CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The focus of the study is the character of Obama speech, how lexical and grammatical features the process of language features. The main purpose of this chapter is to answer the statement of the problems which are presented in the chapter I.

In this discussion, the data were collected from the text Obama's speech. The writer made a description for all of the text Obama's speech of the data to make it easier to understand. Here are the data:

4.1 Findingand Discussion

4.1.1 Obama's Speech

Obama's inauguration speech may be defined as the unifying idea about the kind of life expected for the Americans as a whole as stated or implied by the speech. As a unifying idea, the theme is a recurrent element in the speech. Central to the unifying thought of Obama's speech is a statement that America is in the midst of crisis. Serious and many though the challenges are, Obama convinces his people that America will be able to overcome them. As normally expected from such an inauguration speech, Obama also expresses his new attitudes to the world affairs both for the cause of peace, security, and welfare.

Giving thanks. Obama expresses his humbleness to the task of presidency, his thank to American trust for the position, his remembrance of the sacrifices of his predecessors. He thanks President Bush for his service to the nation and the smooth transition of the office. Historical knots. Obama tries to knot the oath taken to his predecessors – including his – has been forty-

four presidential oaths. These are further linked in both the good and bad times in the American history. It was not only due to those in high office, but the event also resides in the people.

As the economic issue is number one in the minds of most Americans, Obama is wise enough to raise this issue first in his speech. Obama is quite candid in acknowledging that America is in the midst of serious crisis. He does not promise instant solutions. However, he shows his great self-confidence that his Administration will be able to offer the best service to all Americans alike to meet those challenges in his powerful promise: "But know this, America — they will be met".

Obama persists in his optimistic vision that led him to the White House. He cites the scriptures, refers to the Declaration of Independence, and then reminds his fellow Americans of the struggles of the past. He concludes this section by convincing everyone that the core strength of America is still there.

Obama is addressing the cynical politicians who are against his position in his blunt statement that "(t)heir memories are short". He, therefore, persuades them to be cooperative and mindful of his agenda for the whole nation. No matter how strong his words are, they remain friendly. He charts a new foreign policy which is tied to common, human ideals.

Obama splendidly uses a parallel between the armed forces and ordinary citizens in terms of the embodiment of the spirit of service that will determine the success of his administration. He is so marvellous in calling for his people to such an action. Obama's citation of the optimistic spirit of the American revolutionary war serves well of the expectation that their nation must keep progressing, and simultaneously this serves him as a fine way to conclude his inauguration speech.

4.1.2Lexical Features in Obama's Speech

a. Nouns

Both concrete and abstract nouns are used in the speech. The concrete nouns such as: "task, trust, sacrifice, generosity and cooperation", and "(forty-four) Americans"

To refer to the number of the U.S. presidents so far in the history. Proper nouns indicating historical sites of past wars are used such as

"Concord, Gettysburg"

to refer to revolutionary wars, Normandy to World War II and Khe San to Vietnam War.

Collective nouns such as

"America or U.S."

refer to the whole American people

and "generation"

to refer to the current generation of American people as a whole. However, far more abstract nouns are used.

1. Abstract nouns to refer to events

For instance *prosperity* is used to indicate the state of being prosperous of the American people and *peace* to refer to the peaceful conditions whereby Americans are not involved in any war to fight. These two words are used in the context:

"during the rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace"

That strongly emphasize the good as well as the bad times as historically tied to the various events of the presidential oath-taking. It also illustrates the good times that Americans have gone through and that of

"gathering clouds and raging storms"

to illustrate the bad/difficult times that influence their characters.

2. Abstract nouns to refer to perceptions

When Obama talks about America's perception on "their supremacy", he uses the words

3. Abstract nouns to refer to moral qualities

Abstract nouns are also used to refer to moral qualities such as:

- 1) "... (we gather because we have chosen) hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord ...)".
- 2) "With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come".
- 3) "... ourpatchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness".

