Unveiling Persuasion: An Analysis of Person Deixis in Leni Robredo's Letter to Harry Roque

Sheela Anne C. Maraan[1], Clara Vanessa C. De Castro[2], Minsoware S. Bacolod[3], Cecilia F. Genuino[4]

[1]New Era Senior High School, Dasmarñas, City, Cavite, Region-IV-A, Philippines-1300
[2]School of Arts and Sciences, National University Philippines, National Capital Region, Philippines-1300
[3]School of Arts and Sciences, National University Philippines, National Capital Region, Philippines-1300
[4]Philippine Normal University, Manila, Philippines-1300
Corresponding Author: sheelaanne.maraan@deped.gov.ph,

Abstract—*Various studies have delved into persuasion, aiming to understand how individuals influence others' beliefs. In political discourse, politicians leverage language manipulation and devices like person deixis to persuade audiences effectively. Most research focused on analyzing person deixis in political speeches while limited number of studies investigated its utilization by politicians in written contexts. There has been minimal studies of how politicians employ person deixis as a persuasive strategy, except for a few studies within the rhetoric discipline. This study sought to examine how person deixis was utilized as a persuasive instrument in Leni Robredo's letter to Harry Roque. The research utilized both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods, examining a corpus sourced from CNN Philippines' official Twitter account. The researchers then identified and analyzed instances of person deictic expressions within the letter. The letter includes 106 instances of person deixis. Leni Robredo utilized a variety of person deixis in her letter to Harry Roque, with a predominant use of 'we' to emphasize collective efforts. Additionally, she strategically employed 'I' to convey her personal belief and 'we' to outline both challenges and proposed solutions for government attention. The strategic use of person deixis can enhance the persuasive impact of politicians' communication strategies.*

Keywords— *Person deixis, political discourse, communication, persuasion.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Politics is an arena where the ability to persuade and influence others is essential for success. The Influence of Persuasion on Political Discourse has been widely studied, and one important aspect of persuasion in politics is the use of person deixis. Several studies have delved into persuasion and its different forms to understand better how individuals can shape and sway the opinions and thoughts of others. Using person deixis is a common language device politicians employ to persuade their audience effectively. Deixis is crucial to fully comprehending the power of persuasion in political discourse and examining the person's role. Several forms of research have been conducted to explore the concept of persuasion and its various manifestations to understand better an individual's ability to influence and mold the opinions and thoughts of others.

Political leaders use persuasive tactics to influence their followers and fellow politicians to maintain their positions (Dedaic, 2006, as cited in Dawood, 2019). Social power and social influence processes are found in political science, sociology, and social psychology. These processes help identify and define different types of power, allowing for a comparison of their effects. The dyadic nature of power is emphasized in various perspectives, such as social exchange theory, the chilling effect, sex roles, and normative resource theory. Perceptions of power, including legitimate authority and access to resources, increase individuals' perceptions of their power and can lead to dominant communication behavior in attempts to control the interaction.

Political discourse plays a vital role in democratic societies, providing a platform for the exchange and deliberation of ideas and policy development. Discussions and modifications of gender norms and policies have significant potential to mobilize political action, as they encompass social and political progress as movements towards societal transformation. The growth of digital platforms and the dissemination of misinformation have significantly transformed the character of political discourse. These changes have raised academic concerns about their implications for democratic institutions and call for further research.

A rise in polarization between various political ideologies is among the most prominent features of contemporary political discourse. The Pew Research Center surveyed in 2017 and found a significant expansion in the ideological divide between Republicans and Democrats in the United States over the previous two decades. As a result of this increased polarization, the political climate has become more adversarial and less collaborative. "The perceived difference in ideological positions between Republicans and Democrats has consistently increased over the years, reaching its peak in 2008The escalation in polarization has been ascribed to causes such as the emergence of social media platforms, which have played a pivotal role in shaping political discourse. However, these platforms have also raised concerns about the potential spread of misleading information. According to a study published in the Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties, there is evidence of polarization on issue dimensions among Americans (Lelkes, 2016).

