Gender, Aphorisms, and Moral Metaphors in Political Speeches

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Abstract— This study examined the aphorisms and moral metaphors employed in the selected speeches of two political leaders in Basilan Province, Philippines – one male and one female – following Den Hartog and Verburg (1997) classification of techniques in analyzing aphorisms and the Nation-as-Family framework of George Lakoff (2002), specifically the categories stipulated in the studies of Moses and Gonzales (2015) and Wolters (2012). The results show that the female political leader used more aphorisms and Nurturant Parent Metaphors are more apparent in her speeches. On the other hand, the male political leader employed more Strict Father Metaphors in his speeches. Thus, it was found that gender significantly differentiates the utilization of the rhetorical devices analyzed. Overall, the results provide a new perspective on how political leaders are able to shape policy agenda and political rhetoric in their constituents. The paper further recommends that future research endeavors in the study of rhetoric might include more speeches from a randomized number of male and female political leaders, and evaluate more political issues to examine whether they influence the frames used in the speeches.

Keywords— Political Leaders, Political Speeches, Gender, Aphorisms, Moral Metaphors.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Language has an underlying role in the delivery of political orators' staged-managed and pre-planned objectives in order to evoke and persuade the audience toward the desired goals and meanings (Woods, 2006). Political speeches are generally defined as an attempt to provide others with reasons for thinking, feeling, or acting in a particular way; to motivate them; to invite them to trust one in uncertain conditions; and, to get them to see situations in a certain light, among others (Carreon & Svetanant, 2017; Neshkovska, 2020). Since ancient times, political speeches have been given for the purpose of influencing others, using rhetoric to persuade, excite, and claim leadership (Klebanov et al., 2008; Neshkovska, 2020).

Political leaders often use metaphors and frames to persuade audience, engage emotions, and provide citizens with the means to process and remember political information (Holman, 2015). In particular, study on George Lakoff's conceptualization of the nation-as-family metaphor in state and national politics exemplifies how politicians habitually use frames around appropriate moral behavior to present policy ideas and motivate support and approval in their audience (Deason & Gonzales, 2012; Holman, 2015; Lakoff, 2002; Moses & Gonzales, 2014). Researches on policy metaphors, however, rarely compares male and female leaders' use of metaphors or rhetoric (but see Bligh et al., 2010; Schroedel et al., 2013). In addition, scholars focus almost entirely on national leaders or federal policies, where party, incumbency, and competitiveness dominate the dialogue (Holman, 2015). At the local level, where citizens hold very low levels of political information about leaders and policies, frames serve an even more pivotal role in presenting policy choices, as individuals are more likely to rely on metaphors in low-information avenues to interpret political information.

Aside from moral metaphors and frames, aphorisms are also often employed in leaders' speeches. To reach their potential target audience, political speakers resort to various language means of expressiveness, heavily loaded with the objectives in view of a particular orator. Among these are aphorisms. Contemporary dictionaries define aphorisms as short witty sentences which express a general truth or comment (Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language, 2011; Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2015). Being an integral part of the national culture, aphorisms of different politicians absorb and embody different events in the society and cultural peculiarities of a particular nation. Thus, aphorisms of political leaders are able to influence and modify the opinion of the community in the most effective way (Patrusheva et al., 2020). Therefore, the role of aphorisms in political discourses cannot be disproved. It should be pointed out, however, that there is still a need to explore the issue of culture-based features of aphorisms functioning in political discourse which is much influenced by a particular worldview of the community in question (Patrusheva et al., 2020).

Moreover, literature on gender and leadership frequently finds that women address policy-making in a different mode, foregrounding communication and cooperation (Bligh & Kohles, 2008; Duerst-Lahti & Johnson, 1990; Holman, 2015; Kathlene, 1994, 1995; Lang-Takac & Osterweil, 1992) and concentrating on closer relationships with constituents (Deckman, 2007; Holman, 2015). Despite these gender divergences and the number of women serving at the local level, limited attention has been endowed to how gender influences the behavior of local leaders (Deckman, 2007; Holman, 2013; Smith, Reingold, & Owens, 2011). Specifically, scholars have yet to evaluate whether male and female leaders emphasize similar issues when communicating with constituents or use similar frames for political discussions (Holman, 2015).

