

Jaybee G. Coronel, 2019

Volume 5 Issue 1, pp. 186-204

Date of Publication: 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019

DOI-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2019.51.186204>

This paper can be cited as: Coronel, J. G., (2019). *The Discourse of Governance in the Linguistic Landscape of Quezon City Government*. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(1), 186-204.

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## **THE DISCOURSE OF GOVERNANCE IN THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF QUEZON CITY GOVERNMENT**

**Jaybee G. Coronel**

*Philippine House of Representatives, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City,  
Philippines*

[jaybee\\_coronel@yahoo.com](mailto:jaybee_coronel@yahoo.com)

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### **Abstract**

*The study aims to analyze the discourse of governance in the tarpaulins and posters of the Quezon City government, which were posted and distributed on the identified public spaces. The researcher used the three-dimensional model (description, interpretation, and evaluation) of Critical Discourse Analysis designed by Norman Fairclough as a method for document analysis. The Rights-Based Approach in Governance formulated by the National College of Public Administration of the University of the Philippines-Diliman was used as a theoretical guide in analyzing the discourse of governance. It concludes that (1) human rights has influence in responding to the needs of the constituents and governance. (2) Since the English language is being used in most of the transactions and communications of the government, the city government used Filipino language and Taglish (Tagalog and English) to simplify and explain the importance and contents of newly enacted policies and created programs. (3) The issued Executive Order No. 335 on August 25, 1988 pursuant to Article XIV, Section VI in the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines, that intensifies the use of Filipino language in official transactions and communications in government offices was not following by government agencies. Instead, English language is being used in all the documents, while the language for*

*face-to-face communication or materials distributing to the mass is Filipino. And lastly (4), language can create and close the gap between the government and its citizens.*

## **Keywords**

Language, Linguistic Landscape, Discourse, Governance, Human Rights

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## **1. Introduction**

Quezon City is one of the largest and most populated cities in the Philippines. Yet, the city is one of the most developed and competitive cities in the aspects of economic dynamism, technology, infrastructure, environment, government efficiency, resiliency, and tourism according to the Cities and Municipalities Competitiveness Index (2018). It has been a continuing challenge to the city government in retaining its stable economy while providing quality, efficient, effective and responsive services to its citizen.

How do we define governance? And do all nations, localities and communities have the same interpretation of this term and practice it on the right way? There are international and local books currently available in the Philippines, associate it with economic, political and administrative authority, management of the country's affairs at all levels and the ability of the government to generate the trust of the people to encourage participation towards a national development. Fostering participation and good relationship with the people are seen as good factors in practicing good governance. Good governance follows when the officials are transparent, accountable, responsive and efficient to their actions and ensure that policies uphold common good (Brillantes, 2002). There are many explanations of governance, but this study focused on the definition provided by the Rights Based Approach of Governance as basis in analyzing the discourse of governance in the city. According to Rights Based Approach (2006), governance means that the government is not only the agency that is expected to formulate policies and generate funds to provide quality services, but the converged efforts of other groups such as the government agencies, civil societies, private sectors, other stakeholders and the people's participation to achieve the common goal. In this practice of governance, the government recognizes the importance of human rights in meeting the needs of its people.

To attain its goals, public materials in public spaces are used not only to inform, to discipline but to persuade and encourage citizens to partake and to gain public trust. These materials are also called Linguistic landscape that can be seen and displayed outside our homes, shops, roads and markets. Public materials are posters, tarpaulins, notices, orders, newspapers,

magazines, books that use language. However, same studies also show that including the messages we hear from the radios, read in the social media and even the images that portray meanings are also considered Linguistic Landscape (Shohamy & Durker, 2009).

This research studied the posters and tarpaulins used and made by the city government for its advocacies and posted in public areas such as the Quezon Memorial Park, Quezon City Hall, Commonwealth Market and two (2) selected barangay halls; the Barangay Commonwealth and Barangay Batasan Hills (these barangays were chosen based on its population). Apart from the use of social media, these materials were also used as a medium of the government for the provision of information dissemination and encouragement of cooperation of the citizens. It also studied the components (headline, signature line and slogan.) of the texts of the collected materials from 2010-2018. A total of 150 posters and tarpaulins of city government were chosen and collected. The years were based on the term of the current mayor of the city. The researcher wants to study how the city government works based on its mandate and how it values human rights through language in performing its responsibility to the citizens.