Additionally, research has shown that the internet and social media can contribute to affective polarization, creating a heightened sense of animosity towards the out-party. The

study on Twitter users found that exposure to opposing viewpoints through the platform increased out-party animus. Furthermore, the perception of polarization has been tracked using different methodologies. One study used a difference-of-means measure, finding that the perceived difference between Democrats and Republicans increased from 1 point in 1968 to nearly 2 points in 2008. However, it is important to note that the results showed non-monotonic patterns, with equally large perceived differences in the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s as in 2008. The rise in polarization between political ideologies has become a defining characteristic of contemporary politics. According to a study published in the Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, this division of beliefs can create both difficulties and advantages for consumer well-being, marketers, and public policy. An increasing division among different political views is a prominent tendency in modern political discussions. Based on a 2017 survey done by the Pew Research Center, there has been a substantial rise in ideological polarization between Republicans and Democrats in the United States during the last twenty years. To summarize, the increase in ideological polarization between Republicans and Democrats has resulted in a more confrontational and less cooperative political atmosphere. The escalating divergence between various political ideas has emerged as a significant characteristic of modern political discussions. The increase in ideological polarization among political parties has played a crucial role in shaping current political discussions.

The rapid dissemination of misleading information on social media has become a major concern in contemporary society. According to Vosoughi et al. in 2018, false information spreads faster and reaches a broader audience than accurate information on social media platforms. This has significant implications for sustaining a constructive dialogue and shaping public opinion. Nor can we ignore the influence of traditional media in shaping the political debate. Recent contentions about "fake news" and misinformation online have highlighted the critical need for media literacy on a global scale. Digital platforms such as blogs, video-sharing websites, forums, and social networks have become the main forms of communication in the 21st century. However, the line between facts and fiction can often become blurred in these online spaces, making it crucial for individuals, especially young internet users, to distinguish between reality and fantasy. In today's rapidly changing world, spreading misleading information on social media has become a pressing concern that significantly impacts political discourse and public opinion. Social media has revolutionized communication, offering numerous professional benefits in science, environmental advocacy, and natural resource management.

The decline in public trust and confidence in the media's reliability as an information source has been a growing concern in recent years. This decline can be attributed to various factors, including perceived bias in news coverage and events such as the 2008 financial crisis. Recent surveys have documented pervasive deficits in public trust, highlighting the need to address this issue. A comprehensive study by the Media Insight Project revealed that the American public

perceives bias in news coverage, leading to a decline in public trust and confidence in the media. Furthermore, the functioning of democracies relies heavily on public confidence in various political institutions. As a result, the decline in public trust in the media can have significant implications for society. The increasing proliferation of "fake news" and misinformation on the internet has worsened the problem of decreasing public confidence in the media. The recent debates surrounding "fake news" and misinformation on the internet have highlighted the urgent necessity for worldwide media literacy. Undoubtedly, digital stories have emerged as a prominent mode of communication across many internet platforms in the 21st century. Nevertheless, the distinction between factual information and fictional content can frequently become indistinct in these digital platforms, underscoring the importance for individuals to possess the ability to differentiate between what is true and what is imaginary.

Amid societal and political turbulence, trust becomes a paradoxical phenomenon. On the one hand, unprecedented levels of trust have been shown towards the government, the media, and corporations, according to the Edelman Trust Barometer (2020). Nevertheless, recent surveys document pervasive deficits in such trust. Amidst societal and political turbulence, trust becomes a paradoxical phenomenon.

There has been a notable shift in political discourse in recent years with the emergence of populist politicians and the growing influence of nationalist sentiments. This transformation has brought about a narrowing of perspectives, which pits the general populace against the ruling class. This change in political discourse prioritizes sentiments and identities over the details of legislation. This shift in political discourse is driven by a confluence of nationalism and globalization, leading to an increased focus on issues such as immigration, business, and international cooperation. This new landscape of political discourse has become evident in various discussions, including the ongoing debate surrounding Brexit (Ford, 2018). In the context of Brexit, intertwining economic concerns and identity politics highlights the inherent contradiction between national and international interests. Protecting the environment and addressing climate change have also become important topics in this evolving political discourse. This special issue on Gender and Populism contributes to the ongoing debate by exploring the relationship between political masculinity and populism.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the intricate relationship between identity politics and emerging technologies. This recognition has been influenced by scholars such as Kimberle Crenshaw, who highlighted the interconnectedness of social identities and the need to consider multiple factors such as class, gender, and race in political discussions. As a result, the discourse on intersectionality has become more nuanced, emphasizing the complexity of human experiences and how different social locations intersect (Wilson & Griffin, 2017). This understanding of intersectionality has shaped the discussion surrounding the ethical use of emerging technologies, particularly in political

