



EXECUTIVE-LEGISLATIVE RELATIONSHIP IN SOGIE EQUALITY BILL: CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC SPEECHES OF ESTRADA TO DUTERTE (2000- 2022)

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ABSTRACT

For over two decades, the Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression or SOGIE Equality Bill has remained pending in the Philippine Congress despite repeated reintroductions and growing advocacy. This paper provides how public speeches made by Philippine Presidents during the time period between 2000 and 2022 influenced the political development of the SOGIE Equality Bill. This paper showed how presidential speeches reflect executive stances on the bill and how this shapes or mirrors the dynamics between the executive and legislative branches. This research employs Language and Power proposed by Fairclough (1989). The study utilized a content analysis to accommodate the manifest and latent analysis in exploring how language employed by Philippine Presidents shapes gender inclusivity within the context of public speeches on the SOGIE Equality Bill. The result of the study shows that the presidential speeches affect the political fate of the SOGIE Equality bill in the Philippines.

Keywords: SOGIE Equality Bill, Power, Language, Speeches, President, Executive-Legislative

INTRODUCTION

The SOGIE Equality Bill, which seeks to uphold the rights of individuals regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, has been in the legislative limbo for about 20 years now. Since its passing, the SOGIE Equality Bill has experienced continuous reintroductions yet has failed to pass, thus the reason to create a movement to know in which political leaders, especially presidents, publicly articulate their positions and frame issues through political discourse.

Language and Politics have long been interconnected to political leaders to lay down their platforms, goals and objectives, interviews, and most especially speeches. Distinct scholars such as Fairclough (2001) emphasize that the language and power functions to maintain and change the power relations in contemporary society where analysis of language can reveal processes and how the involved parties are more able to resist and change them.

The construction of political power depends heavily on language, yet it must be recognized that political power struggles happen across diverse social fields which are never neutral (Bourdieu. 1991). The way political discourse forms depends on the cultural systems underlying these dialogues including those related to identity, representation, and social hierarchy. Among these, gender emerges as a particularly salient factor—one that not only influences who has access to a political voice, but also governs how that voice is expressed, perceived, and evaluated. Gender as a key social factor influences both access to political voice and shapes expression of political discourse so it is perceived and evaluated by others. Political communication functions at various levels because it requires more than just content delivery and persuasion skills because it involves performing identities while establishing social validation through gendered perspectives and which commands power. Thus, Lazar (2005) argues that to fully interrogate the workings of political discourse, it becomes necessary to examine how gendered norms and expectations subtly inform both the production and reception of political language.

Calonge and Talili (2016) argued that during the State of the Nation Address in the Philippines, the audience forms impressions based on the political speech, which is designed to be strong and persuasive. Dumire (2005), as cited in Calonge and Talili (2016), stated that the President's address plays a crucial role in shaping the conceptual, linguistic, and political changes that occur as a result of significant preceding events. Distinct political and social science fields interpret and express gender concepts in different ways. Social norms of a specific community establish gender-related values and behavioral standards which determine interaction methods between individuals (Rahmi, 2015). Language as a key component of culture and social structure significantly influences the development of identity as individual and social consciousness (Phuong & Dung, n.d.). The study of language and gender has increasingly become the study of discourse and gender. While linguistic patterns, rhetorical strategies, and discursive practices employed by political leaders in the Philippine, experts have explored political speeches by various leaders to fully understand what ideological features and efficient tactical approaches exist within those speeches (Almahasees & Mahmoud, 2022; Bulusan, 2022; Rahmi, 2015).

The main objective of this study is to analyze each President's view on the SOGIE Equality Bill, from its introduction in 2000 to 2022, as reflected in their public speeches during their respective administrations. It also aims to examine how the trends in their statements relate to the country's politics, historical context, and the continued non-passage of the Bill. Lastly, the study seeks to determine how executive-legislative relations influence one another through the President's public remarks on the SOGIE Equality Bill.

In this opus, the researcher seeks to answer the following: (1) How have the public political speeches of Philippine Presidents from 2000 to 2022 reflected their views on the SOGIE Equality Bill, and how do these views relate to the broader historical and political contexts behind its continued non-passage? (2) How have the political pronouncements of the presidency shaped executive-legislative relations, particularly in relation to the Bill? Hence, this study aims to understand how gendered language in political discourse becomes a tool for shaping public perception and for either reinforcing or resisting

political agendas that influence the fate of the SOGIE Equality Bill and the protection of the community regardless of their SOGIE.

Literature Review

In contemporary society, the language used during political discourse actively modifies how people understand both gender-related concepts and how language intersects to political agenda (Khalida et al., 2013c). Within the context of the Philippines, the question arises regarding whether linguistic and ideological acceptance found in common spaces extends into political leadership as well. By examining the executive-legislative dynamic and the persistent challenges surrounding the passage of the SOGIE Equality Bill, this review demonstrates how discourse not only mirrors political structures but actively shapes them. Through the intersection of language, gender, and power, this review aims to uncover how political leaders, particularly Philippine presidents, use language as both a performative and persuasive tool in governance and nation-building.

In the study of Kulo (2022), analysis of language that includes observation of its complete functions and variations enables better understanding of how language affects perceptions, convictions, and identities. Political language serves as an instrument of power which arranges how both minds and opinions shape. This instrument functions as a tool which allows society management. Any societal environment uses political speech to create and sustain social bonds as well as convey emotions and market political concepts and governmental plans (Dylgeri, 2017).

