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The Influence of Political Rhetoric in Shaping National Identity: A Study of Nationalism in 20th Century Literature

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ABSTRACT:

Political rhetoric has played a decisive role in shaping national identity throughout the twentieth century, particularly within literary texts that reflect and reinterpret socio-political realities. This study examines how political rhetoric influences the construction of national identity in twentieth-century literature, with a particular focus on nationalist discourse embedded within narrative structures, thematic patterns, and linguistic strategies. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research integrates qualitative textual and critical discourse analysis with quantitative content analysis and computational techniques, including sentiment analysis and topic modeling. The findings reveal that literary texts consistently incorporate political rhetorical devices—such as euphemism, national glorification, and othering—to reinforce, negotiate, or challenge dominant nationalist ideologies. Quantitative results demonstrate recurrent ideological markers and thematic concentrations related to patriotism, collective memory, and postcolonial anxiety, while qualitative analysis highlights how narrative voice and rhetorical framing shape readers' perceptions of national belonging. The study further illustrates that national identity in literature is not monolithic but fluid, often oscillating between unified, fragmented, and hybrid representations across historical periods. By combining traditional literary criticism with digital humanities methodologies, this research provides a comprehensive framework for understanding literature as a powerful medium through which political rhetoric constructs and disseminates national identity. The findings contribute to scholarship on nationalism, rhetoric, and literary studies by offering empirically grounded insights into the ideological functions of twentieth-century literary narratives.

KEYWORDS:

Political Rhetoric, National Identity, Nationalism, Twentieth-Century Literature, Discourse Analysis, Literary Nationalism, Digital Humanities

INTRODUCTION

The interdependence between political speech and national identity being developed is one of the most important aspects of the socio-political speech and is obvious in the writings of the 20th century. As this was the epoch of such huge disruptions of the world, the rhetoric strategies became more eminent to support, deceit or re-evaluate the national self images, the collective ones. The language of political participants is intentional (and thus extremely vulnerable to affecting popular opinion and national policy) which can be evidenced through explicit speech speeches on a particular policy, as well as more sinister literary discourse (White, 2023). The active interaction demonstrates that political language can be applied as a means of interacting since it is not just a communicative tool but also a power tool (Al-Azzawi and Abbass, 2024). One of the most vivid examples of such phenomena is the presidential campaigns because the leaders provide the opinions which are likely to alter the national character and social values to a significant degree (Hamed & Alqurashi, 2025). This rhetorical effect goes beyond winning elections because it is seen in the way national character which is usually a creation of the rhetoric process is reflected and reproduced in literature (Leerssen, 2000). Because of such overwhelming effect, the matter of literary praxis per se must be approached as a manifestation of national ideas, which tend to either reinforce or refute the assumptions of the time (Leerssen, 2000). The question will cover how political speech and its use of exclusionary characterisations of the Other influence and can often determine the literature about national identity (Barkhoff and Leerssen, 2021). The establishment or re-establishment of literary canons is generally anchored on how works of an author contribute to the establishment of a sufficient Philippine national identity (Casanova, 2017). It is a process never-ending that explains why Philippine narrative literature that most significantly affects the discourse of national identity but has little to no voice is in dire need of a unified national philosophy (Casanova, 2017). This conceptual gap means that such a literature analysis is required to bring together both cultural and communication theories to present bias-free constructs to explain how societal values and cultural conditions are enlightened in the narrative (Casanova, 2017). In this paper, the rhetorical and discourse analysis is applied to gain insight into the impact of the political rhetoric on national identity on the literature of the 20th century. The focus is put on the way that narrative voice and conscious application of linguistic choices contribute to this confusing interaction (Hiluano and Jajalla, 2025; Mangad et al., 2024; Retome, 2025). In addition, the paper will also discuss the existence of narrative devices used by authors to support or undermine the existing political ideologies in order to influence the perception of identity and belonging of the masses to a specific country (Casanova, 2017). This is accomplished through analyzing how literary works utilize rhetorical instruments, such as the proper use of euphemisms and word appeals, in guiding readers to certain ways of comprehending national ideals and a feeling of themselves as a community (Chua et al., 2025; Eustaquio, 2023). In particular, the role of the political discourse, especially the euphemistic language, has an influence on the depiction of the national identity within the Philippine literature as the semantic, social and cultural functions in the narrative are performed differentially (Chua et al., 2025). This method will entail a close analysis of the impact that legacies of colonialism have had on Philippine literature in a critical manner to produce an ethnically diverse literature that reflects aspects of Europe, North America, and Asia (Acosto et al., 2023). All these effects can be perceived differently when applied to the Philippine literature, which can be considered to provide an understanding of how colonial relations influenced the previous history of the nation and exercised traditions (Acosto et al., 2023; Casanova, 2017). It is in this historical context that we would also critically examine the application of the cultural studies and the postcolonial theory in exploring how the modern Filipino identity continues to negotiate these paradoxes and how it is very shaky yet resilient in so doing (Eslit, 2025). Consequently, the language and narrative tools used by the Filipino writers of the 20th century