contexts. This understanding underscores the ethical concerns of integrating-this

II. METHODOLOGY

This study focused only on Leni Robredo's letter to Harry Roque. Vice President Leni Robredo released the eight-page "private" letter she addressed to Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque on June 30, 2022, with the yet-to-be-implemented COVID-19 response recommendations. The letter was taken via CNN Philippines' official Twitter account.

Data Gathering Procedure

The study is qualitative and quantitative in nature, as much evidence of Leni Robredo's use of person deixis are chosen and contextualized within the specified framework. The data was acquired and taken from CNN Philippines' official Twitter account. The researcher searched the letter for occurrences of person deictic expressions. After then, the data was tabulated. Additionally, the acquired data were analyzed. Finally, as a result of the analysis, a conclusion was drawn.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the occurrences of person deictic expressions in Leni Robredo's letter to Harry Roque were determined. After providing a qualitative analysis, a quantitative analysis will be provided, followed by a table exhibiting the figures of person deictic expressions and their percentages. Conclusion was drawn based on the analysis of the data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

What are the person deixis used in the letter?

According to Levinson (2004), person deixis refers to the encoding of the participants' roles in the discourse during which the utterance is produced. Pronouns are deixis indicators; when we employ them, we orient our utterances toward ourselves, our interlocutors, and third parties. That is, the pronoun might be in the first, second, or third person.

TABLE 1. Frequency of person deictic expressions

Person Deixis	Frequency	Percentage
you	3	2.83%
your	3	2.83%
we	38	35.85%
I	1	0.94%
me	1	0.94%
us	1	0.94%
its	1	0.94%
our	31	29.25%
their	12	11.32%
they	10	9.43%
them	5	4.72%
TOTAL	106	100.00%

The letter contains 106 occurrences of person deixis.

I, me, us, and *its* each occurred once. On the other hand, *you* and *your* were both mentioned three times.

Them appeared five times, *they* appeared ten times, and *their* appeared twelve times.

Our appeared 31 times. Finally, *we* appeared 38 times, which accounted for the majority of the occurrences of person

deixis in the letter. The following examples demonstrate the usage of person deictic expressions in the letter:

(Page 1, Line 8) *I* have always believed that the more voices are heard, the more solutions are created. Extend to your office the observations of our daily work, as well as the questions and suggestions that arose from the various meetings we attended.

(Page 7, Line 20) The disruption that was brought about by the pandemic on global supply chains may be an opportunity for *us* to tap our large local market.

(Page 1, Line 8) As per *your* feedback, we are sending *you* this letter to signify our own commitment to more open lines of communication.

The employment of 'I', 'me', and 'us' in the aforementioned utterances was intended to convey deixis in the first person. The terms 'I' and 'me' relate to the addressee, Vice President Leni Robredo, while 'us' refers to both the addressee and the administration. On the other hand, 'you' and 'your' were utilized as deixis in the second person in the aforementioned utterances, referring directly to the addressee, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque.

(Page 6, Line 10) Many of *them* do not have homes or shelters in Metro Manila.

(Page 4, Line 4) *They* were sent there to ensure that social distancing policies are followed, and border controls are enforced. (Page 4, Line 2) Our experience has shown that the Filipino people can be depended upon to cooperate to *their* utmost- as long as the rationale of policies are communicated effectively, Along with clear instructions that describe what we are trying to achieve and the processes involved.