Executive-Legislative Relationship

Legislative-executive relations describe the structures and processes that shape how the legislative and executive branches of a democratic government interact with each other (Cheibub & Limongi, 2014). Within the framework of the 1987 Constitution the three branches of the government exercise different authorities and are subject to the checks from other parts of government. Legislative authority resides in a Congress that unites the Senate with the House of Representatives to generate and craft a law. The executive department represented through the president holds responsibility to execute and enforce legislative laws. It is commonly recognized that Congress is most likely to consider the president's opinions or reactions when deciding what bills to bring up for discussion (Kiewiet & McCubbins, 1985; Mouw & Mackuen, 1992). Given the nature of the political power formally granted to him by the constitution, the people's longstanding tendency to admire the strong authority of the leadership experience, and the functioning of the patron-client relationship that was influential in Philippine politics, it has been abundantly evident that the Chief Executive has a significant impact on national decision-making (Aguilar, 1989).

The power of the presidential decrees is one of the main instruments towards such an endeavor- it is a way whereby, through the process of negotiation and compromise, the executive can influence the creation of a legislative majority that would support the policies they want to see into law (Cheibub & Limongi, 2011). Decrees are intended to serve as a tool for the executive to influence the legislative agenda. Through this mechanism, the government may appeal to a legislative majority, which it may need if it wants the policies formulated through the decree to be translated into law. Therefore, the problem does not lie in Congress's delegation of legislative power or in the president's encroachment on it. Instead, the question is: in what way does the president implement decrees to create a legislative majority while simultaneously following the legislative agenda? According to the institutional hypothesis, the role of decrees is twofold: they help manage routine issues and function as traditionally accepted instruments of negotiation and bargaining within the legislative process. The fact that they do not implicate usurpation or delegation does not necessarily mean that they do not change with the political

circumstances that include the legislative authority of the president, his capacity to maintain his coalition as well as his popularity. Some of these conditional factors like macroeconomic pressures that result in emergency stabilization plans exist, but it is within the framework that it is only by decree that presidents can achieve the speed, secrecy, and surprise that is deemed to be critical to the success of policy (Cheibub & Limongi, 2011).

During all historical periods, the Philippine president has been seen as possessing superior influence over Congress both through constitutional authorities, organizational and political capabilities (Romani, 1957). Historically, the Philippine president has shown dominance despite the constitutional requirement for executive, legislative and judicial branches to have separate powers. The Philippine nation evolved into a democratic form since Aguinaldo and Quezon wielded executive dominance when facing extraordinary circumstances during their respective leadership terms. Through assertive leadership techniques both presidents created an enduring presidential legacy which presented the office as a substantial center of power thus continuing this tradition in subsequent administrations (Rebudilla, 2006). According to Appalo (1981), cultural traditions function as one reason which makes the Philippine president a position of great power in the country. People in the Philippines learn to view their government as a body containing multiple functional components with the president emerging as the ultimate leader. The word "pangulo" which means "head" refers to a person serving as a leader of others because Filipinos believe one individual needs to guide the whole group.

Strong leaders consistently gain power because Filipinos maintain a belief that always places one "head" in charge regardless of current leadership or historical period. This belief in a central, powerful leader is further supported by political practices, such as the use of pork barrel funds to secure loyalty from lawmakers. Political strategies that employ pork barrel funds work as evidence to reinforce the belief that a central leader stands as the most powerful element in the country. The president may have utilized pork barrel funds throughout Philippine political history to strengthen support for their agendas which has increased their dominance within the system. The combination of cultural expectations together with political strategies makes the president obtain a powerful role in the nation. For instance, Ex-President Manuel Roxas successfully obtained support for the Bell Trade Act from legislators through the 1940s use of these funds (Clinton, 2007).

Philippine Presidents from 2000-2022 (Estrada to Duterte)

From 2000 to 2022, Philippine presidency was embedded in a context where the pace of achieving legal advancements in gender and LGBTQ+ rights was often being surpassed by weak uptake of laws and application. During the early 21st century, traditional governments began to respond to the pressure from marginalized sectors such as women and people identifying as LGBTQ+. From the words of Hart (1987) he explains that giving some explanation to an action or a decision can be used as a face-saving tool especially when the action or decision under question is facing the scrutiny of the masses or of certain groups in the society. This plan can be seen in presidential speeches which according to Hart (1987) are termed as commodities which are used to shape and keep the president in line. Such speeches are able to legitimize unpopular policies, emphasize positive points of the leadership of the president, discredit political adversaries by demonstrating them as being on the other end of the political spectrum, and appeal to the undecided or ambivalent citizens side to the government.

Similar to the other presidential speeches, the State of the Nation Address (SONA) can serve as a tactical platform for carrying out such image-management activities. It gives a chance to recover or improve the image of a presidency that has undergone continuous criticism. This period spanned the leaderships of Joseph Ejercito Estrada, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Benigno Aquino III, and Rodrigo Duterte. In the period of leadership by Estrada (1998–2001), characterized by a short tenure, the patriarchal expectations with an emphasis of public assertiveness, received a dominant emphasis with the government paying little attention to gender inequality issues from a structural perspective in. In the analysis of the speeches of Joseph Estrada, there are two prominent changes that seem to have influenced his political speeches. The collapse of the Cold War has caused drastic changes in the socio-political sphere of the 1990s. Second, the Asian financial crisis of 1997 added to the instability of the country and economic insecurity. As the Iron Curtain lowered the specter of communism slowly became a matter of national discourse, Muslims began to be viewed as a conflict zone of national security with insurgency becoming a regional question or Mindanao question (Hedman, 2001). In this context, the peace and unity calls made on this situation by Estrada were often rampant with references to crime and lawlessness in Mindanao. In addition to this localization, the members of drug trafficking and smuggling were also depicted as ethical adversaries of the social order (Fernan, 2025).

