.

The analysis of modality is closely tied to politeness theory, which examines how language preserves or threatens the "face" of participants in interaction (Fitzmaurice, 2002). Politeness strategies can mitigate the force of imposition, project solidarity, or assert authority, depending on how they are deployed (Locher & Watts, 2005). In the context of *Dutertismo*, Duterte's frequent use of direct, uncompromising language may be interpreted as a deliberate strategy to project a strong political face, appealing to those who value decisive leadership, while simultaneously threatening the face needs of critics and opponents. Studying modality through this lens helps uncover how Duterte's narratives balance authority with persuasion, command with solidarity, and coercion with consensus-building.

Beyond linguistic interest, examining modality in *Dutertismo* narratives carries broader implications for understanding Philippine democracy and civic engagement. Language is a key site where power is enacted and contested, and the way Duterte communicated shaped not only policy debates but also public behavior and expectations of governance. By scrutinizing the modal choices embedded in political statements and media narratives, researchers can reveal how language legitimizes certain forms of authority, normalizes particular policies, and frames moral imperatives for citizens. This perspective highlights the centrality of discourse

in sustaining or challenging political power, making it a crucial area of inquiry in political communication and critical discourse studies.

Given these theoretical considerations, this study investigates the modal metafunctions present in Duterte narratives. It aims to uncover how modality operates across different narrative types, (policy statements, supportive political articles, and critical political articles) to construct authority, project legitimacy, and manage power relations. Specifically, this research seeks to identify the discourse features of the Duterte narratives in terms of modality and determine the congruence of the modal features present in the narratives. Through critical discourse analysis, this study contributes to understanding how language operates as a tool of political power and persuasion during the Duterte presidency, enriching the broader discourse on language, politics, and society.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to uncover the language of development in the era of Duterte through the lens of critical discourse analysis. Specifically, the following are the goals of the study:

1. Identify the discourse features of the Duterte narratives in terms of transitivity, and modality;
2. Determine the congruence the discourse features present in the Duterte narratives; and
3. Establish a notion of development discourse constructed in the era of Duterte.

1.2. Theoretical Lens

The discourse feature that this study explored is modality. Modality is a broad expression of a speaker's attitude toward the situation or event described by a sentence or in regard to the proposition expressed by the sentence (Abrea, 2014). It is an important communicative tool for realizing the interpersonal function and expressing social roles between the speaker-writer and the hearer-reader (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Hassan, 1989). Modality consists of the

speaker's comments on what they are saying about the real world. Saeed (1997) postulated that modality allows speakers to express varying levels of commitment or belief in a proposition. Also, he mentioned that modal systems signal stronger or weaker commitment to the factuality of statements. Additionally, Yule (1998) purported that modals convey some indication of the speaker's perspective or attitude with respect to the situation or the state of affairs being described.

The analysis of modality resides on the concept of politeness. Politeness refers to any behavior which actively expresses either positive concern for others, as well as non-imposing distancing behavior (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It is used to describe the extent to which action, including the way things are said, match the addressee's perception of how they should be performed. The theory of politeness is based on the concept of face. Face is closely tied to the public self-image and is something that is emotionally invested which can be lost or saved (Holmes, 1995). In short, politeness is the same as showing concern for people's face (Brown and Levinson 1987; Goffman, 1967). Face involves 'negative face' which is the desire not to be imposed upon and 'positive face' which is the desire to be liked and admired.

For this study, exploring modality through politeness enabled the researcher to view how the notion of 'development' is conceived as a form of behavior. In this case, decoding the development stance of President Duterte requires a special way of understanding his language in order to reveal the important systems in socio-political communication. Through this, President Duterte's judgement towards his view of development can be appraised in terms of social role, relationship with society, scale of formality, and power relationship. Overtly, the lens of modality institutes a theoretical basis how the President imposes his political face to Filipino people with his development direction. Finally, it can demystify how the President expresses his commitment or belief on development. Table 1 presents the analysis framework of modal metafunctions based on Gouling (2006) as cited in Wang (2010).