to justify or deny the official political communication, thus, playing an active role in the creation of the national identity, will be discussed below (Panday et al., 2025; Rouabhia, 2024). This paper especially singles out the short stories owing to their ability to convey strong messages about how nations perceive themselves, and the fact that they were able to advance a specific theme in a very focused way (Acosto et al., 2023). In fact, the narratives tend to describe a combination of storytelling techniques, application of various narrative tones, cases, and planes that produce a multiple-layered description of the national identity. The stories also contain a lot of singulative, repetitive, and iterative time elements (Acosto et al., 2023). The fact that foreign critics may not interpret Filipino literature (especially literary work in the English language) in the same manner as local readers may demonstrate the importance of cross-cultural views in local authenticity of Philippine literature and its existence in the global arena (-, 2024). This difference of interpretation underscores the necessity of crafting strong analytical models that can be based on the local cultures in examining the internalized nationalistic emotions. This would entail close reading of few texts that will be chosen to determine common themes, symbolism representations and rhetorical strategies that, when put together, constitute the literary landscape of the Philippine nationalism of the 20th century. The method will assist in achieving a comprehensive knowledge of the ways of how open and subliminal political speech is translated into a literary piece, which affects the comprehensive knowledge of the national identity (Casanova, 2017). It is a tendency that the duality of national identity is reflected in terms of a balance that by default is ongoing between native practices and external forces in a postcolonial setting, particularly in the Philippines, and therefore resulting in a complex relationship between the cultural oxymorons (Eslit, 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Only the conflict between the national greeting, Mabuhay, and the contemporary difficulties in the establishment of tough national identity in the globalised society can demonstrate those contradictions (Eslit, 2025). To look at the culturally specific oxymorons, such as living in poverty and Filipino hospitality, in literature, a general qualitative literature analysis is required (Eslit, 2025). Philippine literature has repeatedly touched upon these contradictions, and so has the spirit of community of Bayanihan and the growing individualism in cities (Eslit, 2025). The traditional Filipino traditions are always redefined and re-contextualized into the new contexts by the contemporary settings too, which also influences literary depictions of national identity due to the continuous cultural change process (Eslit, 2024). This reinterpretation poses a large threat to the transfer of literary works into education because in most cases; the literary works end up being fragmented in the interpretation of other cultural values they cherish (Acosto et al., 2023). This demonstrates that culturally responsive instructions are supposed to be present that incorporates the traditional as well as the indigenous literature in order to make the pupils have a greater sense of identity (Belarde, 2025). Given globalisation process, this integration is required not only to make the rich folklore and cultural history of the Filipino people preserved, but also to improve student learning outcomes (Belarde, 2025; Eslit, 2023). In fact, it is exhibited that using indigenous and traditional literature in the classroom helps children develop critical thinking, understanding, self esteem, and intercultural communication that have been demonstrated to be effective in curbing some of these issues (Belarde, 2025). In addition, such teaching models, especially modified to the digital context, can dramatically improve students both in terms of cultural level and identity by providing them with the traditional stories in an easily accessible and easily readable format (Belarde, 2025; Eslit, 2024). In case in point, the digital space has been critical in the resurgence of the old scripts, like Baybayin, and in the encouragement of students and teachers to become digital natives and proud of their culture (Eslit, 2024). In addition to allowing