Years later, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the nation's first female vice president, became president after Joseph Estrada was compelled to resign because of corruption and plunder accusations. Macapagal-Arroyo had an outstanding academic and administrative history when she began her political career in 1987. The speeches that Arroyo gave were marked by the high use of technical vocabulary, and long and declarative sentence structures, which according to Gonzalez (1998) is a characteristic of the elite English language of governance in the Philippines, which serves to strengthen the position of authority, not to give the President a wider public reach. Her State of the Nation Addresses represented the situation of top-down communication style, which was aimed at the institutional audience and not at the larger population of citizenry.

The linguistic pattern allows considering the explanations of why the rhetoric of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo can be revisited to explain its indirect applicability to the SOGIE Equality Bill. Even though her speeches did not touch directly on the bill, her administration enactment of the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710) and her official, policy-oriented discourse indicates a larger institutional adherence to gender equality. The analysis of rhetorical and policy indicators will help the section to get past the biography and align better the communication style and governance priorities of Arroyo with the historical and political context of the ongoing inability to pass the bill (Ancho, I.V., 2020).

After a female president, Decades later, Benigno Aquino III became the president after the presidency of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, and there was a rhetorical change to simplicity and relatability to the people. The speeches of Aquino were marked with narratives, the use of Filipino allusions, simplified explanations, and a break with a tradition of elite and technocratic speech. According to Ilie (2017) and Reppen (2010), these changes are indicative of the democratic requirements of openness and availability to enable the leaders to communicate a sense of transparency and reach wider audiences.

This rhetoric change can be discussed with references to the political situation of his administration. A report by a coalition delivered by the 106th Session of the Human Rights Committee (2012) noted that there were still challenges in getting governmental and political backing of

LGBT recognition and rights. The changes in policies at this time, such as the not including the LGBT protections under the Reproductive Health Law of 2011, and the arguments around the issue of legal recognition of transgender and intersex people, become examples of interactions between inclusive language and institutional practice. By taking note of these rhetorical and policy processes, the section will be able to leave behind and get a better sense of how the communication style of Aquino can be fitted into the historical and political environment that has contributed to the ongoing legislative stagnation around LGBT rights initiatives.

Lastly, Rodrigo Duterte took over the presidency and brought an unprecedented kind of linguistic populism which changed the color of presidential rhetoric. His code-switching, profanity and colloquial expressions went against the traditional ways of how a president should be seen and created a perception of accessibility and anti-elitism. According to Tannen (2007), this style is equivalent to the concept of linguistic intimacy, where language reflects the daily dialogue to build mass connection, and Cruz and Bacarro (2021) mention that Duterte used language as a method of emotionally disarming the audience and asserting his status as an outsider against political elites.

This tone of rhetoric can be discussed to correspond to the political processes of his administration. Even though Duterte sometimes presented himself as rhetorically open, such as by making personal comments on sexual identity, policy choices and executive actions included in the list of concerns among LGBTQIA+ activists. The U.S. Marine Joseph Scott Pemberton released on presidential pardon following his conviction in the murder of transgender Filipina Jennifer Laude (Nault, 2021) was also largely perceived as harmful to the rights of LGBTQIA+. It was in the same period that the SOGIE Equality Bill was pending docking since the President refused to certify it as urgent and legislative opposition continued, with Vicente Sotto III and other senators voting against the bill citing that it would confer special rights (Ranada, 2019). Such developments demonstrate the constraints of executive rhetoric without the legislative backing and describe the intersection of discourse, policy actions, and institutional constraints. Opponents in the Senate see it as providing unfair "special rights" and insist it should guarantee equal rights. Because the upper chamber did not agree, it was obvious that the executive cannot achieve much without the formal approval of lawmakers (Philippine News Agency, 2019).

The Intersection of Language and Politics

At the very core of political systems is the multifaceted relationship between language and power, where political speech serves as a means of constructing, contesting, and preserving power in addition to being a tool for communication. The intersection between language and politics is a dynamic arena where ideologies, social structures, and cultural norms are constantly challenged and recreated. It is much more than a transactional exchange of information (Lemke, 2005).

In exploring the intersection between Language and socio-political conflict, scholars emphasize the often-overlooked yet critical role of language in issues of security, democratic participation, and identity politics (Kitenge & Lahiri, 2022; Kruse & Willumsen, 2020; Medda-Windischer & Carlà, 2022). A key contribution to this area highlights the complexity of language dynamics in conflict-prone regions, drawing attention to how language policies and legislation can serve as instruments that either mitigate or exacerbate social tensions. Also, the language system functions to create reality more than it reflects what already exists. Political leaders use language as their main tool to showcase their dominance and grant support to various ideologies and shape collective public understanding (Jones, 2017).

According to Fairclough (2001), language exists inside power structures which sustain social and political control. While political leaders use language during presidential speeches, seminars, interviews, language acts as a political instrument which helps presidents both claim leadership positions and show national beliefs and influence that affects the perceptions of the public (Geil, 2012). Presidents employ strategic language choices to position essential values such as family, morality, and national identity both as foundational principles and fundamental governance structures (Geis, 2012; Wood, 2007; Hart et al., 2013). The approach presidents take in presenting information takes special importance while engaging in significant issues such as gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights. The political language used in these settings brings out ideological issues about social justice while showing positions regarding minority recognition and state protection for marginal groups. Through presidential language, the nation's discussion takes direction while policy directions get shaped and deliver policy positions and they employ it as a performance tool to maintain power (Edwards et al., 2024).

