

## **Pronominal Choice: A Reflection of Culture and Persuasion in Philippine Political Campaign Discourse**

**Paulina M. Goheco**

*De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines*

### **Abstract**

The study investigates the interplay of language, persuasion and culture, as reflected in the usage of pronouns in a political type of discourse such as political campaign advertisements on television. An examination of the linguistic features in a mediated type of discourse may reveal the speakers' strategies in their attempts of persuasion. For example, the first person plural pronouns can be used by politicians in their strategies to gain the people's allegiance, while the use of singular first person pronoun may result in exclusion of some groups. The variances in the use of pronouns can shed light on how participants project themselves and others. In the Tagalog language, the preference for certain pronouns reveals social distance, politeness, or solidarity. To serve as the framework, the study adopts Schacter and Otnes' (1972) categories of personal pronouns; namely, genitive, absolute, and locative. The corpus consists of 60 political campaign ads shown on television for a national senatorial race. The study shows that pronouns are linguistic features that may render uniqueness in a particular type of discourse that is generally persuasive in nature. Through the analysis of the frequency and usage of personal pronouns in the televised campaign ads, the study provides insights on the benefits of the agentive role of the pronoun, as well as the role of culture, and other speaker motivations in the use of pronouns. Despite the significance of inclusive pronouns such as *tayo* 'we' in persuasive discourse, the study reveals the predominance of first person singular *ko* 'I' in the corpus.

**Keywords:** pronouns, Tagalog, persuasion, culture, exclusion, agentive role, political discourse

Discourse may be analyzed through its linguistic features. According to Kress (1989), the realization of a linguistic expression and its meaning is achieved through the interplay of three aspects of language: genre, discourse, and text. An examination of the linguistic

features may reveal the speakers' strategies in their attempts of persuasion. Pronouns, among other linguistic features, can shed light on how participants project themselves and how they express associations with others. Wilson (1990, in Partington, 2003) claims that inclusive pronoun *we* (speaker and listener) can be used as a strategy to express solidarity; whereas, exclusive pronoun *we* (speaker and other/s excluding the listener) can be used to share responsibility, that is, actions are not only the responsibility of one individual. The first person pronouns can be used by politicians in their strategies "to gain the people's allegiance, to have them believe that the decisions that are being made are the right ones" (Wilson, 1990, p. 71, in Partington, 2003). On the other hand, the use of inclusive pronoun *we* may indicate the exclusion of some other groups, which implies a division between *us* and *them*.

Chilton and Schaffner (1997 in Van Dijk, 1977)), in the analysis of the 1994 speech by the British Prime Minister John Major at the 11<sup>th</sup> Conservative Party Congress in England, illustrated how the use of pronouns, among other linguistic features, enabled the politician to carry out his political strategies that related to the political functions of *coercion, resistance, dissimulation, and legitimization*. The use of pronouns 'we' and 'I', aside from the speech acts and other linguistic devices, were investigated. In terms of interaction, the speaker in the text, John Major, displayed particular relationships that were not only linguistic but also social and political. The relationships were manifested in terms of roles as addresser, addressee, and observers; on the other hand, there was the set of political actors with specific interrelationships in the political arena. These relationships were established by the use of pronouns. To indicate saliency of the pronouns employed, the frequency of occurrences was noted. The predominance of 'I' as the subject of particular verbs delineated the role of Major as a leader and a man of action, or a truthful narrator. In the study, the pronouns defined the roles of the participants as they "coerce the hearers into certain communication roles and political roles, and they legitimize or presuppose the legitimacy of the speaker" (p. 217). The study showed that the choice of pronouns were good indicators of political strategies employed by politicians.

In another study, Sai-Hua-Kuo (1998) examined the uses of the second-person singular pronoun 'ni' (you) by three Taiwanese

politicians in televised mayoral debates from 1998. The study showed how the pronoun usage reflected the politician's attitudes and relations toward other participants in the discourse. In the two debates studied, it was found that 'ni' had two diverse pragmatic functions: in the first, the impersonal 'ni', (either address the audience or to refer to an indefinite person) was used to establish solidarity with the audience, while in the second debate, 'ni' was used as a referential pronoun to directly address and confront their opponents. There were more occurrences of 'ni' in the second debate because, as the researcher claimed, it was the last of out of the five debates and it happened just four days before the elections. In other words, there was a greater urgency for the electoral candidates to engage in attacks as the time may be the last opportunity for the them to engage in any aggressive discourse toward their opposing political counterparts. Furthermore, the researcher attributed the varying usage of 'ni' to the 'distinct communicative styles, e.g. casual or formal' (p. 53) of the politicians. In summary, the study suggests that the second-person singular pronoun 'ni' [you in Taiwan] may be used differently according to the intended goal and the communicative style of the speaker in a discourse.