Table 1: Analysis Framework of Modal Metafunctions (Guoling, 2006 in Wang, 2010).

| Modal Verbs | Level | Level of Politeness | Description |
|----------------------------------|--------|---------------------|--|
| can, could, may, might, dare | Low | Positive | This is the use of a linguistic unit (modal verb) to seek common ground and/or cooperation as well as sense of belongingness within the group. The speaker uses modal verbs to intensify interest to hearer, use in-group markers, seek agreement, avoid disagreement, presuppose/assert common ground, offer/promise, be optimistic, give/ask reasons, assume/assert reciprocity, and offer sympathy/understanding towards the hearer(s). |
| will, would, should, shall | Median | | |
| must, ought to, need, has/had to | High | | |

| | | | |
|--|--------|----------|--|
| needn't, doesn't, didn't, need to, have to | Low | Negative | This includes indirectness and apologies. These modal verbs tend to express respect and consideration to the hearer. Modal verbs that show conventional indirectness, hedging, pessimism, minimal imposition, deference, apology, impersonal relationship between the speaker and the hearer, nominalization, and incurring a debt/not indebting the hearer. |
| won't, wouldn't, isn't, shouldn't, wasn't | Median | | |
| hasn't, hadn't, mustn't, oughtn't, can't, couldn't, mayn't, mightn't | High | | |

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study anchored its conduct and interpretation of meaning on the philosophical view of social-constructivism. As a philosophical view, social constructivism recognizes reality as a product of human intelligence with experience in the world and this fits the philosophical and investigative intent of this research since studying development discourse reflects differing realities and experiences on power-relations and ideologies. Also, this philosophy allowed the researcher to position his meanings within a specific context, in this case, the context of Dutertismo which is critically interpreted and subjectively opposed by various entities. Moreover, since the objective of the study was to gain an understanding on how the discourse of development is constructed in one way or another, social constructivism enabled the researcher to focus on a single phenomenon that described the dynamicity of political narratives. As an outcome, this contributed to the definition of the very notion of development in the Philippines.

As a strategy of inquiry, this study related a qualitative nature of investigation. Particularly, this was a qualitative research which integrated a multi-method investigation involving naturalistic and interpretative approach to understanding development discourse. This means that the researcher studied development discourse in its natural manifestation and setting by making sense on the phenomenon of Dutertismo in terms of the meanings people bring in exercising knowledge and opinion towards development. Henceforth, this study considered qualitative investigation as the researcher described and interpreted the Duterte narratives in their naturalistic, not controlled, and observational, not experimental, setting. Furthermore, the current study explored discursive narratives that exercise opinions, validations, and invalidations of reality based on political actions and policies which can direct the interpretation of intricacies of meanings in the socio-political context

of Dutertismo. Likewise, this study, as a qualitative research, was more concerned on validity rather than reliability and generalizability of findings and interpretations (Fernandez, 2011).

Ultimately, the investigation of this research was anchored on two methods of analyses. First, the study employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Fairclough (1992a) as this study sought to analyze and interpret discourse features and patterns of policy statements and political articles produced in the era of Dutertismo. In this parameter, CDA examined the production and reproduction sources and resources that constitute development discourse, a dominant discourse in the Philippine political landscape. The researcher found CDA as one of best suitable methodologies in this investigation since it provided a framework for studying discourse with an emphasis on language in relation to power and ideology, two of the most important drivers that synergize development discourse. Similarly, as the objective of this study was not only to deconstruct the discourse of development in the era of Dutertismo but also to provide some alternatives in understanding and constructing this dominant discourse for a critical appraisal and an increased awareness against disinformation, CDA was a suitable method because it gave an understanding on power-relations that enables some discourses to be hegemonic but may open doorways for change.