This study evaluated four (4) speeches, two (2) of which were delivered by a male political leader, and the other two (2) were delivered by a female political leader – both are leaders in the province of Basilan. Employing Strict Father Coding Taxonomy (Moses & Gonzales, 2015) and Nurturant Parent

Coding Taxonomy (Wolters, 2012) based on George Lakoff's Nation-as-Family framework (2002) and Den Hartog and Verburg's (1997) list of techniques used by public speakers, the author evaluated the moral frames and aphorisms present in the arguments delivered by these leaders in their speeches and how their gender influence the rhetoric and frames used.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This paper was zeroed in on the analysis of the aphorisms and moral metaphors used in the speeches of two political leaders in Basilan, one male and one female. Their speeches were further analyzed using the Strict Father Coding Taxonomy (Moses & Gonzales, 2015) and Nurturant Parent Coding Taxonomy (Wolters, 2012) based on the Nation-as-Family framework of George Lakoff (2002) and Den Hartog and Verburg's (1997) list of techniques used by public speakers. Specifically, this paper answered the following questions:

1. What aphoristic style is dominant in each political leader?
2. What coding taxonomy is dominant in each political leader?
3. Are there differences in the use of aphorisms in the speeches of the two political leaders?
4. Are there differences in the use of moral metaphors in the speeches of the two political leaders?

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study utilized a mixed methods research designs. The aphorisms and moral metaphors in each speech were analyzed qualitatively using the public speakers' techniques exemplified by Den Hartog and Verburg's (1997) which are particularly suited in analyzing aphorisms; and, the coding taxonomies based on the works of Moses and Gonzales (2015) and Wolters (2012) following Lakoff's description of the two moral frames: Strict Father and Nurturant Parent. See tables 1, 2, and 3. To determine the dominant aphorism style and moral metaphors employed by each speaker and whether there are significant differences in their utilization of the two rhetorical devices according to their gender, the data were analyzed quantitatively.

TABLE 1. Den Hartog and Verburg's (1997) List of Techniques used by Public Speakers, Particularly Suited to the Analysis of Aphorisms

Technique	Example
Headline-punchline	To 2 million people given a pay rise through the minimum wage. [Headline] Tory pledge 1: we'll cut it. [Punchline]
Puzzle-solution	What threatens the nation-state today is not change, [Puzzle] but the refusal to change in a world opening up, becoming ever more interdependent. [Solution]
Contrast	10 years ago, a 15-year-old probably couldn't work a computer. (A) Now he's in danger of living on it. (B)
Listing	These forces of change driving the future: Don't stop at national boundaries. (A) Don't respect tradition. (B) They wait for no-one and no nation. (C) They are universal. (D)
Position taking	Today at the frontier of the new Millennium I set out for you how, as a nation, we renew British strength and confidence for the 21st century.

TABLE 2. Strict Father (SF) Coding Taxonomy

Themes	Description
SF1: Morality as Strength	Self-control; toughness; being strong against immorality, evil or adversity.
SF2: Morality as Self-Discipline	Discipline; determination; motivation.
SF3: Moral Authority	Leaders must, should, or do have the authority to lead.
SF4: Moral Contagion	Right and wrong used in an absolute sense, good-versus-evil thinking; punishment as "tough love," for your own good or as deterrent for others, to keep order; commitment to physical protection and safety in the face of threats.
SF5: Self-Reliance	Advocating personal responsibility and independence rather than government intervention; self-interest and self-interested activity are moral and good.

TABLE 3. Nurturant Parent (NP) Coding Taxonomy

Themes	Description
NP1: Morality as Nurturance	Nurturing others; love, and kindness; helping as a way of "giving back"; supporting or encouraging one's own or others' happiness and fulfilment.
NP2: Responsibility for others	Helping and providing direct care for others as moral imperatives, especially those less fortunate and vulnerable.
NP3: Cooperation	Working together is moral and ensures success; a shared sense of purpose or identity, also a sense of mutual responsibility.
NP4: Openness	Taking the others perspective; understanding; and openness to new and different ideas.
NP5: Involved, Responsible Authority	Authority figures have the responsibility to be involved and instrumental on behalf of those with less power or authority.

B. Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was utilized in the study. The political leaders were chosen based on their prominence in the province and with substantial political profile, as well as their gender – one male and one female.

The speeches were chosen from internet-based sources such as Twitter, Facebook, and MindaNews which were publicly published and/or posted. Two speeches were chosen for each political leader which centered on talks regarding peace and order. The collected speeches from the male political leader were composed of 2,137 words, while the speeches of the female political leader were composed of 4,436 words. That results to 6,573 word count.

C. Data Analysis

The researcher gathered four speeches of the two political leaders that were posted in public platforms such as the MindaNews, Twitter, and Facebook.