Public Speeches

Public speeches, especially the Presidential addresses, play a crucial part in influencing national conversation and public opinion (Hoggan & Aloni, 2020). This notion, as Fairclough (2001) provides, serves as a concrete example of public speeches made by politicians during argumentation alongside reasoning and assertion. The speakers use their assertions to sustain their power while implementing rules and spreading their political positions to the public. Hence, public speeches by politicians achieve power by serving their perspectives to the general audience. Through their speeches politicians express their political targets (Medhurst, 2010).

Speech as discussed by Austin (1962) provides three performative utterances and the concepts on locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts which then he called Speech Act theory. The performance of an utterance is known as a locutionary act. It discusses the phrase itself as well as its apparent meaning. On the other hand, the illocutionary act is the act of stating anything. Lastly, perlocutionary acts are speech acts that influence the listener's or speaker's emotions, ideas, or behavior. To put it another way, they try to influence people's opinions, for example, by intimidating, informing, inspiring, persuading, or compelling them to do or realize anything, whether that is their intention or not (Austin, 1962).

The President of the Philippines delivers the State of the Nation Address (SONA) which serves as a constitutional requirement for them to assess national conditions and review government achievements from the past year, while presenting their plans for the upcoming year. The SONA functions as a tool which enables the executive branch to demonstrate its accountability to the nation (Navera, 2006). The research conducted by Navera (2011) about Gloria Arroyo's SONA reveals that presidential speeches use metaphors and strategic methods to capture audience interest. This directs their attention toward specific topics. Presidential addresses may provide cues or signals to specific government agencies to help the executive branch accomplish its mandate, develop initiatives, and provide fundamental services to the public (Eshbaugh-Soha, 2010a, 2010b). As a result, they can also strengthen the relationships between the head of the executive branch and the government's legislative and judicial institutions. This shows that these indicators have the ability to define the public agenda; thus, the head of the executive department may utilize them to advance the administration's most valued objectives. Aside from that, according to Schaefer (1997), these public speeches may be used to address the president's legislative goals, and urge the relevant organizations to act on the suggested policies such as the SOGIE Equality Bill.

Gendered Language and its Power

Language is a reflection of social structures, and one of the most ubiquitous forces in its gender (Talbot, 2019). Gendered language is the manner in which language use represents, reinforces, or resists social norms, expectations, and hierarchies about gender (Eckert et al., 2013; Jones, 2016; McConnell-Ginet & Eckert, 2003). In political language, gendered language not only conveys policy but also performs identity work, legitimates authority, and affects the reception of leaders and their messages by the public (McConnell-Ginet & Eckert, 2003). This has far-reaching implications for the construction of gender and sexuality in public debate, for instance, over the SOGIE Equality Bill in the Philippines.

Philippine presidents developed gender-specific leadership identities which mirror common social norms and cultural notions of the country (Vijayarasa, 2022). The performance creates political influence on leadership evaluation because it determines how public officials get measured for their authority and established legitimacy. For instance, former President Rodrigo Duterte used his rhetorical strength to highlight hyper masculine qualities through decisive leadership and strong authority and toughness which established his presence as an assertive political leader (Encinas, 2024). His casual spoken style with provocative elements such as humor, swear words, and gendered-language descriptions served as a political method to distinguish himself from more traditional elites and establish connections with particular voters. While such discourse appealed to populist sensibilities, it also reflected and reinforced broader patriarchal norms embedded in the nation's political culture (Duran, 2023).

As contested by Karpowitz and Mendelberg (2016), a woman's presentation in political settings depends on established institutional communication norms as well as organizational patterns of interpersonal interactions specific within the institutions they are part of. This is influenced by both rules of procedure and the number of women in the group. Chappell and Waylen (2013) argue that formal political institutions demonstrate gendered organizational character because their procedural rules and informal practices prefer male dominant approaches to communication and decision making. These norms affect not only who speaks and how often, but also how speech is perceived. Gender-sensitive aspects such as reproductive health policies and sexual rights and discrimination laws experience tangible legislative impacts because of this influence.

Political Fate of SOGIE Equality Bill

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression or known as SOGIE Equality Bill has been introduced in the Philippines as a legal solution to stop discriminatory practices, especially based on gender identity and sexual orientation (Tajan et al., 2023, p. 41). While the escalation of gender-based offenses along with workplace and educational stigmas, it leads to suicidal thoughts and attempts together with bullying cases and sexual assaults (Human Rights Watch, 2017, pp. 15–25).

The SOGIE Equality bill has been in the Congress for about two decades (2001-present) from the presidency of Joseph Estrada (1998-2001), Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001-2010), Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III (2010–2016), and Rodrigo Duterte (2016–2022) and present term, Ferdinand Marcos Jr. The legislation, intended to safeguard the rights of LGBT individuals, was initially proposed in 2000 and has since been reintroduced in the 19th Congress, ranking it among the longest-discussed bills in the Philippines (Ildelfonso, 2024).

The LGBTQIA+ acceptance index score of 2017-2020 of the country shows that the country is ranked 36th out of 175 countries in Asia and, in particular, in the Philippines (Flores, 2021). Enactment of the first

SOGIE Equality Bill is still a challenge to the country since versions of the bill have been presented in every national legislative session since the 13th congress in 2004, up to the 19th congress in 2022, but none has succeeded in being passed into law.