The employment of the pronouns 'them', 'they', and 'their' in the aforementioned utterances constituted deixis in third person. 'Them' refers to the previously stated LSIs or Locally Stranded Individuals. On the other hand, the term 'they' in the above utterances refers to uniformed personnel who supervise areas subject to ECQ or Enhanced Community Quarantine; this was indicated in the preceding sentence in the letter. Finally, 'their' refers to the Filipino community, which cooperates with the government's policies when they are properly communicated.

(Page 5, Line 20) One of *our* key programs during the community quarantine was a shuttleservice for frontliners.

(Page 6, Line 6) *We* recommend a thorough review of the policies and the issuance of consistent guidelines on the matter as soon as possible. 'Our' and 'we' are the most often used third person plural deixis in the letter. The pronouns 'our' and 'we' in the above utterances refer to the addressee, Vice President Leni Robredo and her staff.

How do those person deictic expressions served as a persuasive tool in the letter?

Politicians use person deictics to persuade the audience to embrace their ideas. They incorporate both the addresser and the addressee in the political viewpoint being discussed. '**I** have always believed that the more voices are heard, the more solutions are created.' 'In this light, as you have already publicly requested, please allow **me** to extend to your office our observations in the daily course of our work…'

The letter had used the word 'I' once, it was intended to convey the addresser's personal conviction, which she hoped would be shared by the addressee. She emphasized the point about wanting to be heard, not simply said, about wanting her recommended solutions to the country's COVID-19 response to be acknowledged and implemented. Additionally, 'me' was also referenced once in the letter, this was used to narrow down her identity and made this personal indicating that she is personally addressing the recipient and informing him that his public request received a response from her side.

'As per your feedback, we are sending you this letter to signify our own commitment to more open lines of communication.'

The letter's second person pronouns 'you' and 'your' were directed directly to the letter's recipient, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque. These second person deictic expressions were implying that the receiver should have an open mind in order for the two parties' communication to be successful. Addressing the receiver directly eliminates any ambiguity, which is advantageous during a negotiation or discussion.

'Many of them do not have homes or shelters in Metro Manila. 'Our experience has shown that the Filipino people can be depended upon to cooperate to their utmost- as long as the rationale of policies are communicated effectively…'

The pronouns 'them' and 'their' relate to the circumstances of the Filipino population during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The term 'them' alludes to homeless Filipinos, notably those in Metro Manila, who were adversely affected during the first season of lockdowns. On the other side, 'their' also refers to Filipinos who are prepared to comply with the government's policies as long as the instructions are correctly and timely distributed. The addressee used emotional appeal to convince and elicit an emotional reaction from the recipient. An emotional appeal is a kind of persuasive technique that is used to elicit an emotional reaction. The addresser intended to convince the addressee by eliciting an emotional response from him.

'One of our key programs during the community quarantine was a shuttle service for frontliners.'

'Our office, for example, has shifted almost all our operations to augmenting the government's response efforts.'

'Our office has also received a number of queries from LSIs urgently asking for help.'

The aforementioned utterances used the first-person plural pronoun 'our' to emphasize the current initiatives or responses that her team is already undertaking. This includes providing free transportation to frontline personnel, assisting the government in remaining afloat during the COVID-19 outbreak, and responding to questions among many LSIs, or Locally Stranded Individuals. This demonstrates that she is persuading the recipient to acknowledge the efficacy of her team's current remedies to the country's challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

'may we request a detailed explanation of the process for reporting COVID-19 cases from the local level to the national level.'

'Why are we only able to conduct half of what we targeted?'

'we ask the following questions, the answers to which may further shed light on the issue…'

'We believe that a full report is necessary…'

The addresser most commonly utilized the first-person plural pronoun 'we' for persuasive purposes, as indicated by the statistical data obtained in this study. These person deixis 'we' refer to Vice President Robredo's staff. All of the above utterances refer to the administration's shortcomings in dealing with the start of the COVID-9 pandemic. One strategy for producing a persuasive text is to identify issues and then offer remedies. By highlighting the issues, the addressee will become aware of the importance of resolving them.

'We recommend a thorough review of the policies and the issuance of consistent guidelines on the matter as soon as possible.'