On the other hand, the second method of analysis entailed a content analysis through Corbin and Strauss' (2008) Content Analysis on the political narratives produced in the emerging era of Dutertismo. The researcher found this method of analysis suitable in the study since it involved a content comparison of two types of discourse, the case of policy statements and political articles, in order to examine if there was congruency or unity in understanding and communicating development among actors across the Philippine society.

2.2. Research Corpus

A total of 15 Dutertismo narratives was investigated and analyzed in the present study in

order to characterize the underlying discourse features, ideologies, development topics and the congruence of power-relations among the identified discourse actors. The narratives were comprised of five policy statements of President Rodrigo Duterte, five political articles from Duterte supporters, and

five political articles from Duterte critics. The President's policy statements were collected from the President Communications Operations Office and the political articles of the supporters and critics were generated from published journals and media platforms. Table 2 illustrates the corpus of the study.

Table 2: Corpus of the Study.

| Narratives | No. of Narratives | No. of Words |
|--|-------------------|---------------|
| Policy Statements of President Rodrigo Duterte | 5 | 36,955 |
| Political Articles of Duterte Supporters | 5 | 14,682 |
| Political Articles of Duterte Critics | 5 | 10,118 |
| Total | 15 | 61,755 |

The selection and inclusion of the narratives was anchored on the following conditions: a) the narrative should be at least 1000 words; b) the narrative offers position for either ascent or dissent on the development policies of the Duterte Administration; and c) the narrative is reputable in nature and contributes to the dynamic exercise of Dutertismo discourse. Overall, the corpus of the narratives involved 61,755 words which were analyzed using critical congruence discourse analysis in order to derive the prevailing development ideologies, patterns, and issues expressed by each discourse actors in view of their notion on development. For a corpus-driven research like the present study, 60,000 words is already a good structure to generalize and interpret a qualitative phenomenon under investigation (Castello, 2014), in this case, the phenomenon of Dutertismo.

2.3. Research Procedure

Retrieving the Corpus of the Study. The corpus of Dutertismo narratives were consisted of President Duterte's policy statements and Duterte Supporters and Critics' political narratives. The policy statements were collected from the website of the Presidential Communications Operations Office, the official publication arm of the Republic of the Philippines. The political articles were culled from published journals and online media outlets that positioned either ascent or dissent on the policies and actions of the incumbent administration. A total of 15 political narratives were investigated and analyzed to characterize the underlying discourse features, ideology, topic categories and congruence of the power-relations of development discourse in the emerging era of Dutertismo.

Analyzing the Corpus of the Study. The analysis of the political narratives was done through Critical Congruence Discourse Analysis, an integrated approach of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992a) and upscaled direct congruence content analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Describing and Interpreting Results. In the final point of this study, the findings and results yielded in the analysis were described, interpreted, and discussed to draw sound and valid conclusions and recommendations in order to address objectives of this study specifically in making a theoretical insight in Philippine development discourse.

Subjecting the Analysis for Review and Validation. The results of the analysis of the corpus under investigation were subjected for an inter-reliability and validity coding review by faculty experts in development studies, development communication, and discourse analysis. The validators had a track record in conducting studies related to development studies and discourse analysis. This measure was done in order to assess and establish the soundness, trustworthiness, and validity of the results and interpretations yielded in the analysis. Moreover, the researcher utilized the criteria of Lincoln and Guba (1985) in the evaluation of the analysis. The criteria included the following indicators: (a) *Credibility* means confidence in the truth of the findings that can be demonstrated in a tedious engagement and persistent observation; (b) *Transferability* refers to the degree to which the results of a qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings; (c) *Dependability* shows that the findings are consistent and can be repeated; and (d) *Confirmability* refers to the degree to which the results are confirmed or corroborated by other expert reviewers or validators.