The language that political leaders, particularly presidents, use constitutes a powerful symbolic tool that also performs meaningful actions. The actual terms used in political language perform more than simply describing functions because they fundamentally construct shared meaning as well as identity representations and authoritativeness. According to Fairclough (1995) and Lazar (2005), power relations emerge through discourse and get challenged at this point of interaction. The Philippine presidential rhetoric maintains a fundamental position in national value definition as it sets government policy directions and establishes social issue legitimacy including gender and sexual orientation matters (Graneheim et al., 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The Research made use of the Language and Power postulated by Fairclough (1989). The Manifest and Latent Analysis was specifically used in this research. Manifest content in the text analysis should be described, and latent content should be interpreted in qualitative analysis. The manifest and the latent content require interpretation; however, the interpretations may vary in terms of the level of depth and degree of abstraction, and a high level of abstraction must not be confused with a high level of interpretation (Graneheim et al., 2017). Several Scholarly works have effectively utilized this framework to analyze the work of media communication, social movements, and political dynamics. For instance, Enemou (2023) utilized Fairclough's three-dimensional framework to evaluate Nigerian political campaign speeches through an analysis of how candidates employed Nigerian Pidgin and strategic language to engage with voters. Analyzing the parts of their speech showed that they contained persuasive texts together with self-promotion and criticisms towards past administrations. The political performance was influenced by how speakers in political discourse utilized pronouns such as “we” and “I” to promote their beliefs while building collective identity showing how discourse can shape public perception and influence political performance.

METHODS

In this opus, the study utilized a content analysis to accommodate the manifest and latent analysis in exploring how language employed by Philippine Presidents (2020-2022) shapes gender inclusivity within the context of public speeches on the SOGIE Equality Bill. This research analyzed different kinds of public speeches such as State of the Nation Address, speeches accessed through online databases, official government websites, and verified digital media repositories via reputable media outlets such government archives, or official channels (e.g. Presidential Communication Outlets, ABS-CBN News, GMA News). In order to ensure relevance, depth, and alignment with the study's focus on gender and LGBTQ+ issues, the researcher created a criteria for specific information needed. These criteria are intended to guide the identification of speeches that not only reflect public discourse but also effectively contribute to discussions on women's rights, gender equality, and LGBTQ+ advocacy.

Table 1. Researcher made Criteria for Selecting Speeches

Criteria for Selecting Speeches	
Nature of Speech	-A formal public address meant for a large audience is required for the speech. -It should highlight important issues pertaining to women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, gender equality, social inclusion, or other public issues impacting these groups.
Type of Speech	-State of the Nation Address -Speeches spoken in official government functions -Speeches with available video feed or transcript.
Language and Accessibility	-It must be available via reputable media outlets, government archives, or official channels (e.g. Presidential Communication Outlets, ABS-CBN News, GMA News) -The researcher must be able to understand the language used to deliver the speech, such as English or a reliable translation.
Tone and Frequency	-To comprehend the rhetorical attitude, the tone of these references—such as supportive, critical, neutral, or dismissive—will be taken into account. -To ascertain if these concerns are emphasized or marginalized in the discourse, the frequency and depth of mentions will also be evaluated.

This paper analyzed the select Presidents from the time that the SOGIE Equality bill was introduced specifically from Joseph Estrada (1998-2001), Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001-2010), Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III (2010–2016) to Rodrigo Duterte (2016–2022). Although the bill is still in the senate in the current 19th congress, The administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is not included in this analysis, as his term is still ongoing and available data remains limited. Below is the profile of select Philippine Presidents.

Table 2. Profile of the Selected Philippine Presidents

Select Philippine President	Immediate Platform	Years of Service
Joseph Estrada	Pro-poor (Claudio, L. E., 2014)	2 Years and 6 Months (June 30, 1998, to January 20, 2001)
Gloria Macapagal Arroyo	Economic Growth (Sicat G. P., 2001)	9 Years and 6 Months (January 20, 2001 – June 30, 2010)
Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino	Anti-corruption (Quimpo, N. G.M 2013)	6 Years (June 30, 2010 – June 30, 2016)
Rodrigo Roa Duterte	Combating Drug Trade (Ravanilla, et. al., 2021)	6 Years (June 30, 2016 – June 30, 2022)

As previously mentioned, the speeches covered by this study were qualitatively selected from the publicly available transcripts of the pronouncements of the Chief Executive, especially those delivered in a public forum. Those which were delivered in a private setting, inaccessible transcripts, no transcripts or video data at all, and those which were done on the President's personal discretion (e.g. birthday greetings, conversations, verbal reactions) were not included in this study. Furthermore, the researcher had used the aforementioned criteria (Table 1) as the basis of choosing the speeches. Lastly, no second coder was employed but the analysis was validated by language and gender experts employed by the researcher.

The researcher focused on the Philippines as it serves as an example that blends traditional gender customs with political activities which frequently combine religious values with conservative beliefs (Bonifacio, 2018). For deep analysis, the results are validated by accredited scholars such as professional linguist, researchers, and especially political scientists to present a better understanding of how gendered language operates in high-level political discourse, and how it may shape executive-legislative outcomes related to gender rights, particularly the passage—or persistent deferral—of the SOGIE Equality Bill in the Philippines.

After the data gathering phase, the researcher went through the digital file to check each material based on a researcher-made codebook,

which was validated by the Letran Research and Publication Department. The codebook/research instrument consists of two overarching variables, with one to two sub-variables, and seven indicators in an interrogative yes or no format. It also includes the tone of the speech and frequency of the specific words mentioned. These variables, sub variables, and indicators came from the study of the researcher. The analysis of data was done through digital means and tools (Google Sheets, Google Drive, Google Docs) for convenience and uniformity.