'We would like to recommend some points to create an atmosphere of transparency…'

'we recommend creating programs that will lessen the burden of transition on our jeepney operators.'

'we recommend the creation of temporary facilities that will house these LSIs while they are waiting'

'We recommend enhancing the regulation of transporting people from different areas.'

'We therefore recommend the immediate passage of the ARISE bill…'

'We recommend the expansion of the composition of the IATF…'

In Leni Robredo's letter, the preferred pronoun was the person deixis 'we,' which was plainly utilized for persuasive motives. These 'we' refer to her and her team, who share the obligations of serving the people while also recognizing her staff's efforts. After outlining the administration's shortcomings, she and her team proposed remedies to these issues. She attempted to convince the recipient that these actions are required for resolving the country's crisis.

IV. CONCLUSION

Vice President Leni Robredo employed eleven different kinds of person deixis in her letter to Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque. Among them, the letter was dominated by the person deixis 'we', followed by our, their, they, them, you, your, I, me, us, and its. It was noteworthy that she utilized the person deixis 'I' only once for the purpose of communicating her belief. Throughout the letter, she used the word 'we' to refer to her team's efforts to support the public. She also used the pronoun 'we' to define the issues and solutions on which the government should concentrate its focus.

Politicians' use of pronouns appropriately for the context in which they are used enables them to appeal to a variety of audiences and enhances their ability to persuade. Deixis may play a significant role in the structure of persuasive messages. Deixis is critical for Robredo's communication with Roque in terms of conveying her ideas, messages, stances, and identities. Through the use of language as a persuasive tool, the use of

deixis in written or spoken discourse with the intent of influencing others and persuading them to endorse the speaker's positions on certain problems.

REFERENCES

[1] Adegoju, A. (2014). Person Deixis as Discursive Practice in Nigeria's "June 12" ConflictRhetoric.

[2] Aïmeur, E., Amri, S., & Brassard, G. (2023). Fake news, disinformation and misinformation in social media: a review. Social Network Analysis and Mining, 13(1). https://doi.org/10.1007/s13278-023-01028-5

[3] Alabdali, T. (2019). Personal Deixis Implementation in King Fahad's Speech to the International Troops During the Second Gulf War (1990/1991). *International Journal of Language and Linguistics 2019; 7(6): 327-337.* https://www.sciencepublishinggroup.com/journal/paperinfo?journalid=501&doi=10.11648/j.ijll.2019070621.

[4] Ballard, W. L. (1980). M. A. K. Halliday, Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning. London: Edward Arnold, 1978. Pp. 256. *Language in Society, 9(1), 84–89.* https://doi.org/10.1017/s004740450000782x

[5] Brown. P., & Levinson. S. C., Burhanuddin, I. (2023). *A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF DEIXIS IN POLITICAL SPEECHES Donald Trump UN General Assembly Speech: A CaseStudy.* www.academia.edu. https://www.academia.edu/105190270/A_PRAGMATIC_ANALYSIS_OF_DEIXIS_IN_POLITICAL_SPEECHES_Donald_Trump_UN_General_Assembly_Speech_A_Case_Study

[6] Cas Mudde - Populism in the Twenty-First Century: An Illiberal Democratic Response to Undemocratic Liberalism | The Andrea Mitchell Center for the Study of Democracy. (n.d.). https://amc.sas.upenn.edu/cas-mudde-populism-twenty-first-century

[7] Curry, A. L., & Stroud, N. J. (2019). The effects of journalistic transparency on credibility assessments and engagement intentions. *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism, 22(4), 901–918.* https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884919850387

[8] Dawood, A. (2019). A Discourse Analysis of Deictic Expressions in Presidential Speeches. *Journal University of Kerbala, Vol.77 No.7.* https://www.iasj.net/iasj/download/ 1af2347e4ea85c78

[9] Duchan, F., Bruder A., & Hewitt, E. (2009). DEIXIS IN NARRATIVE: A Cognitive Science Perspective. *Edelman report: Cycle of distrust threatens action on global challenges. (2023, February 28).* World Economic Forum. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/01/edelman-trust-barometer-2022- report/

[10] Ford, R. (2018, January 26). Britain after Brexit: a nation divided. https://research.manchester.ac.uk/en/publications/britain-after-brexit-a-nation-divided

[11] Geiger, A. (n.d.). Political Polarization in the American Public. Pew Research Center - U.S. Politics & Policy. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics, 3(1), pp.45-64.* https://www.ajol.info/index.php/gjl/article/view/107180.