2.4. Data Preparation and Analysis

The corpus of this study consisted of a collection of three categories of Dutertismo narratives: (a) policy statements of President Rodrigo Duterte; (b) political articles of Dutertismo Supporters; and (c) political articles of Duterte Critics. Since these narratives were available publicly, the preparation, processing, and coding of the corpus was done directly. For the coding of the narratives, codes were mark at corpus-level, paragraph-level, and

sentence-level. The narratives of President Duterte were coded as [RD] while the Duterte Supporters and Duterte Critics were respectively coded as [DS] and [DC] in the corpus. Further, the code [P#] stood for the paragraph sequence number while [S#] stood for sentence sequence number. For example, the code [RD1-P1-S1] refers to the narrative 1, paragraph 1, and sentence 1 of President Duterte's policy statements. This coding was similarly applied to [DS] and [DC] narratives.

The first stage of investigation involved the analysis of discourse features in Duterte narratives in terms of transitivity patterns, modal metafunctions, and topic categories. In this stage, critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992a; van Dijk, 1998) was employed in order to uncover such discourse features. Also, part of the analysis are interpretations of frequency or the number of occurrence of each discourse feature in a Duterte narrative. In short, the qualitative results and findings of this study were presented and interpreted side-by-side with quasi-statistics. This was done in order to reinforce the interpretations provided in this study.

The second stage of the investigation focused on the congruence of the discourse features. The analysis of congruence was focused on the transitivity system and modal metafunctions expressed in the narratives of President Duterte, the supporters, and the critics.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Modality in the Policy Statements of President Rodrigo Duterte

The discourse feature that this study explored is *modality*. Modality is a broad expression of a speaker's attitude toward the situation or event described by a sentence or in regard to the proposition expressed by the sentence (Abrea, 2014). It is an important communicative tool for realizing the interpersonal function and expressing social roles between the speaker-writer and the hearer-reader (Halliday and Hassan, 1989; Halliday, 1994). Modality consists of the speaker's comments on what they are saying about the real world. Saeed (1997) postulated that modality allows speakers to express varying levels of commitment or belief in a

proposition. Also, he mentioned that modal systems signal stronger or weaker commitment to the factuality of statements. Additionally, Yule (1998) purported that modals convey some indication of the speaker's perspective or attitude with respect to the situation or the state of affairs being described.

The analysis of modality resides on the concept of *politeness*. Politeness refers to any behavior which actively expresses either positive concern for others, as well as non-imposing distancing behavior (Brown and Levinson, 1987). It is used to describe the extent to which action, including the way things are said, match the addressee's perception of how they should be performed. The theory of politeness is based on the concept of *face*. *Face* is closely tied to the public self-image and is something that is emotionally invested which can be lost or saved (Holmes, 1995). In short, politeness is the same as showing concern for people's face (Goffman, 1967; Brown and Levinson 1987). *Face* involves '*negative face*' which is the desire not to be imposed upon and '*positive face*' which is the desire to be liked and admired.

For this study, exploring modality through politeness enabled the researcher to view how the notion of '*development*' is conceived as a form of behavior. In this case, decoding the development stance of President Duterte requires a special way of understanding his language in order to reveal the important systems in socio-political communication. Through this, President Duterte's judgement towards his view of development can be appraised in terms of social role, relationship with society, scale of formality, and power relationship. Overtly, the lens of modality institutes a theoretical basis how the President imposes his political *face* to Filipino people with his development direction. Finally, it can demystify how the President expresses his commitment or belief on development.

Table 3 shows the results of the modality analysis in the policy statements of President Duterte. Politeness is typified into two (2) categories, namely: *positive* and *negative*. Each category has three levels: *low*, *median*, and *high*. The basis for this analysis is anchored on the lens provided by Gouling (2006) as cited in Wang (2010).

