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Face-Saving Strategies in Leni Robredo's Post-Election Speech

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ABSTRACT

The role of language in the recently conducted May 2022 Philippine national elections could not be underestimated. For the presidential candidates, language became very functional in expressing their platform and governmental advocacies for the public. Post-election, language still became purposive when former Vice President Leni Robredo, who was defeated in the presidential elections, delivered her post-election speech and expressed her sentiments regarding her loss in the candidacy. This research analyzes the various face-saving discursive strategies in Robredo's post-election speech using Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory. The researcher used discourse analysis to shed light on how Robredo used language during her post-election speech at the thanksgiving event dedicated to her supporters. The analysis of the 21-minute video recording of her speech reveals that her strategies involved accepting defeat, throwing indirect mudslinging, showing optimism or positivity, emphasizing progress, and avoiding the mentioning of opponents' names. The conduct of this research is useful in the analysis of political speeches and in elucidating more understanding of the functionality of language for election purposes.

INTRODUCTION

The 2022 Philippine presidential election concluded, and the new Philippine President was declared already. The former senator and late dictator's son, President Ferdinand "Bong-Bong" Marcos Jr. was elected by the majority of the Filipinos, with over 31 million votes. The person who came in second place was former Vice President Leni Robredo with over 14 million votes. Before the elections happened, the campaign period made a division in the entire Filipino nation, especially as Robredo's camp allegedly engaged in negative campaigning against Marcos. These claims of negative campaigning caused the campaign of VP Robredo to fall short as the Filipinos were persuaded to choose Marcos as the Philippines' new President.

Contextualizing the Philippine political arena, Hedman (2010) states that public opinion and a candidate's personality are a must as they reflect public trust and popularity. The more positive public opinions towards a candidate are, the more they will vote for them. Hedman adds that public

opinion and popularity in the Philippine elections do not focus on what a candidate can offer (e.g., platforms, credentials, political experience). Instead, they are based more on a candidate's seen personality, family background, and total image from the public angle. This is supported by Wong (2022) who also stated that the Philippine elections are a personality-based popularity contest.

Unfortunately, in Robredo's case, their good public image and popularity became tarnished due to fabricated or inaccurate news information about her since she was seated as the country's Vice President in 2016, according to Tsek.ph, a fact-checking organization in the Philippines (Noriega, 2022). As a result, public opinion towards her became more and more negative; and her popularity among the public, as well as the public's trust, fell. As a clap back, Antonio (2015) said that VP Robredo, especially her supporters called "*Kakampinks*" attempted to throw direct and subtle sneers and insults against the presidential front-runner and now President Marcos, as well as at former President Rodrigo R. Duterte. However, this

only backfired on VP Robredo's campaign as the public's opinion about her became more negative and her popularity declined more.

Araja (2021) notes that, despite the unsuccessful backlash, VP Leni Robredo was confident that she would win again against Marcos as she reiterated her favorite quote since the 2016 Elections which is "The last man standing is a woman". Unluckily, as the 2022 Presidential Election concluded, the results favored former senator Marcos. Because of this, four days after the May 9 Election Day, her camp organized a thanksgiving event where she spoke about the election results and addressed her supporters. Some may consider it as a concession speech, but it is not other than just a post-election speech and/or an address speech.

As said by Haroon et al. (2021), politicians deliver concession speeches after a loss in elections. However, politicians may not also deliver a concession speech, but would instead just mention defeat in other speeches in the post-election period. To be specific, many politicians would just address their supporters, express their gratitude, and would just deliver a speech to tell their experiences and move on (Haroon et al., 2021). In its purest essence, studies about political speeches give insights into how politicians use language to attain particular political objectives. However, not many studies have explored other political speeches that mention defeat aside from concession speeches. As a result, it is essential to know how a politician like VP Leni Robredo would save her face in the eyes of the public, especially her supporters after losing the presidential race.

The current paper is inspired by the Face-Saving Theory of Politeness developed by Brown and Levinson (1987). This was first proposed in 1955 by Erving Goffman, and this proposes that everyone has a "face." "Face" refers to a person's public image that people seek when they communicate with other people (Goffman, 1955). Moreover, Goffman (1955) defines this theory as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact." Additionally, Enache and Militaru (2019) explain that "face" is a social construct that materializes the image of what a person wanted to show to others. Later, Goffman's theory was developed more by Brown

and Levinson in 1978 and was reissued in 1987. Brown and Levinson believe that a human being has a "face" that represents a human's image and self-esteem. For them, a human has two types of "face" which are the positive and the negative faces.