4. Abstract nouns to refer to social qualities

"... they knew that our power grows through its prudent use; our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, the tempering qualities of humility and restraint".

b. Verb

Despite the crisis that Americans have gone through that may not berecovered within a short span of time, Obama convinces his audience and fellow citizens that those difficulties may definitely be overcome by his strong and optimistic determination as expressed in the illocutionary act of commissives (cf. Traugott& Pratt, 1980 for the concept of speech act):

[&]quot;greatness" in "the greatness of our nation" and

[&]quot;the course of American history" as a "journey".

"But know this, America – they will be met ".

He encourages his audience to gain their self-confidence to build their future as expressed in the directive illocutionary act:

"... we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves up, and begin again the work of remaking America".

Obama's repeated use of the multiple illocutionary acts—both co missives and directives (cf. Traugott& Pratt, 1980 *for this concept*)- by means of the helping verb "will" is to show his very strong determinations that would materialize in his administration as follows:

... wewill act ..."; "We will build the roads and bridges ..."; "We will restore science to its rightful place";

"We will harness the sun and the winds and the soils to fuel our cars and run our factories, and we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demand of a new age. All this we can do. And all this we will do"

The last portion of the quotation above is expressed in the multiple illocutionary acts – both representatives and commissives:

"All this we can do"

This indicates that the new President claims that he and his upcoming administration are strong enough to do as they wish. The same helping verbs are used intensively when Obama states his strong determination to bring in the new fresh air in the foreign policy of his administration:

- 1) "We will begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people ..."
- 2) "With old friends and former foes, we **will work** tirelessly to lessen the nuclear threat ..."
- 3) "We will not apologize for our way of life, nor will we waver in its defense ..."
- 4) "... you cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you".

c. Adjective

1, Attributively or predicatively used adjectives

Adjectives are used both attributively and predicatively. Used attributively, the adjectives are meant to further specify the meaning as expressed by the head word, among other things, as found in:

- 1) "... during rising tides of prosperity and still waters of peace".
- 2) "... we come to proclaim an end to the **petty** grievances and **false** promises ... and **worn out** dogmas ...".
- 3) "We remain a **young** nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside **childish** things. The time has come to reaffirm our **enduring** spirit; to choose our **better** history; to carry that **precious** gift, that **noble** idea, passed on from generation to generation: the **Godgiven** promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their **full** measure of happiness".

2. Adjectives are also used predicatively:

- 1) "We the people have remained **faithful** to the ideals of our forbearers, and **true** to our founding documents".
- 2) "Our workers are **no less productive** than when this crisis began".
- 3) "Our minds are **no less inventive** Our capacity remains **undiminished**".

4.1.3 Grammatical Features in Obama's Speech

a. Pronouns Usage

Pronouns are intensively used for co-reference as grammatical cohesive devices as found, among other things, as follows:

- 1) "That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation is at war Our economy is badly weakened ... but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age Our health care is too costly; our school fail too many ... the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet".
- 2) "Today I say to you that **the challenges** we face are real. **They** are serious and **they** are many. **They** will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America **they** will be met".

The way pronouns are used in a given text is well worth examining for the sake of stylistic analysis; namely, who or what is referred to by which pronouns in what kind of context.

According to Brown and Gilman (1960), pronouns suggest power and solidarity. Pronouns in

this study include 'I' 'you' 'we' and 'they'. You and I share a correspondence relationship dialogically while they and we share another type of correspondence relationship. In addition, pronouns reflect the speaker's (in this study, president's) stance. 'I' means the speaker him/herself, yet which does not count much in this study, as the speaker in U.S. inaugural addresses is evidently, the president himself.

Postulating Obama's pronoun usage is related to "E pluribus unum" spirit with the emphasis on 'unum (One)'. This is one of the points to be verified in the following section.

a) THEY

'They' is classified mainly into two groups: suggesting human e.g. men and people in general or NOT human e.g. trees and organizations. It makes distinct difference between other pronouns 'I' 'you' 'we' as the rest can only suggest human. Furthermore, 'they' has a function to 'group up individuals and bind as a whole' (Ito 2010) like 'we', still we need to observe its referents by context.

Speech of Obama:

For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and traveled across oceans insearch of a new life.

For us, they toiled in sweatshops and settled the West; endured the lash of the whip and plowed the hard earth.

For us, they fought and died, in places like Concord and Gettysburg; Normandy and KheSahn.