Table 3: Modality in the Policy Statements of President Duterte.

| Category | Level | <i>f</i> | | | | | Total | Overall Total | % |
|----------|--------|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|------|
| | | [RD1] | [RD2] | [RD3] | [RD4] | [RD5] | | | |
| Positive | Median | 13 | 153 | 133 | 59 | 87 | 445 | 703 | 56.2 |
| | Low | 2 | 31 | 50 | 24 | 43 | 150 | | |
| | High | 4 | 32 | 40 | 12 | 20 | 108 | | |
| Negative | Low | 16 | 87 | 141 | 59 | 110 | 413 | 548 | 43.8 |
| | Median | 5 | 17 | 34 | 12 | 17 | 85 | | |
| | High | 5 | 14 | 5 | 5 | 21 | 50 | | |
| Total | | 45 | 334 | 403 | 171 | 298 | 1,251 | 1,251 | 100 |

Demystifying the [RD] corpus shows that modality was used in expressing politeness. Overtly, politeness is a significant entity in communicating language and this is critically and strategically embodied in the policy statements of President Duterte.

As shown in Table 3, President Duterte’s policy statements are highly characterized by *positive politeness* with 703 representations or 56.2% corpus presence. Under positive politeness, *median positive* constitutes the highest frequency with 445 representations. It is followed by *low positive* as second with 150 representations while *high positive* comes last with 108 representations. The modal verbs ‘will’, ‘would’, ‘should’, and ‘shall’ are commonly utilized by President Duterte to show *median positive politeness*. Representing the President’s *low positive politeness* are ‘can’, ‘could’, ‘may’, ‘might’, and ‘dare’ while ‘must’, ‘ought to’, ‘need’, ‘has/has to’, and ‘had/had to’ are for *high positive politeness*.

On another side, there is also a significant number of *negative politeness* in the policy statements of President Duterte. It constitutes 548 representations or 43.8% of the total corpus presence. Underneath negative politeness, *low negative politeness* is found to be the most occurring with 413 representations which is indicated by modal verbs ‘needn’t’, ‘doesn’t’, ‘don’t’, ‘didn’t’, ‘need to’, and ‘have/have to’. *Median negative politeness* comes as second with 85 representations. This is signaled by the modals ‘won’t’, ‘wouldn’t’, ‘isn’t’, ‘shouldn’t’, ‘wasn’t’, and ‘shan’t’. Lastly, *high negative politeness* counts for 50 representations which is specified by the following modal verbs: ‘hasn’t’, ‘hadn’t’, ‘mustn’t’, ‘oughtn’t’, ‘can’t’, ‘couldn’t’, ‘mayn’t’, and ‘mightn’t’.

Overall, the lens of modality integrated in this investigation reflects the attitude of President Duterte towards development. As the main persona

of the Duterteismo narratives, the President’s interpersonal function and social role in his policy statements is described to be politely positive as indicated by modality. This only means that the President maintains a positive perspective on topics and notions he discloses to his listeners. Also, the President’s propositions and beliefs which he embodied through his policy statements can be critically viewed that he is positively committed to enact, accomplish, or deliver. In short, whatever topics the President pronounces in his policies is an expression of *commitment to deliver*. Moreover, the high occurrence of positive politeness embodies the President’s ‘*positive face*’. This *positive face* projects President Duterte’s political self-image as someone who desires to be liked or admired. Contrarily, the significant representativeness of negative politeness may describe the President’s ‘*assumed coercive behavior*’, an inclination to claim and maintain his territory in the political arena and may distinctively lead to exercising his power and political status over those entities and subjects of his policy statements. Overtly, the President is not afraid to impose his *negative face* in his policy statements.

3.2. Modality in the Political Articles of Duterte Supporters

As previously mentioned, the analysis of modality reveals how an entity is committed to the propositions or beliefs they are communicating. For this study, modality operates to view how these Duterte Supporters are committed to the topics and issues they communicate to their readers while in show of support to the President. In the next page, Table 5.2 shows the results of the investigation of modality in political articles of Duterte Supporters.