Below is the validated codebook that the researchers used in this paper:

Table 3. Researcher Codebook

Main Variable	Sub-Variable	Indicators	Interrogative Form	Tone	Frequency
Executive-Legislative Relationship	Stance Alignment	Presence of alignment of Executive-legislative	Is there a presence of alignment of Executive-Legislative relationship in the speeches of the presidents?	Positive / Negative / Neutral	Count of stance mentions
		Presence of explicit urging	Do the Presidents in their speeches explicitly urge to act on the SOGIE Bill?	Positive / Negative / Neutral	Count of explicit urging mentions
		Use of stance reference	Do the speeches of the presidents include some gender equality references? (e.g., Everyone, regardless of their SOGIE)	Positive / Negative / Neutral	Count of stance references mentions
LGBTQ+/SOGIE Representations in Speeches	Inclusivity of Language	Use of Gendered terms	Does the President use gendered terms in the speech (e.g., chairperson instead of chairman)	Positive / Negative / Neutral	Count of gendered terms mentions
		Use of Inclusive language	Does the President use inclusive language in the speech (e.g., "everyone," "all Filipinos," "they" instead of "he")	Positive / Negative / Neutral	Count of inclusive language mentions
	Visibility of the representations	Manifestation of Equal rights and Equality	Are the rights framed accordingly from passing the SOGIE Bill?	Positive / Negative / Neutral	Count of inclusive language mentions

FINDINGS

Using manifest and latent content analysis, the researchers analyzed how the public speeches affect the executive-legislative relationship in passing the SOGIE Equality Bill in the Philippines. With fifty related speeches of the Philippine presidential, the researcher gathered fifty related information to provide the analysis that would support the idea of non-passing of the bill in the relation of Executive-Legislative departments. In line with the earlier discussions, the Presidential Decree power represents one of the main instruments for doing this—it's a mechanism whereby through negotiation and bargaining the executive can lead the process of shaping a legislative majority in support of the policies like SOGIE Bill where it wishes to implement (Cheibub & Limongi, 2011).

In analyzing the data gathered through specific criteria and research instruments, Table 4 presents corresponding interpretations of each indicator. It also allows the researcher to navigate the tone of how the presidents deliver the speech and how frequently they mention certain scenarios in their speeches. Below is the summary of data collected in the form of Manifest content analysis.

Table 4. Summary of Manifest Content Analysis

Question	Indicator	Yes	No	Interpretation	Tone	Frequency
Is there a presence of alignment of Executive-Legislative relationship in the speeches of the presidents?	Presence of alignment of Executive-Legislative relationship	36	14	Most speeches show a strong alignment in Executive-Legislative relationship	Neutral	36 (I asked the congress., Thank you to Legislative Dept., Executive dept., is doing...)
Do the Presidents in their speeches explicitly urge to act on the SOGIE Bill?	Presence of explicit urging	0	50	None of the president's speeches explicitly urged action on the SOGIE Bill in their speeches.	Neutral	0
Do the speeches of the presidents include some gender equality references? (e.g., Everyone, regardless of their SOGIE)	Use of stance reference	16	34	Presidential speeches mention gender equality or SOGIE-related inclusivity.	Neutral	16 (We want to end the discrimination..)
Does the speeches include power-framing language (e.g., "Together, under my leadership, we will...")	Use of power-framing language	37	13	Majority of the presidents' speeches use power-framing language to assert leadership	Neutral	37 (With my leadership..., During m term.)

Does the President use gendered terms in the speech (e.g., chairperson instead of chairman)	Use of Gendered terms	28	22	Most presidential speeches still contain gendered terms	Neutral	41 (The chairperson of the congress...)
Does the President use inclusive language in the speech (e.g., "everyone," "all Filipinos," "they" instead of "he")?	Use of Inclusive language	32	18	Many presidential speeches employ inclusive language	Neutral	32 (We want to protect the Filipino People...)
Are the rights framed accordingly from passing the SOGIE Bill?	Manifestation of Equal rights and Equality	13	37	Speeches reflect the promotion of equal rights and equality in relation	Neutral	37 (We want to end the discrimination...)

Gender Inclusivity in Political Language

The study revealed that most presidential speeches demonstrate Presence of alignment of Executive-legislative relationship, as indicated by thirty-six out of fifty (36 out of 50) speeches showing references to cooperation and acknowledgment. This shows that from fifty speeches, thirty-six presidential speeches are able to mention and acknowledge the relationship between executive and legislative in passing a certain bill or can ask for help from each department.

"If the Executive proposes a reasonable budget, the dialogue with the members of Congress will go smoothly.." [23] (5th State of the Nation Address of Ex. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino)

Conversely, the overall lack of an explicit urging call to pass the SOGIE Bill (0 Yes, 50 No) shows strong indication of a laggardice stance by the presidents when dealing directly with the politically sensitive and possibly divisive social matters. Although equality and inclusivity in general terms are often advocated by the president, his/her unresponsiveness to take action against legislation concerning SOGIE rights is a sign of conservatism that is based on the interplay of politics, religion, and the morality of the people. It has also been revealed that the number of speeches that have stance references that directly refer to gender equality or inclusivity is only sixteen (16), which indicates that though gender is one of the topics discussed by presidents, it is not yet a part of their political language. Although some presidential speeches still show direct support to gender equality which brings to the community a little light to pass the SOGIE Bill.

"We want to end the discrimination of persons on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and other character traits." [38] (4th State of the Nation Address of Ex. President Rodrigo Duterte)

"Dapat maging daan sa tagumpay sa agribusiness ang reporma sa lupa. Done right, reform will democratize success, as Ramon Magsaysay and Diosdado Macapagal envisioned. We must reform agrarian reform so it can transform beneficiaries into agribusiness men and other agribusiness women. "

"Land reform should be the path to success in agribusiness. Done right, reform will democratize success, as Ramon Magsaysay and Diosdado Macapagal envisioned. We must reform agrarian reform so it can transform beneficiaries into agribusiness men and other agribusiness women." [13] (7th State of the Nation Address of Ex. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo)

Power of Language

While there are words of equality coming from the presidential speeches, it is still evident that gender equality and passage of the SOGIE Bill in most of their speeches is not really their main focus during their term and the time they are crafting their speeches. Fifty speeches were analyzed and thirty-four (34) of them were not showing any gender equality or at least equality-related topics. Hence, the result of low frequency of gender related languages.