## **2. The Three Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis as the Method for Analysis**

The study used the three dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as method in analyzing the contents of the materials being collected. Prior to the discussion about CDA as methodology it is important to discuss the meaning of CDA in this study. It is also important to clarify the concepts and terms which are the central role in CDA such as text, discourse and context. There are researchers used this theory to study the texts that manifest ideology, power, dominance, prejudice and representation. Erstwhile, this study used it as method for representation and define governance based on the public materials collected.

The term *text* explained by Norman Fairclough (2001) as the product of the process of text production. What does text production means? He used the term discourse to refer the whole process of social interaction of which a text is part of it. This process also the process of interpretation. In studying the discourse it is important to be knowledgeable to the discourse practices of the actors who are creating/ writing the contents and how these materials are being distributed or posted. In addition, the social conditions of interpretation and production should also be considered in analysis. Fairclough further explained that apart from textual, discourse and

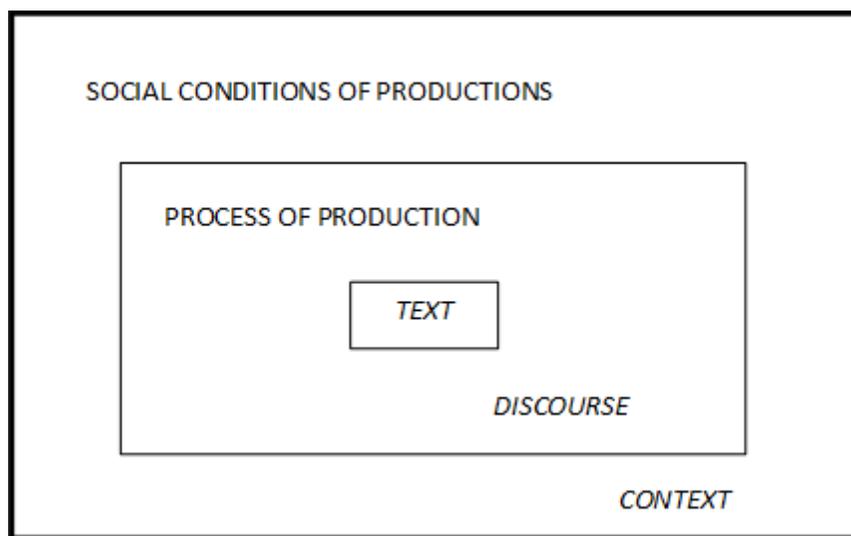
contextual analysis, one is not committing oneself not just to analyze these separately but to analyze the relationship between texts, processes and other social conditions.

Corresponding to these dimensions of discourse, Fairclough (2001) distinguished three (3) stages of critical discourse analysis:

Description is the stage wherein the researcher looks into the formal properties of texts (language used, words, mode utterances, grammar and structure)

Interpretation describes the relationship between text and interaction (text as a product of a process of production and as a resource of interpretation)

Lastly, Explanation is concerned with the relationship between interpretation and social context.



**Figure 1:** *The Three Dimensional Model of CDA (Fairclough, 2001)*

## 2.1 Description

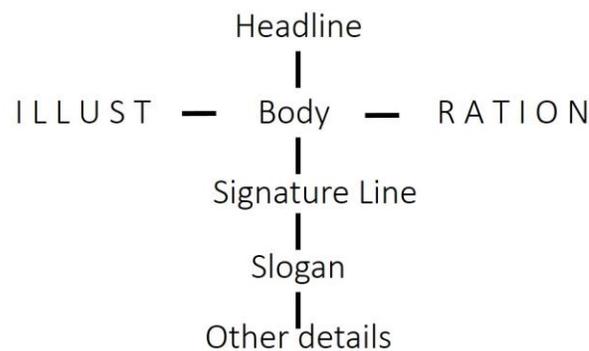
In description, the researcher considered the following guides by Norman Fairclough

### A. Vocabulary

- Experiential
  - What words which are ideologically contested?
  - What words are used to describe everyday life or social issues
  - Is there rewording or overwording?
- Relational
  - What words are being used to relate and connect to people?
  - Are there markedly formal or informal words?
  - What words are used to encourage participation?