Green (2007) investigated the use of pronouns as one of the discursive strategies in political speech. The data consisted of four United Nations General Assembly addresses of Malawian President, Dr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, given over a period of four years during his presidency in 2004 to 2007. The study yielded a consistent use of the in-group pronouns such as *we*, *our*, and *us* in the four address sections. As acknowledged in the study, pronominal choices such as the in-group pronouns in political discourse are often strategies for politicians to connect with the electorate. From the data gathered, there was less use of first person pronouns such as *I* and *my*. These pronouns were used by Mutharika to highlight his authority and success. According to Green (2007), the minimal occurrences of the first person singular pronouns was a response to 'the level of solidarity and responsibility' (p.8) the politician wanted to portray.

Bramley (2008), in her thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Australian National University, argued that pronouns were used to project positive images of the politicians, in the context of the Australian political media interview. The corpus

for this study consisted of 32 Australian political interviews that were recorded between 1995 and 1996, from various public radio and television news programs. The investigation showed that pronouns were employed for various reasons, such as to show affiliation, create distance, or construct different identities of themselves. In summary, the study found that pronouns are a key factor in 'the construction of reality - a reality that is created and understood in the discourse of the moment' (p.v).

Jibrin (2003), in her dissertation, analyzed another political genre, the State of the Nation Address (SONA) in the Philippines. The objectives of the study were to understand the manipulative language used in the SONA, and to identify the macro-structure of the SONA and determine how the political strategic functions were realized in the SONA. The corpus consisted of the first two speeches of five Philippine presidents, namely Ferdinand E. Marcos, Corazon C. Aquino, Fidel V. Ramos, Joseph E. Estrada, and Gloria M. Arroyo, from 1966 to 2002. The use of the pronominals 'I' showed the active position of the speaker and 'We' showed the speaker's solidarity position in the discourse. The study concluded that the SONA reproduced the power of the SONA through the use of linguistic strategies that elicited approval from the audience (Jibrin, 2003).

Pronouns in political discourse have been studied as outlined above, but none of these studies have explored their use in the context of television-mediated political discourse in the Philippines. To fill a gap on the scarceness of research on pronouns in the preceding context, the present study embarks on a preliminary investigation of pronouns as used in Philippine television-mediated political campaign ads (TPCAs). In particular, the research questions are: a) What are the predominant personal pronouns used in the TPCAs in terms of frequency of usage? b) What are their functions? To address these questions, the analysis proceeds with an examination of the Tagalog pronominal system.

In general, the usage of pronouns, in the Tagalog language, may reveal social distance, politeness, or solidarity. Both the first-person plural exclusive-*kami / namin / amin*-and the dual plural-*tayo / natin / atin*- are translated by the English first - person plural (*we / us / our / ours*). The difference between the two categories is the composition of the groupings they represent. The first - person

plural may also be called the *Exclusive* first -person plural because it excludes the person addressed. On the other hand, the dual plural may also be called *Inclusive* first -person plural because it includes the person/s addressed (Schachter & Otnes, 1972).

### Theoretical Framework

To serve as the theoretical framework for the study, the Tagalog Pronominal System of Schachter & Otnes (1972) was employed.

Table 1

*Tagalog Personal Pronouns (Schachter & Otnes, 1972, p. 88)*

|                             | <i>ang</i> form<br>(Nominative) | <i>sa</i> form<br>(Locative) | <i>ng</i> form<br>(Genitive) |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| NON-PLURAL                  |                                 |                              |                              |
| 1s[+SPKR, -ADDR]            | ako                             | akin                         | ko                           |
| 1D[+SPKR,+ADDR]             | kata                            | kanita                       | nita                         |
| 2S[-SPKR, -ADDR-PLRL]       | ka / ikaw                       | iyo                          | mo                           |
| 3S [-SPKR, -ADDR]           | siya                            | kaniya                       | niya                         |
| PLURAL                      |                                 |                              |                              |
| 1PE[+SPKR,-ADDR, +PLRL]     | kami                            | amin                         | namin                        |
| 1PI [+SPKR,+ADDR,+<br>PLRL] | tayo                            | atin                         | natin                        |
| 2P [-SPKR, +ADDR, +PLRL]    | kayo                            | inyo                         | ninyo                        |
| 3P [-SPKR, -ADDR, +PLRL]    | silá                            | kanila                       | nila                         |

Tagalog pronouns are categorized into three functionally distinct sets: genitive, absolutive/nominative, and locative, as

presented in Table 1. The three sets of personal pronouns may be described in terms of their varied functions. To simplify, these functions are described according to the predominant purpose each may serve, as illustrated in the following examples.