Table 4: Modality in the Political Articles of Duterte Supporters.

| Category | Level | f | | | | | Total | Overall Total | % |
|--------------|--------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|---------------|------------|
| | | [DS1] | [DS2] | [DS3] | [DS4] | [DS5] | | | |
| Positive | High | 47 | 12 | 27 | 15 | 1 | 102 | 203 | 57.3 |
| | Low | 23 | 11 | 12 | 9 | 5 | 60 | | |
| | Median | 11 | 13 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 41 | | |
| Negative | Low | 44 | 26 | 11 | 16 | 8 | 105 | 151 | 42.7 |
| | Median | 11 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 26 | | |
| | High | 8 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 20 | | |
| Total | | 144 | 74 | 59 | 57 | 20 | 354 | 354 | 100 |

Table 4 presents that the modality of the Duterte Supporters is dominantly anchored on *positive politeness* with 203 representations or constitutes 57.3% out of the total corpus presence. Entrenched in this positive politeness, *high positive* is the highest with 102 representations while *low positive* and *median positive* originate as second and third with 60

and 41 corpus representations, respectively. On another view, *negative politeness* covers 151 representations or 42.7% in the political articles of the Duterte Supporters. Within this negative politeness, *low negative* ranks first with 105 representations. Second is *median negative* with 26 representations. And last, *high negative* with 20 representations out of

the total corpus.

From the findings stipulated above, it can be construed that the Duterte Supporters positioned their modality on *positive politeness* which exhibits their high commitment to the topics they are discussing and interpreting in their political articles. These topics can be surmised to express sociable, ideal, and warmth relations to personas and entities being tackled in such political articles. As an indicator of attitude or behavior in political texts, positive modality reflects in some degree the *perceived allegiance* of the Duterte Supporters to their patron. This *allegiance* represents the supporters' *positive face* in projecting their political self-image publicly. On another note, *negative politeness* bears weight in the political articles of Duterte Supporters. This displays the *negative face* of such supporters when categorically tackling topics and issues that go against President Duterte. Clearly, the Duterte Supporters are construed to undermine these topics

by imposing their political beliefs and propositions in contrast to those who go against them. They depicted an attitude of what is to be admired and what is not to be. In this way, Duterte Supporters can claim a political territory that depicts social distance among those who criticize the President in view of his style of leadership and governance.

3.3. Modality in the Political Articles of Duterte Critics

Equally important with the first two corpora, [RD] and [DS], is the examination of modality in the political articles written by Duterte Critics [DC]. The analysis provides the researcher an avenue to explore how modality is structured in order to manifest the Duterte Critics' attitude and behavior towards President Duterte. Below is the matrix for results of modality analysis in Duterte Critics. Table 5 shows the summary of modality in the political articles of Duterte critics.

Table 5: Modality in the Political Articles of Duterte Critics.

| Category | Level | f | | | | | Total | Overall Total | % |
|--------------|--------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|---------------|------------|
| | | [DC1] | [DC2] | [DC3] | [DC4] | [DC5] | | | |
| Positive | High | 31 | 9 | 4 | 9 | 31 | 84 | 191 | 69.5 |
| | Low | 30 | 17 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 62 | | |
| | Median | 8 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 12 | 45 | | |
| Negative | Low | 19 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 21 | 59 | 84 | 30.5 |
| | Median | 11 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 18 | | |
| | High | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 7 | | |
| Total | | 104 | 46 | 24 | 28 | 73 | 275 | 275 | 100 |

As shown in Table 5, *positive politeness* characterizes the modality of the Duterte Critics with 191 representations or 69.5%. Among the positive politeness levels, *high positive* leads the rank with 84 representations. As second, *low positive* is composed of 62 representations while *median positive* comes third with 45 representations. On the other side, there are 84 representations for *negative politeness* which 59 of which are *low negative*, 11 are *median negative*, and seven are *high negative* representations.

For this analysis, the high representativeness of positive politeness cannot be construed as similar support to President Duterte. The underlying positive politeness expressed through modals is taken to the topics and issues imposed by Duterte Critics in their political articles. In other words, the modality of politeness presents the President with political colors he is currently into. This constitutes the critics' positive commitment on topics and issues they bring into the consciousness of their readers. Consequently, the commitment highlights their *positive face* in criticizing the incumbent administration when it comes to issues and controversies that they believe bedevil the nation.