Septiyani (2016) asserts that a positive face is defined as a person's wanted self-public image. Hence, it is a person's want for his/her "face." For example, being admired, liked, respected, and understood by the community or society. On the other hand, a negative face is a person's desire to protect his/her rights like freedom of speech. In other words, it is the desire to not be imposed or bothered by others. Therefore, the positive face refers to a person's desire to be socially accepted, while the negative face refers to a person's territoriality.

Face threat is another notion discussed in this paper. In connection to the two types of faces, Brown and Levinson (1987) said that face can be threatened when (a) people are rejected by society (threat to positive face) and (b) when people are experiencing imposition from others (threat to negative face). In VP Robredo's case, a serious failure like the defeat in the presidential election was a serious threat to her "face" since it threatened and disputed both her positive and negative faces. Also, it affected others' expectations of her and her emotional investment. Unfortunately, Robredo's face threat became her "significant failure" which also resulted in her "face loss". Thus, the researcher intended to analyze her post-election speech in addressing her supporters to find out the face-saving discursive strategies that she utilized in her speech after her defeat in the 2022 presidential race. Considering the relevance of this paper in any election or post-election linguistic phenomena, the researcher was prompted to unravel the discursive strategies employed by Robredo in her political speech.

METHODS

The researchers' utilized a qualitative approach and discourse analytic method in this study. According to Kamalu and Osisanwo (2015), discourse analysis is a systematic method for analyzing connected speech or writing, for extending descriptive linguistics further than the boundaries of a simple sentence. Because this paper analyzed the discursive strategies evident in Leni

Robredo's post-election speech, the use of discourse analysis was deemed significant to unravel linguistic patterns more effectively. The researchers mainly used Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory in analyzing the discourses. Themes were also generated by the researchers to have a representation of the extracted discursive strategies. As Aperoch, Corias, and Ates (2022) mentioned, discourses reflect the patterns of beliefs and ideologies of individuals. Hence, discursive strategies are analyzed thematically to draw meanings.

A 21-minute video clip of former Vice President Leni Robredo's speech during her thanksgiving was analyzed by the researchers in this paper. This video was retrieved from the official Youtube channel of Rappler, a Philippine news outlet. The said video material highlighted her speech on addressing the inadequacy of the votes for her which resulted in her loss in the candidacy, her acceptance of defeat, her fight against fake news and negative campaigning, and her plans post-election.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategy 1: Accepting Defeat

As said by Corcoran (1994), announcing and accepting defeat is the hardest thing a political candidate can do after an election. Additionally, in delivering a speech while accepting defeat, the rhetorical and political challenge for the candidate is to not make it as emotional as possible. Instead, the rhetorical and political challenge is to deliver it and make it look like a chapter of pride and honor of their country's history, to deliver the speech with a brave heart and smile, as well as by making defeat a form of victory.

Throughout VP Leni Robredo's post-election speech, she mentioned her acceptance of defeat in the 2022 presidential race. Shown are the excerpts that indicate her acceptance of defeat.

"... May mga watchers tayo 24/7 na binabantayan ang random manual audit. Pero, habang lumilina ang litrato, kailangan din nating simulang tanggapin na hindi ayon sa mga pangarap natin ang resulta ng eleksiyong ito. Sa ganitong paraan, masisimulan na rin natin na itutok ang sarili sa hinaharap. Kailangang tanggapin natin ang pasya ng mayorya. Nakiusap ako sa inyong makiisa sa akin dito" (...We have watchers 24/7

who monitor the random manual audit. But, as the picture becomes clear, we must also begin to accept that the result of this election is not according to our dreams. In this way, we can also begin to focus ourselves on the future. We have to accept the decision of the majority. I ask you to join me here).

"...Kilalanin at pagsisikap natin na hindi mapunta sa wala ang lahat na naabot natin sabay nang pag-respeto sa tinig ng nakararami" (...Recognize and let us try not to go to waste everything we have achieved while respecting the voice of the majority).

Even though VP Leni Robredo encouraged her supporters to accept her defeat, she also did not directly mention that she, herself, had accepted defeat and did not concede to President Bongbong Marcos. Instead, she only implied that she accepted defeat by using the word *"natin"* (we) when she encouraged her supporters to accept defeat. Also, she did not straightforwardly say that she lost this election, but she did say that they should accept the results of the elections, as shown in the first excerpt.