Clauses, whole sentences, and short paragraphs that represented a single thought were used as units for coding; each idea was marked with multiple subjects and moral codes. Sentences that were delivered in Filipino were translated. Each speech was independently coded by the researcher for sentences with aphorisms and moral metaphors, corroborated by the studies of Den Hartog and Verburg (1997), Lakoff (2002), Moses and Gonzales (2015), and Wolters (2012).

For the analysis of the aphorisms employed, texts which were qualified in any of the techniques elucidated by Den Hartog and Verburg (1997) were coded as HP (headline-punchline), PS (puzzle-solution), Contrast (C), Listing (L),

and PT (position taking). It was also noted that sometimes these formats were combined.

For the moral metaphors, if a unit of analysis referred to a political topic and was also coded as a moral expression, then the unit of analysis was considered an expression of moral politics, and could be further analyzed according to the taxonomy of Moses and Gonzales (2015) and Wolters (2012). Hence, each was assigned one, none, or several of the Strict Father or Nurturant Parent categories.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To answer the first and third research questions, the researcher analyzed the texts and labelled it with the techniques identified by Den Hartog and Verburg (1997) which are appropriate in analyzing aphorisms in written or oral discourses. The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 4. It shows that the female political leader employs more aphorisms than the male does. Headline-punchline (HP) technique occurred more frequently in both speakers. It should be noted that one or two techniques were combined in some instances. For example, the statement "Now more than ever, we call for a deeper understanding of the Bangsamoro people and their cause, for the greatest injustice we legislators can do, is to enact or not enact a law, for a people we do not know, we did not care to know" is a combination of position taking and contrast.

TABLE 4. Aphorisms used by the Two (2) Political Leaders

	No. of Occurrence	Overall Percentage	Male	Female
Headline-punchline	**72**	**35.47%**	43.06%	56.94%
Puzzle-solution	27	**13.30%**	48.15%	51.85%
Contrast	23	**11.33%**	47.83%	52.17%
Listing	28	**13.79%**	35.71%	64.29%
Position taking	53	**26.11%**	47.17%	52.83%
Total aphorisms	**203**		44.33%	55.67%

Different rhetorical formats can be utilized to craft aphorisms, but if political leaders set up clear relations of opposition (contrast), or delineate a particular concrete stance (position taking), they are designed to draw readers' attention to a specific point. If they pose challenges (puzzle–solution), or use strikingly dramatic delivery modes (headline–punchline), they are crafted to open up possibilities for interpretation. Listing, or 'pursuit', to provide emphasis is likely to be ubiquitous across the different types and/or purposes. Creative aphorisms can turn on attention to past successes, thereby emphasizing a shared history or uninterruptedness (Shamir et al., 1994) or to future possibilities, which may be a characteristic of charismatic rhetoric (Bligh et al., 2004). On the other hand, destructive aphorisms can emphasize lenses of departure between political leaders which may prove decisive in an advocacy or unprecedented leadership challenges (Clayman, 1995). They may also spur an avenue of uncertainty and fear that can be exploited, or that warns people to probable threat.

The results suggest that part of the ability in crafting and utilizing aphorisms in speeches involve the application of common rhetorical techniques to enhance one's delivery of ideas, as well as an ability to combine formats for message delivery, that is, to amplify impact and also keep messages short but meaningful and comprehensible. It also lends significance to the idea that considering the nature of aphorism can provide an additional perspective from within which to analyze political leaders' rhetoric.

Following Moses and Gonzales' (2015) and Wolter's (2012) annotation schemes, the four speeches delivered by the two political leaders contained a considerable number of discourse units that could be ascribed to the moral metaphor models described by Lakoff (2002) – Strict Father (SF) and Nurturant Parent. The results show that the female political leader employed more Nurturant Parent metaphors (79.10%) than Strict Father metaphors (46.15%) – of the NP metaphors, 'Openness' and 'Involved, Responsible Authority' occurred more frequently with 15 number of occurrence, respectively. These answered the second and fourth research question. Strict Father metaphors (55.26%) were more utilized by the male political leader, dominantly the 'Moral Contagion' frame with 24 number of occurrence (see Table 5). Consequently, the male political leader is more likely to use Strict Father themes and less likely use Nurturant Parent themes. Overall, the speeches contained 78 ideas that were framed in Strict Father morality terms and 67 ideas in Nurturant Parent morality.