Asunderlined above, there are three times of appearance of 'they'. The first use of 'they' reminds us of Puritans (Whites) who immigrated to America by the Mayflower. However, the second 'they' evokes slaves (Blacks) from Africa. The third 'they' superficially hints at all Americans, yet if we take a closer look, there can be a deeper interpretation. Concord suggests the War of Independence, Normandy suggests World War II and KheSahn suggest the Vietnam War. Thus 'they' refers to Americans. But Gettysburg is the Civil War, meaning this was the

battle among Americans. Gettysburg is the symbolic place for President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation (1862) and the Gettysburg Address (1863), which lead us to the idea that 'they' implicates more of Blacks. Historical facts show there were more black war victims at that time.

In this paragraph, Obama repeatedly used the expression, "For us, they...". The next section is dedicated to an analysis of the use of this 'us'.

b) WE and I

'We' has a function to 'arouse sense of unity by grouping up individuals and bind as a whole' (Ito 2010). When observing the pronoun 'we', there are two essential points: First, is 'we' inclusive or exclusive? Second, is there 'a basis of sense sharing' or not(Tanaka and Fukaya 1998).

Obama speech:

We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth; and because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation, and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united,

we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself; and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace.

First 'we' evidently refers to Americans. However, the question is the second 'we'. People suffered from Segregation are Blacks, not Whites that this 'we' implicates Blacks. Therefore, this is superficially an exclusive 'we' usage (against White people). Yet the third 'we' suggests 'we the Americans' or 'one people', meaning an inclusive 'we'. Was the second 'we' originally intended to be an exclusive usage and interpretation, addressing only from Blacks' viewpoints. My answer is no.

Rather, by fusing exclusive 'we' and inclusive 'we' together and by making the best of the functions of 'we' and 'they', Obama stylistically accomplished to encode the concept of 'One

America', the fundamental philosophy of U.S., 'E pluribus unum' in his first symbolic inaugural address.

Obama used personal pronoun "we" from beginning of the address to establish intimacy with the audience. Perhaps, he wanted to give feeling to the audience that he was one of them and they all were equal. In last part of Obama's address, he relied on "you and I" relation to indicate that he was close enough to the audience and he was having direct conversation to them. Though the address was ceremonial and formal, but the use of personal pronouns gave feeling of informality.

b. Metaphor

Obama's inauguration speech uses figurative language—a language that cannot/ should not be taken literally; it is used as a way of saying something other than the ordinary way (Perrine, 1988, p. 565). The figures of speech used are mostly metaphor and very few in the forms of synecdoche and metonymy. Metaphor is used to compare things that are essentially unlike. Such uses are intended to say something more vividly and forcefully (Perrine, 1988, p. 565).

When referring to the good times the presidential oath was spoken— when the American economy is at its top position and the country enjoys the full extent of peace, Obama describes them:

"The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace".

When talking about the bad times, he describes

"Yet, every so often the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms".

When referring to the course of American history, Obama uses the metaphor "a journey" as in "Our **journey** has never been one of short-cuts or settling for less",

and the future that Americans have to travel through as

"the road": "As we consider **the road** that unfolds before us, we remember with humble gratitude those brave Americans ...".

When pleading the joined force of all Americans to face the challenge in the future, Obama expresses it:

"... let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come".

Obama continues,

"At these moments, America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because we the People have remained faithful to the ideals of our forebears, and true to our founding documents."

He signifies the tough times we are in using the metaphor but brings the sense of optimism how America has risen over rough times in the past. It was interesting to see that he used 'We the People' as that is a direct reference to the text of the Constitution. It enunciates the preservation of the values of the forefathers and the confidence in these values holding strong today.

c. Rhetorical

On Monday, January 21st, 2013, Barack Hussein Obama attended the inauguration ceremony following the tradition of his predecessors. After taking his oath of office, President Barack Obama made an inaugural address which is the most significant part of the inaugural ceremony. The inaugural address was the first contact of re-elected president with his people in which he presented his vision and set forth the goals of the next administration. Unlike 2009 inaugural address, his address gave less hope, but more opportunity.