People's indirectness in speech happens when they do not want to give information that may threaten their face and/or if it is unfavorable to themselves and their audience (Tsuda, 1993). In this case, VP Leni Robredo did not directly and overtly tell her acceptance of defeat as it was seen as an unfavorable move for her since her supporters might get dismayed by her acceptance of defeat. In connection to that, after seeing that the quick count of voting results on the night of the May 9 elections favored President Marcos, most of her supporters did not easily accept their clear defeat. After that, her supporters organized a protest and conducted a rally in front of the COMELEC Headquarters as they believed that there was an election fraud (Santos, 2022). Hence, she did not say directly that she accepted her defeat, and instead, she asked her supporters to accept defeat just like her. If she directly said to her supporters that she has accepted her defeat, that move might disappoint her supporters who continued to fight for her. In addition, she did not directly say that she accepted her defeat as it could boost the confidence of her opponents and antis which could potentially threaten her face.

Aside from that, based on the excerpts shown, she was also being careful of the words she uttered in her speech when she implied her acceptance of

defeat as they might be interpreted by people as a concession speech which was not clearly her aim. This is because conceding to President Marcos would mean that she already surrendered or that she gave up. Hence, this strategy aims to make her audience think that although she accepted defeat, she did not concede, and she would continue to fight. Also, this strategy saved her face with her supporters as it still gives them hope that VP Robredo was fighting with them and would continue to fight with them.

Meanwhile, this saves her face from the public as she overtly encouraged her supporters to respect and just accept the majority's vote, the democracy, and simply the results of the elections as she did. Additionally, accepting her defeat even if indirect, and asking for her supporters to accept defeat might be interpreted by other audiences as a mature and polite move. Therefore, VP Robredo's face would be saved because of her acceptance of defeat. Overall, this strategy shows that VP Robredo accepted defeat to save her face from the public, especially her supporters.

Strategy 2: Throwing Indirect Mudslinging

The term mudslinging is a political term that refers to politicians' strategy to damage their opponent's reputation through substantive criticism, the assassination of the opponent's character, the use of pejorative language, throwing direct or subtle sneer or shade, and insinuating a rumor about the opponent politicians (Haselmayer, 2019). Furthermore, political mudslinging also involves negative imagery. In connection with that, the researchers have noticed hints of mudslinging in VP Robredo's post-election speech. To be specific, VP Robredo used indirect mudslinging by insinuating a rumor or assumption and throwing subtle sneers or shade toward President Bongbong Marcos. Here are the excerpts or parts of her speech that indicates indirect mudslinging.

"Ang totoo, hindi lang sa araw ng halalan matunton ang mga maling pangyayari. Hindi lang sa mga nasirang vote counting machine, o sa mga ulat nang bilihan ng mga boto. Ang pinakamalaking nating laban—kalaban namamayagpag na bago pa lang ang panahon ng kampanya dahil dekadang prinoyekto". (In fact, it is not only on election day that wrong events can be traced. Not just in broken vote counting machines, or in vote -buying reports.

Our biggest opponent overwhelmed us before the campaign period because of decades of projects).

"Matindi at malawak ang makinaryang kayang magpalaganip—magpalaganap nang galit at kasinungalingan. Ninakaw nito ang katotohanan, kaya ninakaw din ang kasaysayan, pati na ang kinabukasan". (The machinery (they use) is powerful and vast enough to spread anger and lies. It stole the truth, so it stole history, as well as the future).

"Pero sa ngayon, maaaring naghari ang makinarya ng kasinungalingan. Pero tayo lang ang makakasagot kung hanggang kailan ito maghahari". (But for now, the machinery of lies may have reigned. But only we can answer how long it will rule).

For politicians, a political attack like mudslinging is a common weapon used to destroy their opponents' image, and it is a rational strategy that molds and impacts public opinion so that they could gain support and influence on the citizens (Schweitzer, 2009). In VP Robredo's speech, she covertly attacked President Bongbong Marcos' camp. In the excerpts, she indirectly accused Marcos Jr. and his camp, as well as the other people who supported his candidacy and campaign as liars, thieves, and masterminds behind our country's academic state regarding historical revisionism. By using the term "*ninakaw*," she was hinting that she directed these attacks on Marcos Jr. because of his family's corruption issues. As a result, it is also the term that VP Robredo's camp call Marcos Jr. Aside from that, VP Robredo was the subject of disinformation since she was elected as the Philippines' Vice President, and this greatly impacted her decline in trust ratings, and popularity among the public (Noriega, 2022). Thus, her accusation and belief toward the opposing camp were not surprising, but just a normal and obvious reaction; and she used it as a strategy to save her face.