- Expressive
  - What are the metaphors used?
- B. Grammar
  - The researcher also looked into the experiential grammatical features such as the organization of the words in the sentence. The relational grammatical features considered through looking the pronouns used to relate and connect with people and the modes (declarative, questions and imperative) of the sentences.
- C. Textual structure
  - How does the creator/ actor/ writer of the text writes the whole text?

## 2.2



**Figure 2:** Components of commercial print advertisement (Toolan, 1988)

Analyzed the components of the posters and tarpaulins based on the model of Michael Toolan. However the study focused only on the headline, signature line and slogan.

### Interpretation

In studying the relationship of texts and discourse practices of the actors/creators of the materials, the researcher also integrated the member's resources (MR) of the creators or the ideas they have in their heads and draw upon when they produce or interpret the texts.

### 2.3 Explanation

In this stage, it analyses the relationship of discourse practices and context and how sociocultural practice and social condition affect the discourse. The researcher will search and find the absences in the texts and contradictions.

The following questions will be answered on the next chapters relative to the analysis in Explanation stage:

- What are the issues and rights that have been prioritized by the local government?
- What is/are the social condition/s of Quezon City that affect/s its interpretation of governance?

- How social, cultural and political aspects affect governance? Are there changes in the contents of materials after the election for new national government officials?

### 3. Rights Based Approach in Governance

Amidst rapid changes in the focus and priorities of the government, one thing that remained constant- the people as the center and main objective of the development and priorities of the bureaucracy. Since people is the center of the development, they have to be proactive and participate in all government process from planning to programming, from project development to implementation through monitoring and evaluation. This will ensure that their needs will be addressed and realized.

The Rights-Based Approach (2006) in governance is based on the UN Declaration on the Right to Development. It helps to accelerate the realization of people's fundamental rights. This approach converge the two fundamental directional processes which are the human rights and development. It also serves as a technique in applying human rights standards as criteria in development as a harmonious confluence of socio-economic, political and cultural processes. It aims for the improvement of life of individuals through just and equal distribution of positive results and benefits.

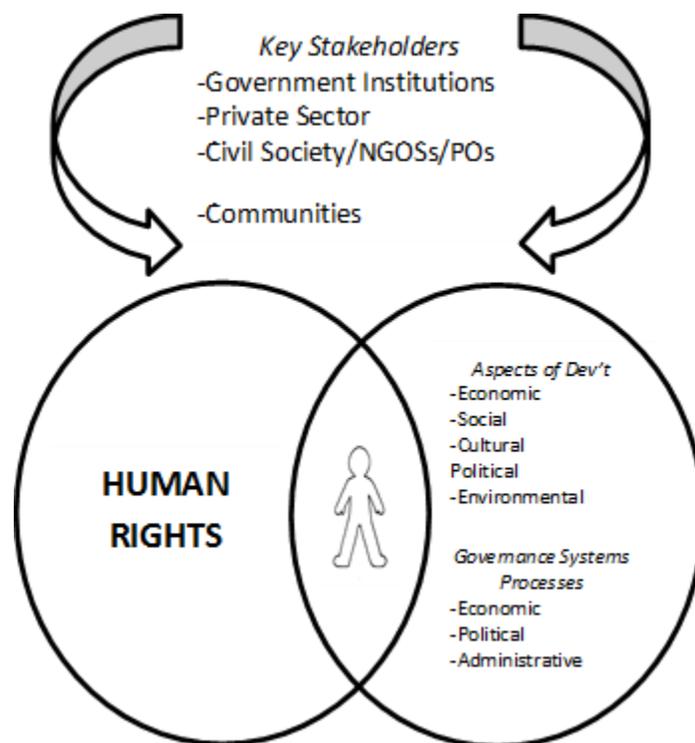


Figure 3: The Rights-Based Approach Framework in Development and Governance (2006)

How should the government act on the needs of the people? The government should work on Economic Governance, Political Governance and Administrative Governance. Economic Governance involves decision making processes that affect the city's or country's economic activities and its relationship with other economics, such as macroeconomic and microeconomic policy formulation, legal institution and regulatory bodies and corporate governance, institutional reform and private sector development. Political Governance is the process of decision making to formulate policy and legislation, such as the political processes including election administration, human rights, legal and judicial reform and strengthening of non-governmental organizations and community groups. Administrative governance refers to the systems and processes of policy implementation in such areas as public sector restructuring, public-private sector partnerships in service delivery, privatization, outsourcing and contracting procedures, management information systems and decentralization of public services and the process of budget preparations, execution and monitoring.