[12] Gretter, S., Yadav, A., & Gleason, B. (2017, January 1). Walking the Line between Reality and Fiction in Online Spaces: Understanding the Effects of Narrative Transportation. National Association for Media Literacy Education, 9(1), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.23860/jmle-2017-9-1-2

[13] Hang, X. (2023, August 22). Email Etiquette: A Pragmatic Analysis. , 3(8), 77-79. https://doi.org/10.54691/fhss.v3i8.5540

[14] Irgens, B. (2018). *Person deixis in Japanese and English -A contrastive functional analysis.*Uib.https://www.academia.edu/36563566/Person_Deixis_in_Japanese_and_English_a_Contrastive_Functional_Analysis

[15] Koutsantoni, D. (2006, January 1). Rhetorical strategies in engineering research articles and research theses: Advanced academic literacy and relations of power. Elsevier BV, 5(1), 19-36. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2005.11.002

[16] Lelkes, Y. (2016, January 1). Mass Polarization: Manifestations and Measurements. Oxford University Press, 80(S1), 392-410. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfw005

[17] Levinson, S. (2004). *Pragmatics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press Retrieved from https://1lib.ph/book/ 2956279/eca4dd.

[18] Merrison, A J., Wilson, J., Davies, B L., & Haugh, M. (2012, July 1). Getting stuff done: Comparing e-mail requests from students in higher education in Britain and Australia. Elsevier BV, 44(9), 1077-1098. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2012.05.009

[19] McArthur, T. (1986, July 1). The power of words: pressure, prejudice and politics in our vocabularies and dictionaries. Wiley-Blackwell, 5(2-3), 209-219. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971x.1986.tb00727.x

[20] Mghsolutions. (n.d.). Trends in linguistics. *Scribd.* https://www.scribd.com/document/332446115/Trends-in-Linguistics

[21] Nakassis, C. V. .(2021). Deixis and the Linguistic Anthropology of Cinema. Chicago. https://www.academia.edu/44976444/Deixis_and_the_Linguistic_Anthropology_of_Cinema

[22] Politeness Theory (Pragmatics): Definition & Strategies. (n.d.). StudySmarterUK.https://www.studysmarter.co.uk/explanations/english/pragmatics/politeness- theory/Press, Cambridge, (1987)

[23] Quinto, E. (2014). Stylistic Analysis of Deictic Expressions in President Benigno Aquino III's October 30th Speech. 3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature: *The Southeast Asian Journal of Language Studies, 20 (2), pp. 1-18.* http://ejournal.ukm.my/3l/article/view/5140.

[24] Smith, C A. (2000, January 1). Writing public policy: A practicum. Routledge, 9(1), 77-92. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572250009364686

[25] Speech and Language Processing (2nd ed.). (2008). Pearson Publishing. https://blackwells.co.uk/bookshop/product/Speech-and-Language-Processing-by-Dan-Jurafsky-James-H-Martin/9780135041963

[26] The Scottish Government. (2023, March 10). *Using intersectionality to understand structural inequality in Scotland: evidence synthesis.* https://www.gov.scot/publications/using- intersectionality-understand-structural-inequality-scotland-evidence- synthesis/pages/3/

[27] Walker, M., Linsenmeyer, M., Hollingsworth, S. E., Hanrahan, S., & Elwood, T. (2021, August 15). 17.5 *Theories of Persuasive Communication.*

[28] Pressbooks.https://open.library.okstate.edu/speech2713/chapter/17-5-theories-of- persuasive-communication/

[29] Wilson, M E., & Griffin, K A. (2017, November 5). Intersectionality in Educational Research. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/658125

[30] Yule, G. (1996). Pragmatics. New York: Oxford University Press. https://1lib.ph/book/ 1234693/bc68b9.