This strategy used by VP Leni Robredo saved her face from her supporters by damaging the reputation and the "face" of President Bongbong Marcos. By using accusation, she lessened the burden on her which made her think that she was saving her face. She indirectly said that because of their overwhelming machinery – internet trolls – that spread disinformation and inaccurate historical information, she did not win the elections as they

started using internet trolls to damage her reputation and image ever since she was seated as the Vice President of the Philippines. Moreover, by accusing Marcos Jr.'s camp, she expressed her negative evaluation of their positive and negative faces (Kedves, 2013). For the context, Marcos Jr.'s camp did not accept debate challenges (except SMNI which is owned by Marcos Jr.'s spiritual adviser), did not answer almost every accusation about their camp, and did not accept interviews from foreign and popular yet controversial journalists and reporters as they wanted to keep Marcos Jr.'s positive public image. Aside from that, Marcos Jr.'s camp called out VP Robredo's camp as they thought they were always using negative campaigning to destroy Marcos Jr.'s image. Since VP Robredo's public image was destroyed by internet trolls, and these internet trolls have not bad-mouthed Marcos Jr., she arrived at a negative evaluation in which she accused the as persons who were behind the internet trolls and "liars" as they also kept on denying that they hired internet trolls (Mercado, 2022). Unfortunately, there was no proof that Marcos Jr. was involved with internet trolls, so VP Robredo's indirect shade against Marcos Jr. fell into just pure accusations and rumors. Hence, it is counted as mudslinging because it looked like she was insinuating a false rumor. According to Kedves (2013), since she is trying to save her face by threatening others' faces, she was also expressing her lack of solicitude or care for the other camp's positive face. This was expected as these two are both political opponents.

To be clear, VP Robredo saved her face by throwing indirect mudslinging toward Marcos Jr. Specifically, she was throwing accusations and evoking rumors since she did not have concrete proof that Marcos Jr. had complete control over the internet trolls who spread disinformation and inaccurate historical information which threatened and damaged her face. However, this could backfire on her and might still threaten her face as she was also threatening the face of her main opponent. Furthermore, the face of his supporters would also be threatened as they would feel that it was a personal attack on them since their presidential bet, the person whom they supported and believed in, was being attacked. As a result, they would retaliate which could threaten VP Robredo's face again, as well as her supporters' face.

Strategy 3: Showing Optimism or Positivity

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), optimism or positivity is one of the common and specific strategies in positive politeness strategies. If a person is being optimistic or positive, it means the person is full of hope, cheerfulness, and confidence to face whatever challenges he/she may experience in the present or the future. In VP Robredo's post-election speech, she expressed several times her positivity and optimism. Here are the excerpts that show her optimism or positivity to save face.

"Pero ang natutuhan ko sa ganitong mga panahon na mahihirap, ang paghilom, hindi darating habang nagkukulong o nagmumukmok. Darating ang paghilom kapag sinimulan na muling ituon ang sarili sa ating kapwa" (But what I have learned during these difficult times is that healing does not come while in confinement or in mourning. Healing will come when we begin to refocus ourselves to others).

"Kaya payagan ang sariling lumuha. Pero, paghanda nang pahiran ang luha. Pagpagin ang sarili. Tibayan ang puso dahil may trabaho pa tayo" (So allow your own tears. But, get ready to wipe away the tears. Be yourself. Take heart because we still have work to do).

"Pero ngayon, excited ako. Excited akong ituloy ang pagsisikap na kasama kayo. At sinasabi ko sa inyong lahat, tuloy ang pag-asa. May liwanag pa rin. Sa halalang ito, hindi naman nawala ang liwanag na 'yon. Ang totoo, lalo pa itong tumindig, lalo pang lumawak" (But now, I'm excited. I am excited to continue the effort with you. And I say to all of you, keep on hoping. There is still light. In this election, that light has not disappeared. In fact, it brightened up more, it has expanded more).

"Uulitin ko po, walang nasayang. Hindi tayo nabigo. Masasayang lang ang ating pinagsikapan kung titigil tayo at babalik sa dating kalakaran". (I will repeat, nothing was wasted. We have not failed. Our efforts will only be in vain if we stop and go back to our old ways).

Positive politeness strategies aim to decrease the threat to the speaker's positive face. According to Togatorop (2019), these kinds of strategies are used by people to feel good about themselves. In this case, VP Robredo used a positive politeness strategy by being optimistic about her future activities as well as her supporters' future actions.