#### **4. The City Government of Quezon City**

In pursuit of the mandate of the local government to the provision of public service, it responds to the needs of the people through its 30 departments and offices, 15 task forces, 2 city hospitals, 1 university, 2 executive-level committees and several units dedicated on specific concerns and spearhead various projects and programs that need the support and participation of the citizens ("City Departments and Offices"). These departments are divided into three groups based on its directives;

##### **4.1 Competing on Efficiencies- Departments related to Increasing Efficiencies of the Bureaucracy and Governance**

- Office of the City Administrator;
- Office of the Secretary to the Mayor;
- Communications Coordination Center;
- City Treasurer's Office;
- City Assessor's Office;
- Radio Communications Service Office;
- City Personnel department;
- Public Affairs and Information Services Office;
- Liquor Licensing and Regulatory Board;
- Office of the City Attorney;

- Gender and Development Resource and Coordinating Office;
- City General Services Office;
- QC Information Technology Development Office;
- Business Permits and Licensing Office;
- Barangay Operations Center;
- Board of Assessment Appeals;
- Task Force on Amusement Tax;
- Administrative Management Office; and
- City Accounting Department.

The posters and tarpaulins of these departments mostly inform the public about the step by step procedures, specific requirements, reminders regarding the negative effects of trusting fixers, directions, using technological advancements through internet and mobile phones in paying taxes and presented shorter processing of the documents to avoid disruptions and delays.

#### **4.2. Building Up the City- Departments that transform the City's surrounds into becoming more Cost-Efficient Business Location, Livable Residences and Pleasurable Urban Center**

- Department of the Building Official;
- Parks Development and Administration Department;
- Market Development and Administration Department;
- Quezon City Fire Station;
- Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department;
- Engineering Department;
- Department of Public Order and Safety
- Cultural and Tourism Affairs Office;
- City Planning and Development Office;
- Task Force for the Control, Prevention and Removal of Illegal Structures and Squatting; and
- Subdivision Administration Unit.

The departments/offices that transform the city into being business friendly, safe and orderly, encourage the citizens through posters and tarpaulins to follow rules, practice discipline, participate on the advocacy and campaigns of the city, provide reminders to avoid accidents and promote solidarity.

#### **4.3 Alleviating Poverty- Departments Related to Poverty Alleviation Programs of the City Government**

- Quezon City General Hospital;

- Novaliches District Hospital;
- Social Services Development Department;
- Sikap Buhay Entrepreneurship and Cooperatives Office;
- Housing and Community and Resettlement Department;
- Office for Senior Citizens Affairs;
- Scholarship and Youth Development Program;
- Quezon City Polytechnic University;
- Quezon City Public Library;
- People's Law Enforcement Board;
- Novaliches District Center;
- Public Employment Service Office;
- QC Housing and Urban Renewal Authority;
- City Health Department
- City Veterinary Department;
- Division of City Schools-QC;
- Community Relations Office; and
- City Civil Registry Department

These departments are mandated to create programs and projects in alleviating poverty and to disseminate information regarding the newly enacted ordinances concerning the welfare of an identified sector and its citizens. Most of the posters and tarpaulins posted were focused on the people who needs more health at income related programs. For the health poor, the city health department calls the attention of the citizens through giving preventive, curative and health care information and promotional campaigns about the benefits of having healthy diet, exercise such as joining zumba classes, sports and camaraderie among youth to avoid smoking and using substance/drug abuse and other bad vices. The city also has kick-off activities for each sectors such as children, women, Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) and senior citizen by informing their rights through programs and projects. There were tarpaulins posted, that gave preventive information against sexual abuse for women, children and LGBT groups and the sanctions for the offenders or perpetrators.

The posters and tarpaulins of the departments/offices that implement the local government's entrepreneurship and micro-finance program, manifest partnership and collaboration with private sectors and other non-government organizations in providing the livelihood skills training, business and entrepreneurial skills and workshops as well as creating a

marketing platform for start-ups in the form of mounting trade shows and assistance for the micro-entrepreneurs in accessing entry to international and local trade fairs.