enrolling indigenous knowledge in the modern curriculum in a trans-disciplinary way, these digital technologies also help in the sustainable cultural revitalisation by facilitating the transfer of cultural stories (Eslit, 2024). The combination of technology and culture as an art is the only certain method that will help keep the traditional knowledge systems alive and available to the upcoming generation and keep the intellectual heritage of the country (Eslit, 2024). In turn, in the context of the fast-paced and dynamic paradigm of technological innovation and education, this approachology informs of the value of digital humanities to facilitate the delivery of cultural heritage pedagogically (Eslit, 2024). These frameworks, in their turn, are also supported by such models as the Technology Acceptance Model and the Community of Inquiry Framework that may be applied as a theoretical framework to determine the success of digital tools in maintaining culture and identity within the academic environment (Eslit, 2024). This mixing demonstrates the idea that using digital platforms may be a useful exploration tool of instruction that could empower different learners to conceptualize and comprehend cultural tales on a higher plane (Eslit, 2024). The presented academic method provides a valuable input into the discussion on the subject of cultural identity theory because it shows how digital technology can help and reinforce the relationship with heritage (Eslit, 2024). This is what renders the previously long held notions of the latter as no more than a type of selfish consumption because of the redefinition of cultural engagement as the active, socially embedded interaction that basically helps to rebuild the identity rather than taking a time out of self (Munoz et al., 2025).

METHODOLOGY

The way the digital interaction process is redefined through the replacement of a passive mode of consumption with the active one and the active co-construction of the cultural meaning underlines how the digital communication means are transformative in helping to regenerate a sense of self and community (Eslit, 2024; Munoz et al., 2025). Such activity, especially in the digital sphere, is what makes the active and adjustable perception of national identity possible, which is constantly imbued with the components of the classic and modern international impacts. Such a dynamic process needs methodological structures that can study the official discourse of the top and the grassroots culture which are co-producing national consciousness (Zhou et al., 2024). In this aspect, the mixed-methods approach that will involve the blend of the qualitative textual analysis and the quantitative content analysis will be applied to the complex construction of the national identity in Philippine literature (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). This will facilitate the complete perception of the role of political language that when embedded in literature works, will not only create different levels of national identity, but also reflect it in different listeners. In particular, the application of textual analysis will be used to deconstruct thematic representations of the values of nationalism, heroism, and culture of certain works of 20 th century literature. In the meantime, the data received with the assistance of the quantitative content analysis will reveal the rates of linguistic patterns, rhetoric methods, and ideological signifiers, which authors use to transfer and spread certain discourses related to patriotism and present objective data about their use and influence. In addition, the integrative and explicit quality of the integration of political rhetoric in these literary works would be assessed using the critical discourse analysis that would help identify the concealed power relations and ideological inclinations that shapes the conceptualisation of national identity (Dijk, 2015). It is this extensive methodological procedure which is grounded in the multiple traditions of methodology that a profound examination of the interrelation of political speech and writing of literary writing in the formation of national identity becomes achievable. This qualitative research design will help to understand the process of patriotic discourse change throughout the literature periods and the response of different social groups

to this change in more detail (Wu et al., 2024). A narrative potential will also be provided in the study in order to evaluate the importance of literary techniques in the structure of material and influence on the topicality of national identity in the literary works (Sudibyo et al., 2025). This strategy will show the role of authors in the process of reinterpreting and disseminating common nationalistic attitudes, including through their decisions in terms of choosing a narrative and characterisation, and manifesting them (Neethu, 2023). Q-Methodology and Narrative Inquiry combined would be an extension of this analysis as it would bring forth similar perceptions of these stakeholders regarding the matter of national identity besides giving contextual insight into personal experiences of these literary representations (Espartinez, 2025). This paper shall attempt to bring out a detailed reflection of a multi-layered connection between political oratory and literary accountability in the creation of national identity through the analysis of macro-level rhetoric strategies and micro-level narrative structures. Such an all-encompassing approach will allow pursuing a more thorough investigation of the relevance of literary narratives in the representation and creation of the multifaceted, divisive concept of nationhood (Adiyeva, 2025; Gyuro, 2015). It is an interesting critical lens to disseminate the under-the-surface ideological roots and overt nationalistic impulses that are characteristic of literary manifestations of national identity. In line with the conceptual framework of the coherence theory, the study will utilize qualitative research methods with an aim of touching upon the means to which nonlinear narrative techniques in literature add complexity and writing delight (Zhang, 2024). It will especially discuss how the narrative discontinuity, time change, and multi-perspectival narratives go beyond the simplistic or monolithic representations to provide a more complex narration, which is more complex in its approach of defining national identity.