By saying emotive sentences and encouragements, she expressed her optimism and positivity after losing to President Marcos Jr. For example, in the excerpt above, she told her supporters that it was fine to weep or to be sad and cry, but they should make their hearts strong as they still had work to do. By saying that, she was indirectly encouraging them to pull themselves together and move on. If that is the case, she was optimistic about her future and her supporters' future. It also implies that no one among her and her supporters ought to give up and surrender to the fight and that they would continue to work on it. In addition, in the next excerpt, by telling her supporters that there was still light, she emphasized what she said beforehand that there was hope. These utterances indicate her positivity and optimism about losing the presidential race. She was implying that even if she lost, there was still hope.

Her positivity or optimistic outlook after her defeat decreases the face threat towards her. By being optimistic and positive, she was implying that it did not matter if she lost the presidential bid. She was completely fine with it as she believed that there was still hope for her and her supporters. By also staying optimistic, her supporters were also encouraged to not lose hope because there was still light as she said. Through that, she saved her face from her supporters because it made them think that it was fine that she lost the presidential bid as she was also completely fine with it. After all, she did not look or sound disappointed and discouraged about the election results. She stayed optimistic which indicates her happiness and contentment despite the negative results of the elections for her camp. This would have lessened had she not said optimistic statements to her supporters; she would be labeled by the public as bitter and resentful. If that were the case, the public would become angrier and more negative towards her which could threaten her face. In addition, some of her supporters might become disappointed in her since being resentful shows bitterness and immaturity. Also, if she uttered pessimistic statements in her post-election speech, people would think that she could not accept her defeat which might lead to a face threat.

Strategy 4: Emphasizing Progress

One unique strategy of minimizing face threat that was found in VP Robredo's speech is the emphasis on her camp's progress throughout the

elections. This could be gleaned from the excerpt shown below.

"Tatandaan niyo lang, nung October 2021, nagsimula tayo, 8% lang ako. Sa loob lang ng ilang buwan nang pagta-trabaho, umabot tayo ng 28%. Gaano kalayo pa kaya ang mararating natin kung hindi tayo bibitaw?" ("Just remember, in October 2021 where we started, I was only 8%. In just a few months of working, we have reached 28%. How far can we go if we will not let go of it?").

By emphasizing her camp's achievement or progress throughout the election, she was indirectly showing her confidence and pride in their progress. According to Ortoleva and Snowberg (2012), confidence in politics is a common phenomenon that refers to a politician's thinking that some of his or her attributes like his or her performance are better than what everyone thinks it actually is. Hence, it results in a sense of pride. It is undeniably impressive that despite the overwhelming machinery that involved internet trolls who spread inaccurate information about her, she continued to rise in polls and surveys ever since she announced her candidacy. Hence, it is worth mentioning again that she reiterated her favorite quote which is *"The last man standing is a woman"* when she participated in a 2022 debate with other presidential aspirants. This justifies that she had the confidence to win. Although her face was threatened seriously when the partial results came out and experienced great face loss after seeing Marcos Jr.'s clear victory, by emphasizing her progress she thought that she could save her face by telling everyone how impressive her progress was. This saved her face from her supporters and the public. When she showed them her confidence, her opponents' camps got threatened. When she showed them that she had not lost her confidence despite her loss in the elections, and if she showed them that the face loss that she experienced did nothing to her emotionally, she saved her face.

Moreover, by emphasizing her camp's progress and by laying down her confidence that she would continually regain her popularity and positive public opinion, she was also increasing her supporter's morale which helped them save their face. Her supporters were the ones who contributed a lot to her campaign, and they were also the ones who got extremely disappointed when the partial results came out. To save their face, they needed

something to hold on and by VP Robredo emphasizing their progress and achievement, their faces could be saved. It is because, through showcasing their achievement and progress, they could see that they really did impact VP Robredo's campaign and helped her to rise. This also shows that VP Robredo cared for her supporters because she was helping them to regain their morale and save their faces.