Meanwhile, among the fifty (50) speeches examined, thirty-seven (37) include power-framing language, whereas 13 do not feature it. This indicates that most of the presidents' speeches deliberately highlight authority and leadership using expressions like "With my leadership," "During my term," and "Under my administration." Consequently, the use of gendered terms in presidential speeches with (28 No, 22 Yes) (e.g. "business owner" instead of "businessman") indicates that the language of governance is still somewhat influenced by conventional gendered phrases. Despite a discernible push for inclusivity, evident in the rise of gender-neutral language, the ongoing use of gendered terminology indicates that political discourse remains inclined toward traditional, male-centric standards.

"We have come too far and made too many sacrifices to turn back now on fiscal reforms. Leadership is not about doing the first easy thing that comes to mind; it is about doing what is necessary, however hard." [14] (8th State of the Nation Address of Ex. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo)

Hence, 50 speeches examined, 32 were identified as using inclusive language, whereas 18 did not somewhat utilize it. This suggests that most presidential speeches make an effort to employ language that reflects a sense of collective identity and inclusivity, utilizing phrases like "we," "our people," or "the Filipino people." Ultimately, concerning the last indicator, the data indicates that merely 13 speeches demonstrate a clear expression of equal rights and equality, whereas 37 do not. This indicates that the majority of presidential speeches do not clearly position equality in relation to the SOGIE Bill or the promotion of LGBTQ+ rights.

DISCUSSION

The results above align with Perdana et al., (2024), that the relationship enables them to move in the sphere of coalition politics and deal with different political forces. Such alliances are very important in influencing the decision-making and governance of the multiparty presidential systems, as witnessed in the case of both the Philippines and Indonesia. The existence of such a relationship is an indication of a political tactic whereby the presidents deliberately bring out an image of collective rule—a hallmark of Philippine political discourse aimed at maintaining public trust through rhetorical collaboration. Hence, such executive-legislative oversight increases accountability in the sense that individuals must work hard to ensure they implement gender-responsive policies and not as an add-on. Moreover, the fact that the clause puts a heavy emphasis on both the public and the private institutions is a guarantee wide-ranging coverage since it knows that gender inequity is

not just confined within government systems but also in the business entities, education, and even social organizations (Akla, 2025).

As Kena (2017) notes, this variety of methods for addressing the broader subject of language, gender, and sexuality has led to debates and disputes in recent decades, which persist today. These discussions ought to be seen as a strength in the field, as they ensure that significant topics concerning language and society remain in focus, even in the absence of agreement. The frequent use of these power-framing languages seeks to present themselves as the catalyst for shared advancement or national initiatives. This rhetorical approach seeks to build trust, instill assurance, and strengthen the president's primary position in leadership and national progress.

The study also suggests that gender awareness in formal discussions is developing but has not yet been completely incorporated into the communication methods of governance. These linguistic patterns may quietly sustain current gender hierarchies, presenting authority and leadership through terms linked to masculinity, while diminishing the prominence of women and those with diverse gender identities (Coates et al., 1998). These linguistic selections aim to cultivate unity and a sense of national identity, portraying the president as one with the populace instead of an authority speaking over them. Expressions such as "Our aim is to safeguard the Filipino people" exhibit a unifying tone that fosters collective accountability and involvement in nation-building (Manzano et al., 2020)

While certain presidents reference equality with phrases such as "We aim to eliminate discrimination," these comments are typically vague and general, emphasizing moral appeals instead of concrete policy measures. This framing suggests that while equal rights are symbolically recognized, they are not meaningfully linked to legislative actions such as the SOGIE Bill.

Table 5. Select Transcript of speeches

Select Presidents	Transcript of the Select Speeches
Joseph Estrada	"I want my people to enjoy peace, but only with freedom, I want my people to savor prosperity, but only with fairness, and I want my people to experience stability, but only with openness..." (<i>A Peace with Freedom speech from Estrada in New York, July 22, 2000</i>)[4]
Gloria Macapagal Arroyo	"The country needs peace to uplift the Filipino people and empower the communities..." (<i>Socialist International speech by Gloria Macapagal Arroyo ., n.d</i>)
Benigno Aquino	"Noynoy" "I particularly admire Japan's current thrust towards gender equality.." (<i>Benigno Aquino on joint session of the National Diet of Japan</i>)[34]
Rodrigo Duterte	"We want to end the discrimination of persons on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and other character traits..."(<i>4th State of the Nation Address of Ex. President Rodrigo Duterte</i>)[38]

From table 5, Ex-President Estrada, Aquino, and Macapagal did not express the passage of the SOGIE Equality Bill aside from Rodrigo Duterte. However, it would have been more successful if Duterte had explicitly emphasized equality, empowerment, and fairness that should be translated into a tangible and consistent advocacy for the SOGIE Equality Bill—such as promoting inclusive rhetoric, institutionalized protections, and genuine representation. The lack of personal interaction with the SOGIE Bill is an indicator of the larger reluctance of the Philippine political leadership to address socially divisive but critical matters related to gender and sexuality (Maningo, 2024). Being rhetorically favorable towards justice and human rights, every administration tends to put forward the more politically safe agendas, and neglect those that question the customary norms or the religious sensitivities. It would be more effective in case these leaders employed their political statistics and moral authority to make the dialogue on