The absolutive/nominative pronoun may have various functions in a clause. One function is that of a Subject in a monadic intransitive clause, as in the following example (Gochecho, 2006a):

- (1) Lumangoy kami  
 swam=ABS.1P.PLRL  
 [We swam]

In (1), the absolutive form of the pronoun indicates the focus and what the focus is doing through the verb form. The absolutive form of Tagalog pronouns may also serve as Subject in identificational and classificational clauses.

Similarly, the Locative Pronoun may serve various functions in a clause. It may indicate location, as illustrated below:

- (2) *Nasa kaniya* ang dokumento.  
 LCV 2s DEF document  
 [The document is with her]

Lastly, the Genitive/ Ergative Pronoun may be used as a possessor or an agent in a clause (Reid & Liao, 2004). This may be illustrated in the following examples (Gochecho, 2006a):

- (3) Kaibigan= *ko* ang nanay= mo.  
 Friend=GEN.1s DEF mother=GEN.2s  
 [Your mother is my friend.]
- (4) Kinuha *nila* ang kotse.  
 Got=GEN/ERG.3PL DEF car  
 [They got the car]

Example (3) shows the pronoun *ko* in a possessive construction, while Example (4) illustrates the function of a pronoun as an agent in a clause. Example (4) shows the case relation of the Genitive pronoun *nila* as the Agent, which carries the actor macro

role, while *kotse* is the Patient that plays the undergoer role. Transitive verbs typically have two complements: an Agent, which carries the actor macro role; and a Patient, which carries the undergoer role (Reid & Liao, 2004). The agent (actor) refers to the participant who performs, instigates, or controls the situation, while the undergoer (patient) refers to the participant who does not perform, initiate, or control any situation but rather is affected by it (Foley & Van Valin, 1984, as cited in Reid & Liao, 2004).

The use of pronouns may also indicate social distance or solidarity. The choice of the "T" form (from the French *tu*) in addressing a one person reflects an equal relationship among the participants, while the "V" Form (from the French word *vous*) reflects an unequal power relationship: for example, a superior uses T but receives V, while a subordinate uses V and receives T (Brown & Gilman, 1960, in Bonvillain, 2003).

### Method

The corpus consists of 60 TPCAs used by the senatorial candidates for the elections in 2007. These were transcribed from television advertisements (ads) with 30 or 60 seconds duration of airing on television during the campaign period of the Philippine senatorial election held on May 14, 2007. There were a total of 37 political candidates who ran for senator: 12 candidates from the government party, 11 candidates from the opposition, 1 independent candidate, and the rest of the candidates from less known political parties. The senatorial candidates competed for 12 senatorial slots for a 6-year term that ends on June 30, 2013. Not all candidates fielded their campaign ads on television; thus, the procurement of data was based on its availability in the medium. No particular mode of selection was needed because 60 was the maximum number of videos accessible in the Internet archives. Most TPCAs were recorded during primetime viewing, which started at 6 pm onwards. These ads were recorded from the two leading networks ABS-CBN and GMA 7 although there was no attempt to identify the specific sources for each since all stations fielded the same pre-recorded TPCAs for each candidate. It must be noted that part of the materials used as corpus were in the form of audio recordings because of the difficulty

of catching each and every TPCA during commercial breaks of television programs. Thus, for a more comprehensive set of materials to serve as corpus, actual video recordings of these TPCAs were acquired from the internet, specifically, the YouTube and subsequently validated through an actual viewing of the video clips aired by a leading television network.

The personal pronouns were traced according to their corresponding forms nominative (*ang*), genitive (*ng*), and locative (*sa*). Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the television-mediated political campaign ads, the occurrences of personal pronouns were segregated according to the different modes of texts: spoken texts (ST), written texts (WT), and Song. The goal was to identify and analyze the predominant pronouns used and the functions they served in the discourse.

### Results and Discussion

The interdisciplinary nature of the TPCA presents various opportunities for the participants in the discourse to strategize their actions and usage of linguistic features such as the personal pronouns. Table 2 shows the profile of pronoun usage in the corpus.

As illustrated in Table 2, the first person non-plural, *ko* is predominantly used in the corpus, with a total of 79 occurrences or 27.7 % of a total of 285 occurrences of pronouns in the corpus. The next in frequency count of pronouns in the corpus is the First Person non-plural nominative *ako*, while the third is the Second Person Genitive form *mo*. These pronouns are closely followed by the inclusive pronouns, *atin*, *natin*, and *tayo*.

The employment of the personal pronoun *ko* in TPCAs may provide the following benefits: first, it provides an informal register that simulates face-to-face interactions; and second, it provides a clear representation of actions and plans of the different segments of the target audience (electorate).