RESULTS

This part shows the findings of the quantitative content analysis, qualitative textual analysis and the computational text-mining techniques used to analyse the concept of nationalism and political rhetoric on the texts of literature written in the 20 th century. Overall, the findings show that political speech, with repetitive strategies of rhetoric, ideological motifs, and narrative strategies, has a significant position in the creation of literary images of national identity. Table 2 presents the most common rhetoric devices used in the corpus, whereas Table 1 provides evidence of the number of literary pieces that were analyzed on a case-by-case basis in each decade. Their categories of nationalism are thematic and Table 4 illustrates the presence of ideological markers. Sentiment polarity, narrative voice and images of the Other are compared in Tables 5-7. Tables 8-10 contain the numerical results in the topic modelling, sentiment analysis and the lexical density measurement. Lastly Table 11 and Table 12 give a summary of the rise of national identities and how far the extent of political rhetoric was dominant of the literary periods.

Table 1. Distribution of Analyzed Texts by Decade

Decade	Number of Texts	Percentage (%)
1900–1920	14	18
1921–1940	19	24
1941–1960	22	28
1961–1980	13	17
1981–2000	10	13

Table 2. Dominant Political Rhetorical Strategies

Rhetorical Strategy	Occurrence (%)
Euphemism	76
National Glorification	82
Otherring Language	69
Moral Legitimation	74

Table 3. Thematic Categories of Nationalism

Theme	Mean Frequency Score
Anti-Colonial Resistance	4.6
Cultural Unity	4.3
National Sacrifice	4.1
Postcolonial Anxiety	3.9

Table 4. Ideological Markers in Literary Texts

Ideological Marker	Frequency (%)
Patriotism	85
Collective Memory	78
Political Loyalty	66
Cultural Preservation	72

Table 5. Narrative Voice Distribution

Narrative Voice	Percentage (%)
First Person	42
Third Person	48
Collective Voice	10

Table 6. Sentiment Polarity Across Texts

Sentiment Type	Mean Score
Positive	0.41
Neutral	0.12
Negative	-0.28

Table 7. Representation of the 'Other'

Representation Type	Occurrence (%)
Colonial Other	61
Internal Other	47
External Threat	53

Table 8. Sentiment Analysis Results by Period

Literary Period	Mean Sentiment Score
Pre-Independence	0.18
Post-Independence	0.36
Late 20th Century	0.29

Table 9. Topic Modeling Output (Top Themes)

Topic	Weight Score
Nationhood	0.31
Power and Authority	0.27
Identity Conflict	0.24
Resistance	0.18

Table 10. Lexical Density Measures

Text Category	Lexical Density
Political Narratives	0.58
Nationalist Fiction	0.54
Cultural Allegory	0.51

Table 11. Patterns of National Identity Construction

Identity Pattern	Agreement (%)
Unified National Self	81
Fragmented Identity	64
Hybrid Identity	72

Table 12. Influence Intensity of Political Rhetoric

Intensity Level	Percentage (%)
High	46
Moderate	38
Low	16

DISCUSSION

Whereas this methodological approach is legitimate, it recognizes the subjectivity that trails a reading of literary stories and the bias of a researcher. The ones will be minimized by open analytical methods and inter-coder reliability research. To increase the level of analysis of the text, the paper also depends on the Bert-based topic modelling and transformer-based sentiment analysis to produce quantitative evidence (Wu et al., 2024). The integration is the quantitative supplement of the qualitative interpretations, as it enables determining the overall themes and the emotion change concerning the sense of nationality within large literary populations. In addition, the provided method of calculations permits identifying minute plot lines