## **5. The Language of the Local Government**

In general, the actors/writers that create the contents of these materials use Filipino and English languages. Filipino and English languages are both the official language of the Philippines as designated in Article XIV Section 7 of the 1987 Constitution. However, most of the government output, communications, letters and memoranda are written in English. Filipino language and Taglish (mixed Filipino and English in a sentence) are being used in the materials read by the public. Majority of the materials used verbs that describes the works of government which are always “in action”.

The creators used negative adjectives in describing fixers, drugs and garbage to discourage the citizens in using drugs, asking fixers a help for faster processing of documents and littering on public areas.

In encouraging the people’s participation, the government used pronouns like “tayo” (us/we), “ikaw” (you) to speak to its readers and remind them about their responsibility as citizens to join with the government in improving the quality of public services. Apart from pronouns, they also used communal words such as family, community, “bayan” (country/people) to describe the need of collective action.



The departments/offices express their responsiveness to the concerns of the constituents through these. The local government also wants the citizens feel that the government is trustworthy and reliable by giving unfailing services. How do these posters and tarpaulins show efficiency and responsiveness? These materials describe the kind of government the Quezon City has. They disseminate information especially for the consumers because most of them experienced fraud in buying goods even in online. They give complete details and preventive steps to avoid being a victim of fraud. According to the news released by the Philippine Star ("Fraud lifts economic crimes, 2018) at the first quarter of 2018 many fraud cases in businesses nearly doubled in the last two years. These cases affect not only the consumers but the affected business owners as well.

Health is one of the major concerns of the city due to its large population. The continuing increment of its population increases the cases of various diseases and illnesses. The kind of environment due to increasing number of informal settlers is also one of the factors. The government visits congested areas and inform citizens about the possible disease outbreak, preventive care, health programs and projects of the government and other national agencies.

There are posters that convey a faster, lenient processing and simpler steps in submitting applications for birth certificate, marriage contracts, business permit etc. to make it more understandable for the citizens. These posters also show how populated the city is, which processes many applications and documents every day. The city is currently using manual system but still in process of digitization. This is one of the reasons why many of them were victim of fixers. Fixers are asking larger amount than the processing fees inquired by the city government.

## **6.2 Forging People's Participation**

The posters and tarpaulins not only inform the people but encourage them to participate such as joining campaigns, public consultations, evaluating projects and programs of the government.

## **6.3 Protecting Marginalized Sectors**

Most of the posters and tarpaulins empower women through educating them about the instances that may happen to their daily lives particularly when they are outside their homes such as catcalling, sexual harassment, abuse which are not normal and need to be reported.

The local government also describes that children should live in a kind of society wherein they are safe, drug free and being nurtured. The city is campaigning a child-friendly city and asking for the support of the youth in all the actions of the government concerning their rights.

#### 6.4 Maintaining Order, Discipline, and Protecting People

Posters and tarpaulins used terms such as “bawal” (don’t), No, alisin (remove) as giving reminders and discipline especially the motorists. Moreover, these materials included the regulations, the rules, orders, do’s and don’ts, sanctions/ consequences if they disobey the rules.