Table 2  
*Frequency Distribution of Pronouns in the Corpus*

| PRONOUNS                   | ST         | WT        | Song      | Total      | %           |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| <i>ko (ng,)</i>            | 59         | 7         | 13        | 79         | 27.8%       |
| <i>ako (ang)</i>           | 30         | 0         | 1         | 31         | 10.9%       |
| <i>mo (ng)</i>             | 21         | 2         | 7         | 30         | 10.6%       |
| <i>atin (sa)</i>           | 19         | 0         | 10        | 29         | 10.2%       |
| <i>natin (ng)</i>          | 22         | 0         | 2         | 24         | 8.5%        |
| <i>siya (ang)</i>          | 15         | 0         | 7         | 21         | 7.4%        |
| <i>tayo (ang)</i>          | 15         | 0         | 4         | 19         | 6.7%        |
| <i>Other<br/>Pronouns*</i> |            |           |           | 51         | 17.9%       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>180</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>44</b> | <b>285</b> | <b>100%</b> |
|                            | 63.2%      | 3.5%      | 15.4%     | 100%       |             |

Other Pronouns\* - include *niya* (12); *kayo* (10); *kaniya* (5); *sila* (5); *iyo* (4); *kami* (94); *akin* (3); *inyo* (3); *namin* (2); *ninyo* (2); *amin* (1); *ikaw* (0); *nila* (0); *kanila* (0)

The use of pronoun *ko* in discourse bears a resemblance to the use of English pronoun 'I', which provides a "much closer and more informal rapport with the audience" (Partington, 2003, p. 61). The informal scenario engages the speaker and the electorate in simulated real-life conversations that may redress the lack of face to face interactions in a television-mediated discourse. A projection of a personal relationship between the speaker and the hearer may be illustrated in the following excerpts, which form Frame 1 in the TPCA of the political candidate Francis 'Chiz' Escudero (CE). In this scenario, CE talks directly to grade school students in a classroom.

- Child 1:       Gusto **ko** maging piloto  
                   [I want to be a pilot]
- (1) Child 2:   Gusto **ko** maging doktor para magamot ko si lola.

- [I want to be a doctor so that I can cure grandmother]
- (2) Child 3: *Gusto ko maging teacher.*  
[I want to be a teacher.]
- (3) Child 4: *Gusto ko maging senador!*  
[I want to be a senator]
- (4) CE: *Ako rin*  
Me, too.]  
Children: Laughter
- (5) CE: *Munti man ang pangarap ay mahalaga.*  
[However small a dream is, it's still important.]  
*Bibigyan boses ko ito sa Senado*  
[I will give it a voice in the Senate]
- (6) Children: *Say Chiz!*

In the foregoing utterances, the use of 'ko' sets a clear representation of the first-person point of view of a speaker in addressing the co-actors. The relaxed scenario engages the candidate in an informal conversation with young students who may represent the children of the electorate. *Ko* is a linguistic device that enables the interlocutors to simulate a conversation with the electorate. The usage of *ko* reduces, if not eradicates, the distance created by the medium in which actors speak and act on the screen while the electorate view in their own homes or other places out of the television box.

In addition, the excerpts reflect the dreams of the youth in society. In Excerpts (5) to (6), the candidate responds positively to the dreams expressed by the children. The exposition of the ambitions in the preceding excerpts lay out a good scenario for the candidate to inform the electorate that he gives importance to the children's dreams and that he would be their voice. The whole process unfolds with the candidate not making a long speech of all these dreams and how he would make them come true. Instead the co-actors in the TPCA, through the use of *ko*, did it for him. All he had to do was answer favorably. Thus, the informal and real-life scenario brings the candidate's advocacy for the youth closer to the electorate

In its capacity to represent the actual plans and actions of the speaker, it may be helpful to examine the particular plans/actions

that may be expressed through the use of *ko*. The Tagalog Genitive Pronoun *ko* [my or I] may function as a possessor in a possessive construction and or as an agent (one who performs, instigates, or controls the situation) in a transitive clause. Table 3 shows a profile of *ko* occurrences in the corpus.