Strategy 5: Avoiding Mentioning the Opponents' Names

As said by Tsuda (1993), when people are in a face-threatening situation, they tend to think and decide whether or not they should say what they wanted to say or execute what they want to do. In connection to that, throughout VP Robredo's speech, she did not mention any of her opponents' names, especially Marcos Jr.'s name in spite of throwing indirect mudslinging at him. Avoiding uttering her opponents' names actually saved her face from her supporters, her opponents' supporters, and the general public. In connection to her indirect mudslinging, she did not directly accuse his main opponent, President Marcos and his camp, by calling their names or uttering their names. Instead, she was just accusing "someone" to be a liar, thief, and mastermind of historical revisionism. However, the public, especially her supporters generally knew who she was pertaining to because they knew the context behind it, and she used the keyword that everyone could understand which was "*ninakaw*." Since they already knew who she was referring to, there was no need to utter her opponents' names.

It is also because dropping the names of her opponents, especially Marcos Jr., during her speech could backfire to and threaten her face as name-dropping could be interpreted by her audience as bitterness, immaturity, unprofessionalism, and disrespectfulness. Since she did not have any concrete evidence that Marcos Jr. or his supporters were behind the internet trolling, she made sure to carefully choose the words she uttered and ensured that she did not say anyone's name as it could damage her characterization in the public or the public's outlook of her. Lastly, this also secured her from not losing her face again since Marcos Jr. had a lot of supporters who would clearly react negatively if she dropped a name.

CONCLUSION

In this analysis, the researchers examined VP Leni Robredo's post-election speech delivered four days after losing the 2022 Presidential Elections. In her 21-minute post-election speech, she addressed her supporters, announced her future activities and plans, and spoke of hope and encouragement. Inspired by Brown and Levinson's Face-Saving Theory of Politeness (1987), the current paper focused on examining and finding out the face-saving discursive strategies that she used in her speech. The analysis revealed that VP Leni Robredo utilized five face-saving discursive strategies.

The first is accepting defeat. To be clear, VP Leni Robredo did not concede to President Marcos Jr. Instead, she only accepted her defeat, but she did not mention it directly. She only indirectly said that she accepted her defeat when she also encouraged her supporters to accept the results of the elections just like her. Therefore, to save her face, she did not concede, but instead, she just accepted her defeat as she wanted to respect the decision of the majority.

The second strategy that was found is throwing indirect mudslinging. To save her face, VP Leni Robredo threw indirect mudslinging, particularly she indirectly insinuated a rumor and an accusation that President Marcos Jr. was the reason behind her defeat in the 2022 presidential election since he used overwhelming machinery that spread lies and disinformation against her ever since she served as the Vice President of the Philippines. Therefore, VP Leni Robredo utilized throwing indirect mudslinging to make her supporters and audience think that she did not win the presidential election because of President Marcos Jr.'s machinery (internet trolls). However, this could backfire to her; and it would threaten her face more since President Marcos Jr.'s supporters would clearly react to it even though her mudslinging, particularly the accusation was indirect.

Moreover, the third strategy is showing optimism or positivity. To save her face, VP Leni Robredo showed optimism or positivity throughout her speech. She gave her supporters a lot of encouraging words and sentences that signified her optimism or positivity despite losing the elections. Being optimistic or positive after the face threat and/or face loss means utilizing a positive politeness strategy. This shows that VP Leni Robredo wanted to minimize the face threat and the

serious emotional impact of face loss by making herself feel good and hopeful, and she did not even think she lost the elections. This also means that she was motivated to continue the fight and that she wanted her supporters to do the same. Hence, VP Leni Robredo's optimism or positivism is a strategy to save her face after her defeat in the elections because it could also threaten her opponents' faces.

Another strategy that was found is emphasizing progress. When delivering her speech, she emphasized the progress that her camp made throughout the election period to save her face. She uttered their progress by stating survey results. She sounded proud of their progress which is why she also showed confidence in continuing the fight. When she emphasized their progress, she was also showing her confidence which threatened the face of her opponents, and in that way, she saved her face from the face threat that her opponents gave her.

The last strategy found is avoiding telling the opponents' names. Throughout her speech, she avoided naming her opponents, especially when using strategy 2 which is throwing indirect mudslinging. She did not mention President Marcos Jr. to save her face as people might view her as unprofessional, bitter, disrespectful, and immature. Also, since she did not have concrete evidence that could prove her accusations against President Marcos Jr., she ensured to be careful and to avoid mentioning his name so that she would not involve herself in trouble that could threaten her face again because, if she did, President Marcos Jr.'s supporters would clearly negatively react against her. Therefore, VP Leni Robredo used the strategy of avoiding telling her opponents' names so that her opponents and their camps would not react to her speech too negatively which cannot save her face. Overall, the researchers could think that politicians like VP Leni Robredo used different discursive strategies to save their faces after experiencing face threats and face loss.

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