### 7. Format of the posters and tarpaulins



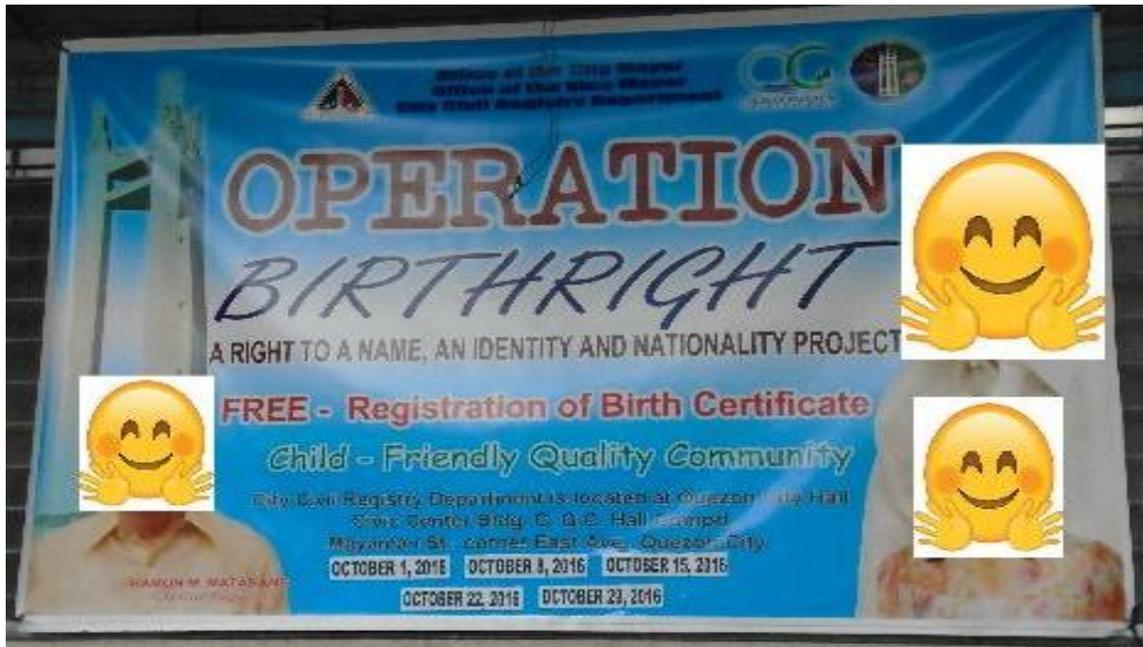
*Figure 6: Reduce all the trash you threw:  
Let's Segregate!*



*Figure 7: No Littering in Quezon City*

Most of the posters and tarpaulins used the city’s seal and includes the title of ordinance to explain to the readers that the regulations stated on the poster/tarpaulin is mandated by the recently enacted or amended law. Apart from these, the names of offices responsible in executing

the policies are also included along with the partner national agencies and non-government organizations.



**Figure 8:** *Sample Format of the Tarpaulin*

Readers will also notice the initials of the officials and heads of the departments, sometimes with their images. Colors were chosen based on the preferred colors of the officials to inform the readers/citizens that the projects/reminders are spearheaded by the officials and department heads. Apart from the initials and images, the seals/logos of the offices of these officials were also visible to other materials.

The seals/logos along with the name of city and ordinances are usually placed at the top or bottom of the materials. The title of the project and its slogan are both read in the middle of the posters or tarpaulins. Other information are written under the name of project and slogan while photos are usually put at the sides.

## **8. Factors that Affect the Contents of the Materials or the Socio-Cultural Conditions**

The contents of these materials were based on the needs and rights of the citizens. However, the city government prioritized certain needs and rights based on the following:

1. Population- Many materials are written about women and children because the city has 2.94 million of people on the 2015 census of population held by the Philippine Statistics Authority (NCR Census 2015), and its population mostly children and youth and women. However, the two sectors are not only considered as marginalized sectors. The city also given the LGBT groups a priority that also empowers their group. There are also senior citizens and person's with disability who need attention because they have also needs that has to be addressed;
2. Health status- The population also affects the health status of the citizens, due to increasing number of informal settlers living near the creeks, rivers and roads that cause flooding and fire. Illnesses easily outbreak in the communities particularly to huge barangays. Children were the first one who get affected during disasters and also suffered from diseases due to lack of vaccines and medicines.
3. Development- the city is one of the improving cities but based on its materials collated, it still on the process of developing its systems unlike other cities. Factors that caused its tedious implementation of digitization are; it has a lot of clients every day, lots of paper, need a filing system and need more spaces to accommodate all the clients;
4. Public safety- The city government also works and promotes safety of motorists and coordinates with Metro Manila Development Authority in transport and traffic management. The city also campaigns for anti-drug use for public safety, anti-crime and healthy lifestyle. It also provides information to the public on what they should do when earthquakes and sudden rain occurs that cause flooding. From evacuation, provision of relief goods and the signal when they need to get back to their homes or relocation areas in case they lost their properties.
5. Poverty- As the population increases it challenges the government on how it will translate its economic stability to its constituents. Poverty has also an effect to the health of the people specially the marginalized sectors. The government partnered with private sectors for employment and trade fairs; and
6. Political interest- the officials based their programs and projects on the advocacy and priority of the national government. The local government altered and aligned their projects from 2016 up to present such as giving priority to issues that tackle drug abuse, security and safety;

## **9. The Linguistic Landscape helps the City Government to Attain its Goals**

These materials comprise the information for the citizen to be cognizant about the government services. Mostly government documents were written in English particularly the enacted ordinances. Majority of the citizens do not have much grasp in reading English documents. These citizens were from the poor sector and Quezon City is considered as one of the cities in National Capital Region which has a large number of poor families. The city is using these materials because not all citizens are utilizing smartphones for updates posted by the administrator of Facebook page.