Table 3  
*Functions of 'ko' in Utterances in the Corpus*

| Possessor | Agent | Total |
|-----------|-------|-------|
| 16        | 63    | 79    |
| 20%       | 80 %  | 100%  |

Table 3 shows the significantly high usage of the *ko* pronoun as an agent as compared to its function as a possessor. This may suggest the emphasis given on the actions projected by the actors in the TPCA. Some examples of *ko* occurrences, whether as agent or possessor, are illustrated in Table 4:

Table 4  
*'Ko' as Possessor or Agent*

| 'ko' Occurrences  | Genitive Functions |       |
|---|--------------------|-------|
|   | Possessor          | Agent |
| 1. Sana kaya namin ang tuition <i>ko</i> ...  | X                  |       |
| 2. Pag graduate <i>ko</i> , sana may trabaho agad.  |                    | X     |
| 3. Sana mapagamot <i>ko</i> (i) ang tatay <i>ko</i> (ii)...                                     | X (ii)             | X (i) |
| 4. When I'm asked, "Would I vote for Noynoy?" kung hindi <i>ko</i> siya anak, sa totoo lang, oo | X                  |       |
| 5. Katotohanan. Ito ang gusto <i>ko</i> !   |                    | X     |

Table 4 shows the occurrences of *ko* as possessor in 1, *tuition ko* [my tuition]; 3, *tatay ko* [my father], and 4, *anak ko* [my son]. The table also shows another function of *ko*, that of an agent in the clause. In utterance 3, *Sana mapagamot ko...*, the pronoun *ko* serves as the Agent of the Verb *mapagamot*. Similarly, the use of *ko* in utterances 2 and 5 of the same table function as agents. The use of *ko* as an agent reflects the active role of the speaker as an actor who performs, instigates, or controls the situation. For instance, the speakers in Table 4 are the instigators of action: 'graduate' (in 2), *mapagamot* (in 3), and *gusto* (in 5). The significantly high frequency count of *ko* in the corpus suggests a tendency to indulge in expressing personal aspirations and actions as shown in Excerpts 1, 2, 3, and 5 of Table 38.

The complete context of the utterances previously shown in Table 4 is provided in the following excerpt.

(8) TPCA # 13. Escudero, Chiz (CE)

Frame 1: Young musical band members and other assistants preparing the stage and tuning instruments  
(While a guitarist (G1) tunes his guitar)

WT: *Sana kaya namin ang tuition ko...*

[I hope/wish we can afford my tuition]

Frame 2: A young female assistant (FA) fixing the lighting

FA: (talking to a male colleague)

*Pag graduate ko, sana may trabaho agad*

[When I graduate, I wish/hopeto find a job right away]

Frame 3: A young male assistant (MA) is shown contemplating with a WT flashed on screen

WT: *Sana mapagamot ko ang tatay ko..*

[Hopefully, I wish/hope I can have my Father cured]

Frame 4: A young female adult holding a microphone

G2: (Guitarist 2)

*Eh, sino naman makikinig sa atin?*

[Who will listen to us?]

G1: Suddenly points to CE

*Si Chiz!*

[Chiz!]

Frame 5: CE, with back to camera, turns around to face the crowd as everybody mills around CE

Excerpt (8) illustrates exchanges in conversation in a scenario that is familiar to the youth segment of the electorate. Frame 1 presents a scene in a studio or a place where musical band members are preparing for a show while written text (WT) is flashed on the screen, *Sana kaya naming ang tuition ko*. Frame 2 presents another scene that focuses on a female assistant who talks to male colleague and expresses her hope of finding a job immediately after she graduates. The TPCA moves on to Frame 3 where another youth ponders, while WT shows an aspiration of having his father cured. As if hearing all aspirations, despite the fact that only one was spoken, one of the guitarists raises the question as to who would listen to their needs and aspirations; another guitarist responds by pointing to the political candidate. Finally, Frame 5 reveals the face of the political candidate as he turns and shows his face towards the camera.

The TPCA simulates a scene that may transpire among young musicians and assistants, who may be typical working students in the youth sector of the electorate. In the process of the discourse in (1), three aspirations of the youth were revealed, namely: financial need for education and health purposes, and employment after graduation. The use of *ko* enabled the participants in the TPCA to express personal needs and problems in a natural interpersonal manner. The TPCA in (1) illustrates how the use of Genitive *ko* as an agent offers a clear and personal communication of actions or aspirations of the speaker.

In summary, the use of *ko* offers an informal and personal point of view in the discourse that may redress the distance between the television viewer and the TPCA actor. Unlike other types of political discourse that generally use more formal language, the alienation of some sectors of the electorate, especially the youth, is mitigated, if not, effectively avoided. As compared to the more formal use of the plural form *namin* (our) or *natin* (ours), the dual pronoun *tayo* [us], or the distant third person 'siya' [he/she], the pronoun *ko* provides a less formal register in discourse as it projects a personal relationship between the speaker and the hearer. In addition, it gives the TPCA an opportunity to address the different needs and aspirations of the different sectors of the electorate as reflected through a wider representation of the electorate.

A significant factor in the usage of the pronoun *ko* is the speaker who uses it. A speaker in a TPCA may be the political candidate or other actors (co-actors) in the advertisement. As Cook (1992) notes, the speaker in a television advertisement may not always be the sender of the message. As a television-mediated discourse, the TPCA employs a variety of speakers aside from the political candidate to express the underlying message of the political candidate. Table 5 shows how the usage of *ko* is distributed among the participant actors in the corpus.