Overtly, this *positive face* is seemingly positioning the President in a limelight that is against the ideals of the Filipino people. On another picture, negative politeness simply denotes *negative face* in the political articles of Duterte Critics. *Negative face* marks the territory and social distance where these critics argued their disbeliefs and frustrations against the incumbent President.

Overall, exploring modality in the three corpus sheds light on the bigger endeavor this study aims to establish which is congruence analysis. In this sense, the analysis of modality establishes the consistent notions of values and ideological intents in the corpus as respectively communicated and embodied by President Duterte himself, the Duterte Supporters, and the Duterte Critics.

3.4. Congruence of the Discourse Features in the Dutertismo Narratives

In this investigation, Dutertismo narratives are framed and interacted by three *discourse actors*, namely: *President Duterte with his policy statements*, *Duterte Supporters with their political articles*, and *Duterte Critics with their political articles*. With the

interaction of the said discourse actors, the notion of *congruence* integrates all the discourse features and development ideologies and issues present in the Dutertismo narratives. As such, the analysis of congruence is done by comparing the discourse features expressed by President Duterte in his policy

statements to the discourse features articulated by Duterte Supporters and Duterte Critics in their political articles, respectively. Table 6 illustrates the congruence of the discourse features in the Dutertismo narratives based on the investigation made in this study.

Table 6: Congruence of the Discourse Features in the Dutertismo Narratives.

| Features | President Duterte | Duterte Supporters | Duterte Critics |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|
| | Positive (Median) Politeness | Positive (High) Politeness | Positive (High) Politeness |
| Modal Metafunctions | President Duterte is optimistic, seeks cooperation, intensifies his interest to his hearers, offers promises, and provides reasons on his actions. | Duterte Supporters assert their ideological beliefs, offer their understanding about the President and intensify their interests to their hearers. | Duterte Critics assert their ideological beliefs, offer their understanding about the President and intensify their interests to their hearers. |

In this study, *modal metafunction* identifies and determines the *attitudes* or *behaviors* of President Duterte, the Duterte Supporters, and the Duterte Critics as essential actors and perpetrators of Philippine development discourse. Since these actors have differing and conflicting ideological and political intents, *modal metafunction* allows them to express *varying levels of commitment and belief* on development. It also includes the comments on what discourse actors of development are saying about the development realities that persist the nation. As these realities are important features of Philippine development discourse, modals convey further the essential indications of the discourse actors' perspective and attitude with respect to the situation and state of affairs they described respectively as *development*. Correspondingly, modal metafunctions demystify *development* as a *conceived form of political behavior* demonstrated by President Duterte, the Duterte Supporters, and the Duterte Critics. Finally, with all of these functions and features, this study implored congruence analysis in modal metafunctions of the Dutertismo narratives to determine who among the discourse actors development utilizes a stronger or weaker commitment to the factuality on their respective development beliefs.

As illustrated in Table 6, President Duterte demonstrates *positive (median) politeness* in his policy statements. In this modal expression, the President construes an *optimistic* attitude towards development which is expected for a leader who has an oath to serve being elected to the highest position of the land. Since the core of the modal analysis is *politeness*, the behavior of President Duterte justifies his optimism towards development. Being optimistic, the President institutes smooth communication and self-defense in his interactions with the Filipino people. Furthermore, the chief executive seeks cooperation

and intensifies his interest to his Filipino constituents. This behavior paints him an image of trust and confidence which he overwhelmingly secured from the Filipino electorate. Likewise, the President's politeness actively expresses positive concern for the Filipino people. This is the case of offering promises and providing justifications or reasons on his actions. Overtly, promises are common to politicians like the President and justifications are upheld to maintain trust and confidence in his governance. These justifications identify his relationship with his audience, giving them the opportunity to think what he feels and deliberates his political leadership. Characteristically, the justifications or reasons of his actions are maintained by *median politeness*, an indication that President Duterte is always trying to reach out to his constituents, the Filipino people whom he seeks favor from.