SOGIE become normal, not something to be discussed as controversial but an element of social justice and equality (Gamalinda et al., 2024). Through it, they would have assisted in creating a more enlightened and inclusive political culture, where diversity is accepted as power instead of a threat to moral or cultural virtues

These dynamics can be seen through the course of the SOGIE Equality Bill. The SOGIE bill has been resubmitted through successive congresses, but lack of uniform high-level executive support (including certification as urgent) has been identified by the advocacy groups and human-rights monitors as one of the reasons why the bill has continued to be stalled in committee and interpellation by opponents in either house. Meanwhile, when presidents (or their representatives) have publicly disavowed the bill—as by not referring to it in key political speeches or international conferences—that silence has given the effect of demonstrating to anti-SOGIE alliances in congress that it is barely costly politically to do so (De Guzman, 2023).

Comparative examples help to make the point. The Anti-Terrorism bill was forcefully hastened through and passed into law after the unanimous executive support and the quick passage by the congress, - such a good example of presidential will meeting enough congressional allies to overcome civil-society opposition. In comparison, even certified measures that were deemed urgent (e.g. some of the urges proposed by Duterte) were not passed since there was no consensus in the congress proving the weakness of certification as a single instrument (Gonzales, 2020). Other bills such as the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act (RH Law) show that Congress is able to act without executive focus as well as the RH debate has had its share of active public debate and executive posture at different times, and the law was finally passed by Congress, showing that legislation initiative and coalition-building within Congress can yield results which are no longer solely dependent upon presidential priority (Sales, 2015). The combination of these cases indicates that presidential announcements determine the speed and allowable risk by lawmakers, however, the ultimate result lies in the committee dynamics, party control, mobilized constituencies, and elite bargaining

CONCLUSION

Putting everything into account, while there are some limitations on their presidential speeches, the non-passage of the SOGIE Bill instilled in the way they present their speeches. Presidential speech analysis comparing the years 2000-2022 shows that the SOGIE Equality Bill in the Philippines has taken more the form of rhetorical gestures than actual endorsement of the policy. Through the presidential speeches of Estrada, Arroyo, Aquino, and Duterte, they reflected views in the inclusivity and awareness of equality differently but barely touched the direct issue of the SOGIE Bill. Rather, in their speeches they presented generalized concepts of equality, unity, and development serving as rhetorical platforms, not directly addressing social issues like LGBTQ+ rights. Such a regular pattern indicates a kind of symbolic politics, in which the idea of inclusiveness is called upon to retain a modern, democratic image as well as being limited to avoid losing conservative advocates in the political and religious establishment. In historical perspective, this rhetoric silence falls in line with the overall history of legislation of gender and human rights in the Philippines. The same empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming achievements, as those of the Magna Carta of Women, were only made possible in the past when presidential rhetoric was equated with institutional practices and legislation. The SOGIE Equality Bill, on the contrary, is still pending passage since the debate by the government (the presidential) was at times sympathetic but lacked the symbolic and procedural force

necessary to advance the legislative process. The content analysis of the study revealed that the explicit mention of SOGIE issues is limited, and the use of gendered language is more frequently gender-neutral or traditional, which further emphasizes the persistence of the idea of the linguistic and cultural norms in assigning the name to the discourse of equality.

The paper also points out that the failure of the SOGIE Equality Bill to pass over the years could not be simply seen as a legislative failure but rather as a manifestation of the way executive language has traditionally maneuvered moral conservatism and institutional accommodation. Lack of solid presidential promotion like the bill being declared as urgent or clear instructions in the State of the Nation Addresses would reflect the political consideration of the Philippine presidents. By implication, the language of the executive indicates the convergence between words, power, and politics: what is not said in presidential speech is as political as what is said.

With all that being said, through manifest and latent content analysis, these results uncover a dual nature in presidential discourse: although inclusivity and equality are progressively recognized at the surface, the underlying aspects of political communication continue to be affected by executive-legislative relationships, guarded conservatism, and centralized power. Clearly, presidents convey unity and fairness by using neutral tones and inclusive appeals. Underlying the conversation, though, is a strategic silence concerning divisive topics such as the SOGIE Bill, exposing the persistent conflict between progressive values and political reality. This dynamic suggests that although the concept of equality has made its way into presidential language, its complete incorporation into governance discourse still depends on wider changes in political culture, institutional transparency, and societal willingness to accept gender equality.

This chart allows us to observe the apparent increase in the number of both indicators that could be answered with "yes" or with "no" which proves that the references to the themes related to gender equality have become more common in the presidential speeches. The trend is that the Presidents of the Philippines between 2000 and 2022 are becoming more prone to including the topic of gender, which indicates a changing degree of sensitivity to inclusiveness and social justice.

However, despite this rise in thematic mentions, the data also reveals a notable disconnect between rhetorical acknowledgment and concrete policy action. The fact that there is a gender-related language does not mean that the SOGIE Equality Bill is unambiguously advocated, nor that there is a will to advance the legislation. Rather, these sources are still mostly superficial or hidden under the umbra of general discourses of governance, development or social protection.

The disparity between rhetoric and legislative course highlights a broader dynamic in the relationship between the executive and legislative branches: even when the president gestures toward progressive principles in his or her speech, it does not translate into presidential influence, endorsement of sense of urgency and long-term political backing of congressional action. This somewhat leads to the growing references to the awareness of gender issues but does not go further than taking a definite and stable position about formalization of the SOGIE Equality Bill and the way in which political discourses can take into consideration the marginalized groups without undertaking structural modification.

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