Table 5

*Frequency Distribution of 'ko' Usage among TPCA Participants in the Corpus*

| Co-actors | Political candidate | Third Party | TOTAL |
|-----------|---------------------|-------------|-------|
| 46        | 20                  | 14          | 79    |
| 57.0%     | 25.3%               | 17.7        | 100%  |

*Legend:*

*Co-actors – refer to other speakers (aside from the political candidate) such as celebrities, ordinary persons in dramatizations and actual scenes*

*Third Party – inferred, unidentified or not clearly identified personas in songs or WT*

It may be gleaned from Table 5 that a significant percentage of *ko* usage is attributed to co-actors in the corpus. Most co-actors play roles that represent the various sectors of the electorate such as: the working class (female and male employees, jeepney driver, the market vendor, etc.); the family unit (mother, father, and children); and the youth (young music band members, students). This representation is significant as it allows the electorate to identify with the roles that are simulated in the TPCA. In addition, the term co-actors may also refer to the celebrities in the TPCAs. Table 6 presents a summary of the aspirations and actions expressed by the co-actors in the corpus.

Table 6

*Summary of Co-Actors' Aspirations/Actions in ko Expressions*

| Aspirations/ Actions                                 | Occurrences | Percentage |
|--|-------------|------------|
| Aspirations:   |             | 67.4%      |
| a. Dreams for a better life                          | 21          |            |
| b. Ambition in life                                  | 6           |            |
| c. Hope for opportunities                            | 1           |            |
| d. Hope for financial security                       | 3           |            |
| Personal Claim                                       | 5           | 10.9%      |
| Boast of candidate's achievement<br>(testimonial)    | 4           | 8.7%       |
| Banter   | 3           | 6.5%       |
| Explicit Plan to vote for PC                         | 2           | 4.3%       |
| Benefit received from the candidate<br>(testimonial) | 1           | 2.2%       |
| Total  | 46          | 100%       |

The aspirations of co-actors account for the highest frequency of occurrences. This may suggest the goal of the TPCA to address the aspirations of the electorate, as expressed through expressions that employ *ko*. In a similar vein, the use of *ko* pronouns in testimonials and expressing personal plans and actions provide a simulation of similar concerns of the electorate.

On the other hand, only 25.3% of the total usage of *ko* is attributed to the political candidate. Further examination of the messages and actions of the political candidate expressed through *ko* is summarized in Table 7.

Table 7  
*Summary of Political Candidates' Actions/Aspirations*

| Political Candidate's Aspirations/<br>Actions  | Occurrences |
|--|-------------|
| Plan of action                                 | 14          |
| Personal claim as individuals                  | 2           |
| Plea for votes                                 | 2           |
| Personal achievement information               | 1           |
| Solidarity (feeling of team spirit, closeness) | 1           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                   | <b>20</b>   |

The use of *ko* by the political candidate enables them to personally reveal their plans of action, personal claims and other propositions, as summarized in Table 7. Some examples of the political candidate's usage of *ko* in the corpus is provided in the following excerpts.

- (9) *Ipaglalaban ko, at paninindigan ko na gawing five percent ito.*  
 [I will fight and make sure that it be raised to five percent.]
- (10) *Bibigyan boses ko ito sa Senado*  
 [I will give it a voice in the Senate]
- (11) *At ang edukasyon, isusulong ko.*  
 [And education, I will push for it]
- (12) *Ipaglalaban ko po ang mga probinsya., pangako iyan.*  
 [I will fight for the provinces, that's a promise.]

Excerpts (9) to (12) are specific plans of action of the candidate. In these expressions, no other persona speaks for the candidate but the political candidate himself. This makes the communication more direct and personal.

Despite the benefit of a direct and clear communication that a political candidate's statements may bring, there is a noticeable

marked difference in the use of *ko* between the co-actors (57% usage) versus political candidates (25.3%). As Biocca (1991) asserts, “the wise politician will avoid authoritarian or coercive rhetoric and will shun the risks inherent in assuming too much personal responsibility for actions and policies” (p. 72).

This may explain the higher frequency of *ko* usage by the co-actors as compared to that of the political candidate. The employment of *ko* expressions by the co-actors reduces the coercive force that may be created if it were the candidate stressing his own personal achievements. Aside from avoiding an ‘authoritarian rhetoric’ (Biocca, 1991, p. 72), this phenomenon may also be related to the reluctance (of the political candidate) to bring attention to oneself because of the Filipino cultural value of *hiya* (Church, 1986). According to Bresnahan (1991), giving or receiving a compliment may be threatening to the value of *hiya*. This may be a predicament for the political candidates since the essence of the TPCA is to convince the electorate to vote for them based on their qualities and achievements that make them worthy of the votes. Thus, to avoid violating *hiya*, another actor (co-actor) acts as the intermediary to compliment the candidate. The use of *ko* by co-actors allows the TPCA to highlight the candidate’s achievements, excellent qualities, and ultimately put forward the message that elevates the candidate’s position.