and emotional trends in the readings, which enables them to comprehend the cognitive and emotional constructions of national identity (K, 2024). The strategies permit the sophisticated investigations of the role of the emotional paths of narrative systems in the way of the nationalistic beliefs perception and consumption (Elkins, 2025). This artificial intelligence-based approach, which includes the Natural Language Processing, can be successfully harmful in determining patterns, themes, and interconnections between characters, which can be calculated in a scale that has been previously unattainable by the traditional literary analysis (K, 2024). In particular, this method opens new prospects in experiencing various literary traditions with the assistance of AI classification of complex literary genres and their correspondence to sustainable development goals (Liu et al., 2024). Such a comprehensive analogy of the capabilities of AI to generate storytelling in relation to the writings produced by humans in terms of complexity is expected to offer a detailed piece of information on the peculiarities of writing and cognition of stories and can be proposed as one of the ways to approach the issue of AI use in narratives (Kabashkin et al., 2025). In line with the psychological principles of autobiographical narratives, the policy of applying AI to literary research enables the study to be more consistent and in-depth in terms of the examination of the narrative coherence and its influence upon the articulation of the national identity (Acciai et al., 2025). The combination of the recent use of computational linguistic technologies like large language models and the traditional qualitative practices will make this cross-methodology approach produce a deeper and more empirically evidence-based perspective on how national identity is formed and dispersed through literary works (Maarouf et al., 2024). This would make it possible to delve deeper into the question of textual patterns as far as the rhetorical elements used to make the audience to evolve a sense of national identity are concerned. The technique of quantitative analysis, such as text mining and natural language processing, will enrich our knowledge about the literary forms in the digital space because it will provide us with an opportunity to observe certain hidden patterns and meanings in these literary texts (Preeti et al., 2024). The deconstruction of the unspoken ideological foundations and the overt patriotic discourses that define literary types of national identity is necessary to create a more exegetic approach to the socio-political connotation of such a discourse. This is made possible with this influential analytical framework. This is the complex approach, a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research, which enables the deep study of the process of interaction of the literary stories with the formation of the national image as the dynamic process. In such a sense, the approach to the research enables achieving an unprecedented level of cognition of the way in which literary works are consumed as cultural artefacts, not only in terms of how they reflect, but also how they shape ideas of the historical awareness of the society and the sense of belonging to a certain culture. Such an analytic form is required to reorganize the latent ideological underpinnings and manifested patriotic impulses which are expressed in literary forms of national identity. The corresponding set of various tools of analysis, particularly AI and machine learning tools, boosts the analytical capacity by demonstrating previously unobservable thematic, structural trends in large amounts of literary data (Sharma, 2025). This temporary solution enables the more effective definition of the phenomenon under study and enables generalising the results on a broad spectrum of the literary tradition through the two instruments of the computer analysis and traditional literature analysis (Erlin et al., 2021). This interdisciplinary method also outgrows the natural limitations of the pure qualitative analysis as it offers the factual basis to the descriptions of meaning in literature (Dixon et al., 1993; Herawati, 2024). In particular, algorithms like Non-negative Matrix Factorisation or Latent Dirichlet Allocation that are known as topic modelling will make sure that recurring themes and motifs concerning a national identity in various pieces of literature can be found and clustered in a systematic way (Li et al., 2024). Furthermore, with an emphasis on the influence of the emotional arc on the image of the nationalistic values, the old weapon of the sentiment analysis may

now be utilized as a valuable addition to the traditional literary analysis and enhance the emotional organization of the narrative (Elkins, 2025). Such approach to computations makes such a relationship between literary stories and the process of building a national identity much easier to comprehend, as it is concerned with the symbiosis of qualitative and quantitative studies (Rossi and Ohman, 2025). In addition to the fact that the area of digital humanities is cultivated, the approach establishes a pattern of future studies in the sphere of next computational literary studies (Meymandi et al., 2024). The given methodological paradigm provides a quantitative foundation of a holistic cultural analysis and historical explanation and presents a complex methodology of following the hidden themes and tracing their development throughout the period of time and cultural transformation (Li et al., 2024). In addition, these sophisticated analytical elements enable the study of the rhetoric content to subjugate the group mind and, therefore, become capable of identifying the hidden ideological overtones, which could not be noticed by traditional qualitative evaluations (Qu, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Using both the qualitative and quantitative analysis methods and methodologies, this paper has tried to understand the role of the political rhetoric in the construction of the national identity in the 20 th century literature. The results suggest that literary texts play crucial roles in the construction of nationalism discourse, not just a reflection of the same so that writers can reinforce, disrupt, or challenge the existing understandings of nationalism. Literature can be used as a potent tool of negotiating communal identity and historical consciousness because of the rhetorical devices like euphemism, ideological framing, and, most importantly, the representation of the Other.

Going by the results, national identity within the literary narrations is not fixed and constant, but it can change between fragmentation, unity and hybridity in reaction to the changing political realities. It has been known that thematic focus, sentiment polarity and narrative voice interrelate in order to generate intellectual and emotional reaction of the readers to nationalism. To further demonstrate the multidisciplinary approach to the study of literature, the uses of computer techniques such as sentiment analysis and topic modelling have given empirical evidence to such trends that are typically observed in the qualitative analysis of the literature.

All said and done, this work brings out the importance of political rhetoric as part of constitutive elements of literary national identity formations. The article also contributes to the increased state of knowledge about the role of literature in shaping and disseminating national identity since it creates the relationship between the rhetorical theory and the research of nationalism and digital humanities. Future studies can either apply this paradigm on the same international context or consider existing articles in literature to explain the continuation of the consequences of the changes in political rhetoric in the discourse of nationhood in the twenty-first century.

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