The language used in Obama's inaugural address was appropriate to the subject, audience, and occasion. The address was composed following the standards and rules laid down by the rhetorical situation. Obama followed the grand style language with great deal of figurativeness and formality, but with choice of simple words. He expressed himself in grand style language because the event was ceremonial and formal. He made a choice of simple words to convey his

message to the common people. The speech was meant to unite, to gain sympathy and trust of the people, therefore the president appealed to the audience with formal but most simplistic language.

We also find some of the most famous metaphors of American politics in Obama's address. Let us analyze some examples from the address:

"....a never ending journey...." represents the continue political system. "....the star that guides represents the founding creed of the America. "For our journey is not completedeals with change and continuity.

The use of metaphors in a discourse is to make it more attractive to the ears. Some time metaphors are use to explain an event in one word or phrase and some time, it is rhetorical situation that compels the rhetoric to use the metaphor to be more appealing and convincing. Obama successfully applied the metaphors to give a sense of shared responsibility, change, and continuity of political struggle until every citizen enjoys the equal opportunities, liberty, and happiness.

Obama's rhetoric is both intelligent and insightful as he uses particular stylistic qualities such as patterns of speech and metaphors to have a persuasive effect on the audience. He is alluding how he is taking the oath during bad times, or "gathering clouds and raging storms."

This enables the audience to understand the status quo and picture the storm of times we are in right now. Obama relates that in the only way we can change as a nation is to push through and work hard. It will not be easy and it will be a journey,

"In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less."

This passage was strategically placed towards the beginning of the speech to signify to audience that it will not be a quick and easy journey but one of hard work and time. It adds

credibility to Obama's rhetoric as he is acknowledging that the problems of the nation will not be fixed by tomorrow. Instead it will be a steady process of working together in all capacities to change the status quo of our nation. He is noticeably confidant that America will change,

"The state of our economy calls for action: bold and swift. And we will act not only to create new jobs but to lay a new foundation for growth...Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end."

The audience is captured in his oratory and his motion for change. They believe in him as a leader because of his confidence and the motion for change is absorbed as they feel they can stand behind his leadership. Obama's words exude with the accountability that the nation needs right now.

The first inauguration of Barack Obama as the <u>44th President of the United States</u> took place on Tuesday, January 20, 2009. The <u>inauguration</u>, which set a record attendance for any event held in Washington, D.C., marked the commencement of the first four-year term of <u>Barack Obama</u> as President and <u>Joe Biden</u> as Vice President. Based on the combined attendance numbers, television viewership, and Internet traffic, it was among the most-observed events ever by the global audience.

"A New Birth of Freedom", a phrase from the <u>Gettysburg Address</u>, served as the inaugural theme to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth year of <u>Abraham Lincoln</u>. In his speeches to the crowds, Obama referred to ideals expressed by Lincoln about renewal, continuity and national unity. Obama mentioned these ideals in his speech to stress the need for shared sacrifice and a new sense of responsibility to answer America's challenges at home and abroad.

Obama and others paid homage to Lincoln in the form of tributes and references during several of the events, starting with a commemorative train tour from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Washington, D.C. on January 17, 2009. The inaugural events held in Washington from

January 18 to 21, 2009, included concerts, a national day of community service on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the swearing-in ceremony, luncheon and parade, inaugural balls, and the interfaith inaugural prayer service. The presidential oath as administered to Obama during his swearing-in ceremony on January 20 strayed slightly from the oath of office prescribed in the United States Constitution, which led to its re-administration the next day.

In addition to a larger than usual celebrity attendance, the <u>Presidential Inaugural Committee</u> increased its outreach to ordinary citizens to encourage greater participation in inaugural events compared with participation in recent past inaugurations. For the first time, the committee opened the entire length of the <u>National Mall</u> as the public viewing area for the swearing-in ceremony, breaking with the tradition of past inaugurations. Selected American citizens participated in the train tour and other inaugural events, and a philanthropist organized a People's Inaugural Ball for disadvantaged people who otherwise would be unable to afford to attend the inaugural festivities. Among the celebrations for the inauguration, the committee hosted a first-ever Neighborhood Inaugural Ball with free or affordable tickets for ordinary citizens.