In terms of frequency, the use of the other pronouns is not as marked as *ko*; collectively, however, the aggregate usage of these pronouns account for 54.2% of the total pronoun usage, as presented in Table 8.

Table 8  
*A Summary of Pronoun Usage*

| Pronouns  | Frequency | %     |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Ko  | 79        | 27.8% |
| ako (10.9%), mo (10.5%), atin 10.2%,<br>natin (8.4%), siya (7.7), tayo (6.7%) | 154       | 54.2% |
| Others  | 51        | 18.0% |
| Total   | 284       | 100 % |

Table 8 shows that the pronouns *ako* [I], *mo* [you, your], *atin* [ours, us], *natin* [our], *siya* [he\she], and *tayo* [us, we] have relatively lower frequencies of usage as compared to *ko*; nonetheless, their combined frequency of occurrences account for more than fifty percent of the total pronoun usage.

Tagalog personal pronouns may serve various functions in discourse. The pronouns *ako* [I] and *siya* [she/he] are absolutive/nominative pronouns that may be used for self-introduction such as in the identificational nominal clauses in the following excerpts.

- (13) *Ako po si Prospero Pichay.*  
[I am (politeness marker) Prospero Pichay]
- (14) *Ako po si Migz Zubiri.*  
[I am (politeness marker) Migz Zubiri]
- (15) *Boarder po ako dito sa Manila.*  
[I am a boarder here in Manila]

The speakers in Excerpts (13) and (14) are two campaigning political candidates, while the speaker in (15) is a co-actor. Excerpts (13) and (14) illustrate the identificational function of *ako* in the utterances. Excerpt (15) illustrates the function of the pronoun as a classificational nominal clause.

Another function of the Tagalog pronoun *ako* is to relay personal information, which sheds light on how speakers project themselves. As illustrated in the following excerpts, the political candidates, who are the speakers in utterances using *ako*, relay information about themselves.

- (16) *Doon ako sa kapakanan ng karamihan.*  
[I go with the welfare of the majority] ST 227
- (17) *Naniniwala akong pwede tayong mauna sa buong mundo.*  
[I believe we can be first in the world] ST 244
- (18) *Hangad ko ang kabutihan ng ating mamamayan tuwing gagawa ako ng bagong batas.*  
[I wish for the welfare of our citizens every time I write a law] ST 351

The use of *ako* in Excerpts (16) to (18) illustrates how the speakers (political candidates) are able to express their personal

beliefs, plans, or sentiments that are pro-country. In addition, the use of first person singular *ako*, like *ko*, shows a tendency to maintain a personal and informal rapport with the audience. Similarly, the use of the familiar form *mo* and *siya* may create an atmosphere that is more relaxed and informal unlike in situations when the 'V Form' or the more formal form of pronoun is used such as the deferential pronouns *kayo* or *sila*.

The findings also indicate the relatively significant frequency of the dual plural *atin* (10.2%), *natin* (8.5%), and *tayo* 6.7%). These pronouns are also called Inclusive pronouns because they include the person addressed. The use of the dual plural pronouns may also be considered a solidarity strategy, especially when there is an attempt to include the person addressed even if that person is not really included in an action that is attributed to the Subject, represented by the dual pronoun, as illustrated in Excerpt (19).

(19) Ralph Recto:

*Gumawa po tayo ng batas para mabilis magrehistro at makahiram ng murang puhunan.*

[We created a law for faster registration and borrowing of low-interest capital] ST 212

(WT is flashed while the political candidate is talking)

Republic Act 9178 Barangay Micro-Business Enterprises Law

(2)

WT: 1.234

In Excerpt (19), the speaker includes the audience by choosing the pronoun *tayo* (we) despite the fact that the audience was not a part of the creation of the legal provision. The inclusion of 'you' allows the speaker to create a position of solidarity with the audience, which seems to express the idea that the speaker and the audience are involved in the promulgation of the law: with the speaker as the creator of the law and the audience as the ones who benefit from it. It is also an attempt to soften the boastful effect of the statement, which otherwise would be more boastful because the statement clearly heralds the speaker's own achievement.