TABLE 5. SF and NP Themes in the Speeches of the Two Political Leaders

	No. of Occurrence	Overall Percentage	Male	Female
Total SF frames	**78**		**55.26%**	**46.15%**
Morality as Strength	17	21.79%	8.97%	12.82%
Morality as Self-Discipline	5	6.41%	1.28%	5.12%
Moral Authority	13	16.67%	6.41%	10.26%
Moral Contagion	31	39.74%	30.77%	8.97%
Self-reliance	12	15.38%	6.41%	8.97%
Total NP frames	**67**		**20.90%**	**79.10%**
Morality as Nurturance	7	10.45%	1.49%	8.96%
Responsibility for Others	9	13.43%	2.99%	10.45%
Cooperation	13	19.40%	4.48%	14.93%
Openness	20	29.85%	7.46%	22.39%
Involved, Responsible Authority	18	26.87%	4.48%	22.39%
Total SF and NP frames	**145**		**38.62%**	**61.38%**

These results articulates to existing scholarly works about gender and political behavior which avouch that women in political office are more inclusive and work to include more voices in the policy process (Barnes, 2012; Gilligan, 1982; Kathlene, 1994; Tilly & Gurin, 1992). Overall, the results provide a new perspective at how political leaders are able to shape policy agenda and political rhetoric in their constituents, even when constrained by pressing issues and a focus on peace and order phenomena.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Employing Den Hartog and Verburg's (1997) identified techniques in public speaking which are appropriate in the analysis of aphorisms in political speeches, it was found out that the political leaders utilized such techniques in their talks to evoke and persuade the audience on the intended meanings that they want to deliver. For both speakers, headline-punchline technique emerged as the most used style among the five identified in the study.

Using the coding taxonomy of Moses and Gonzales (2015) and Wolter (2012) based on Lakoff's (2002) Nation-as-Family frame, the researcher found that the two political leaders apply frames in different ways – the male is more dominant in the use of Strict Parent frames and the female employs more Nurturant Parent metaphors. In general, there is clear evidence that Lakoff's theories, based on patterns in national, also apply to local politics. The findings are consistent with other research on the deep-rooted nature of these themes. Overall, although these results are compelling, they are also limited by the low number of political leaders studied in the study; future research could expand these results to a broader set of leaders to ensure external validity. Future research might also evaluate more political issues to examine whether they influence the frames used in the speeches.

The female political leaders used more moral metaphors to present peace and order issues in her speeches, especially Nurturant Parent themes, whereas the male political leader used more Strict Parent themes. A number of scholars have found that women in office or those who hold supervising position, and higher, engage in alternative policy making, reduce conflict, and encourage cooperation. In particular, female leaders work more with constituents and open the policy process up to new groups (Beck, 1991; Deckman, 2007; Flammang, 1997; Holman, 2014; Holman, 2015). The use of alternative frames by female leaders yields another blueprint of an expansive leadership style by women (Holman, 2016).

The aphorisms and moral themes in these speeches may help constituents process the information presented by political leaders. Similar to other forms of persuasive rhetoric, aphorisms and the Strict Father and Nurturant Parent metaphors help guide people's political thinking, discussions, and choices. In particular, by using rhetoric in consistent ways, politicians are able to motivate citizens to process information in a more systematic way, thus, increasing the persuasiveness of the rhetoric (Deason & Gonzales, 2012; Lau & Schlesinger, 2005; Lavine, Lodge, & Freitas, 2005; Moses & Gonzales, 2014; Schlesinger & Lau, 2000).

The fact that Moses and Gonzales (2015) did not consider all eight prioritized categories in their study as elucidated by Lakoff (2002) might have influenced the number of expressions and/or discourses that were categorized under Strict Father and Nurturant Parent models. Various expressions and/or discourses might have not been coded to one of the two models for they might belong to a category that is not represented in Moses and Gonzales' (2015) taxonomy.

This could also have had an influence on the results found with regard to the comparability of the two genders and their use of Strict Father and Nurturant Parent language. Thus, the annotation scheme as presented by Moses and Gonzales (2015) does not identify all relevant discourse units referring to the Strict Father or Nurturant Parent models. The annotation scheme they utilized is selective in nature since they only take into consideration a selection of the categories relevant to the Strict Father and Nurturant Parent models as presented by Lakoff (2002). Hence, in order to identify all relevant discourse units, future research should include all categories as described and specified by Lakoff (2002).

As to the influence of gender in the uses of aphorisms and moral metaphors, it was found out that there are differences among the means of the variables measured. Hence, in this study, gender significantly differentiate the utilization of the rhetorical devices analyzed. However, as mentioned, future research endeavors in the study of rhetoric might include more number of speeches from randomized number of male and female political leaders.

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