Although diverging in political and ideological standpoints, Duterte Supporters and Duterte Critics employ the same *positive (high) politeness*. Compared to President Duterte's positive (median) politeness, *positive (high) politeness* expounds the Duterte Supporters and Duterte Critics' ideological intents underscored in their respective political articles. In this study, the *high politeness* indicates *strong assertion* on what Duterte Supporters and Duterte Critics perceived to be true or factual in their propositions about development. This also suggests that whatever these two groups offer in their narratives are personal understandings about the political identity of President Duterte which intensifies the maintenance of interest to their Filipino audience. This kind of attitude is expected from the two groups since they share the kind of realities they feel and see to be occurring in the nation. As these realities influence their individual political dispositions, personal understanding about the President is maintained either by *concurrency* or *dissent*. For this

study, concurrence is postulated by the Duterte Supporters while *dissent* is explicated by the Duterte Critics. Clearly, their contradictory understanding about the President is unquestionably one of the driving forces that perpetuates the dynamic exercise of development discourse in the Philippines. Moreover, positive (high) politeness espouses the social roles that the Duterte Supporters and Duterte Critics play in Philippine society which is to persuade the Filipino public about their assertions on President Duterte, the kind of government he leads, and the type of development he brings to the Philippine society.

Overall, the analysis of congruence reveals that President Duterte, the Duterte Supporters, and the Duterte Critics maintain the same level of commitment and belief on development regardless of their political differences and ideological intents. This conveys the essential indications of their perspective and attitude with respect to the situation and state of affairs they described respectively as development. Correspondingly, the apparent consistency of modal metafunctions demystifies development as a conceived form of political behavior demonstrated by President Duterte, the Duterte Supporters, and the Duterte Critics. Finally, President Duterte maintains median commitment on his development agenda while both Duterte Supporters and Critics explicate a high commitment to the factuality on their respective development beliefs.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

Ethics review and clearance were waived since this study was corpus-based. No humans or animals were involved in the conduct of this research. The analysis and interpretation were guided by established criteria and expert validators confirmed the results and findings of the study.

Data Availability Statement

The corpus used in this study are publicly available and can be provided for research purposes upon request. Interested researchers and readers may contact the researcher through his official email.

Conflicts of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest associated with this study.

AI Disclosure

The author of this manuscript declares that no generative artificial intelligence (AI) or AI-assisted technologies were used to generate content, ideas, frameworks, or theories during the writing process. AI was utilized solely

4. CONCLUSIONS

President Duterte maintained a positive perspective on topics and notions about development and demonstrated commitment to deliver his development promises. Also, he depicted a coercive behavior to demonstrate his claim to power and maintain his territory in the Philippine political arena. On one hand, the supporters established a positive allegiance to President Duterte and imposed their positive public self-image on the development programs. Additionally, they undermined topics and issues that were against the President and claimed a political territory of strong social distance among those who criticized President Duterte with this style of leadership and governance. On the other hand, the critics possessed a positive commitment in criticizing and positioning President Duterte as a politician that is far from the traits of a true Filipino leader and against the ideals of the Filipino people. Likewise, they marked their political territory with strong social distance, disbelief, and frustration against President Duterte and those who support him.

President Duterte, the supporters, and the critics maintained the same level of commitment and belief on development regardless of their political differences and ideological intents. President Duterte maintained a positive (median) commitment on his development agenda while both supporters and critics explicated a positive (high) commitment to the factuality on their respective development beliefs.

to enhance readability and refine language, under strict human oversight and control. After using AI technologies, the author carefully reviewed and edited the manuscript to ensure its accuracy and coherence. The author understands the potential of AI to generate content that may sound authoritative but could be incorrect, incomplete, or biased. Therefore, the manuscript was thoroughly revised through human judgment.

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