## Conclusion

Due to the notion that inclusive pronouns generally render solidarity in a discourse, there was an expectation, on the part of the researcher, of prevalence in the use of inclusive pronouns, such as *tayo [we]* or *kayo [you]* in the discourse. However, the findings reveal that *ko [I]* was more frequently used. The predominance of the pronoun 'ko' was unexpected but its usage may have its own merits for this type of political discourse. The use of *ko* may be attributed to the benefits it brings to the discourse. These benefits include two essential elements that may be crucial to the goal of a persuasive discourse such as the TPCA: an informal register that simulates face-to-face conversations and the agentive role that is bestowed on the speaker.

Unlike other face-to-face political campaigns, the TPCA has a quality of physical distance and obscurity due to the massiveness and multiplicity of the audience being addressed through the medium of the television. The use of *ko* mitigates the distance through its informal register. The use of *ko* in the TPCA simulates an informal conversation between the candidate and the electorate without the formality that the inclusive pronouns may create in a televised discourse.

Another benefit of the use of *ko* is the agentive role that it gives to the speaker. Through the pronoun *ko*, the political candidate is able to clearly attribute any achievements that he/she may want to highlight in the campaign. This is necessary because the speaker is portrayed as the instigator of a particular action in the midst of an array of multiple actors in various scenes of the discourse. The use of multiple actors to represent the family members and the community reflects the Filipino culture of being family oriented and having an extended family of relatives and close friends in the community. However, the number of participants in a TPCA may create confusion especially in terms of reference to the political candidate and the achievements or plans that he intends to highlight in the TPCA. Through the use of the pronoun *ko*, the political candidate is clearly identified as the initiator of an action. This is an example of how

pronouns enable the politician to create a positive identity that makes the political candidate appear more eligible for the position.

The Filipino values and ideologies may have influenced the discourse in terms of topic and style, but it is important to note that the use of pronouns is pivotal in understanding the nature of political discourse. The use of pronouns in the study provides linguistic evidence that shows how politicians construct a reality that is favorable to them. Thus, despite cultural values of deference, the findings reveal that the goal of persuasion through a positive representation of one's self weighed more heavily than that of gaining solidarity through cultural values of deference.

### References

- Biocca, F. (1991). *Television and political advertising*. Frank Biocca (Ed.). NJ: Erlbaum Associates, 1991.
- Bonvillain, N. (2003). *Language, culture, and communication*. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
- Bramley, N. R. (2001). *Pronouns of politics: The use of pronouns in the construction of 'self' and 'other' in political interviews*. Digital collections of theses. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/1885/46225> on January 10, 2012.
- Bresnahan, M. (1991). *Finding our feet*. Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America.
- Britten, R. S. (1993). *A content analysis of televised political advertising in the 1988 fall Presidential campaign*. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, United States -- Illinois. Retrieved August 15, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (Publication No. AAT 9328979)
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chilton, P., & Schaffner, C. (1997). Discourse and politics. In T.A. Van Dijk (Ed), *Discourse as social interaction*. London: Sage Publications Inc.
- Church, T. A. (1986). *Filipino personality: A review of research and writings*. Manila: De La Salle University Press.
- Cook, G. (1992). *The discourse of advertising*. London. Routledge.
- Foley, W.A., & Van Valin, R. Jr. (1984). *Functional syntax and universal*

- grammar*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. Xii.
- Gocheo, P. M. (2006a). *A grammatical sketch of Tagalog*: A term paper submitted in PhD Applied Linguistics subject Advanced Philippine Grammar. DLSU Manila
- Green, C. (2008). Discursive strategies in political speech: The words of Dr. Bingu Wa Mutharika. *Issues in Political Discourse Analysis*, 2(1), 59-74.
- Jibrin, C. (2003). *A political discourse analysis of the state-of-the-nation addresses of five Philippine presidents*. Dissertation. De La Salle University.
- Kress, G. (1989). *Linguistic processes in sociocultural practice*. Oxford: Oxford
- Kuo, Sai-hua. (2002). From solidarity to antagonism: The uses of the second person singular pronoun in Chinese political discourse. *Text*, 22(1), 29-55.
- Partington, A. (2003). Politics, power and politeness. In A. Partington (Ed.), *The linguistics of political argument* (pp. 124 - 155). London and New York: Routledge.
- Reid, L., & Liao, H. (2004). A brief syntactic typology of Philippine languages. *Language and Linguistics*, 5, 433-490.
- Schachter P., & Otones, P. S. (1972). *Tagalog reference grammar*. Berkely, Los Angeles, London: Iniversity of California Press.

### **About the Author**

Paulina M. Gocheo, PhD. is the Vice Chair and a Faculty member of the Department of English and Applied Linguistics of De La Salle University. Her research interests include Discourse Analysis (political and legal discourse), Contrastive Rhetoric, ESL, Oral Communication, and Academic Writing.