In adherence to transparency and accountability, the city government used Taglish or Filipino language in these posters and ensure that words being used helped to persuade the readers to follow the rules and participate. Apparently, the campaign of one billion rising participated by thousands of women around Quezon City, more than 2000 children who do not have yet birth certificates were registered, long queue in paying taxes were reduced and tedious processing of documents are no longer the top predicament in the city hall. Nevertheless, there are still departments that need to improve their services and information dissemination especially the social services. There were citizens who are not fully informed about the process of reporting such as abuse among women and children and even their rights.

Meanwhile, other departments such as the QC Department of Public Order and Safety improved its services in protecting its citizens and reducing casualties during flood and earthquakes because of proper information dissemination, road mapping and peacefully evacuated the citizens living in dangerous areas.

## **10. How Language Conveys the Importance of Human Rights in Governance**

According to M.A.K Halliday in his study *Explorations of function of Language* (1973), the language is used for various purposes in the society and this study defines governance in the context of the materials used by the city government such as the use of language for regulatory and representational (providing information). . The analysis is based on the three-dimensional model of Norman Fairclough (2001)- language text discourse practice and socio-cultural conditions. The result of the analysis based on the three dimensional of the materials were already discussed in preceding parts of this paper.

Governance in these texts were described as practicing good governance through providing efficient and effective services and equal distribution to all citizens in terms of the administrative governance. Citizens were given preventive information to avoid the outbreak of illnesses and elude abuse, exploitations and violence for women and children. In economic governance, the government should focus on improving governance in all economic activities such as providing programs for local entrepreneurs, creating micro-financing policies and services, regulatory services and efficient services in paying taxes and foster partnership with private sectors. In political governance, the government should formulate policies that will benefit the marginalized sectors, encouraging participation during the process of legislation and strengthening the non-government organizations and community groups as they help the government to understand the situation of the people or communities they represent.

## **11. Conclusion**

Majority of the tarpaulins and posters used the terms related to human rights and needs such as the birth certificate, employment and health services. In empowering the marginal sectors, the term laban (fight) is the most common used word especially when they want to encourage these sectors to participate to all the government activities that empower them. Most of the materials focused on the welfare of the women and children. The Critical Discourse Analysis method helped the researcher to analyze the posters and tarpaulins and focused only on the texts. Colors and images used in analyzing the materials are not included.

Human rights and needs are not only reflected on the materials but the social problem were also seen, wherein most of the Filipino citizens tend not to participate with the government because they do not understand the government documents such as the ordinances posted on the bulletin boards, the flow charts, mandates of the departments and the requirements needed. One of the reason is the language used because the government used English language in all the transactions and communications. Majority of the Filipino particularly the marginalized sectors understand Filipino language. However, the government worked to translate and simplified the information they need through primers such as the recently passed ordinances and distributed to congested areas. There are also materials that were written in Filipino to encourage the participation of the people in all the development process. The government used these materials as medium to communicate and expressed that the government is trustworthy. The materials reflect that the local government values human rights particularly in responding the needs of the

constituents for their own development as human being. Lastly, language can create and close the gap between the government and citizens but it is best to use this language to continually encourage the people for participation, provide them enough information to understand their rights and the ordinances that were passed are for their own benefit. Lack of understanding about human rights and laws, citizens will become more credulous and easily fall to the bait of the selfless opportunists.

The study is only limited to the three (3) terms of the current Mayor of the city, perhaps the comparison of the former Mayor and current will also help to study the different meaning of governance of the two (2) different mayors. It is also suggested to study meaning of governance in other government offices to explain how these offices do their responsibilities to the people through language. Apart from it, other linguistic landscape materials can be added or study such as the newsletters, pamphlets and flyers.

The language has always introduced new meaning and definitions like governance based on the understanding and actual work of the leaders and perspective of the people. Using language which is easily understood by the people will let them feel that they are part of the governance and can contribute for the betterment of their own country.

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