

## **TRANSITIVITY AND IDEOLOGY: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF OBAMA'S SECOND INAUGURAL SPEECH**

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### **Abstrak**

Kajian ini ditujukan untuk menganalisis bagaimana Barack H. Obama; presiden Amerika ke-44; menggunakan bahasa di pidato pelantikannya yang kedua untuk menyampaikan ideologi-ideologi politiknya. Kajian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan teori system transitivitas dari Halliday yang telah diadopsi oleh Fairclough dalam kerangka teori analisis wacana kritis. Dari empat proses transitivitas yang diadopsi oleh Fairclough, kajian ini membuktikan bahwa proses material mendominasi pidato Obama, diikuti oleh mental proses dan relasional proses. Klausula-klausula material yang ditemukan, menunjukkan bahwa Obama menyusun bahasanya untuk melakukan aksi-aksi dalam periode pemerintahannya kedepan. Ia melakukan itu untuk mengembalikan kepercayaan diri masyarakatnya setelah banyak masalah tersisa dari masa jabatannya yang pertama. Obama menggarisbawahi kesetaraan sepanjang pidatonya untuk menunjukkan kepada masyarakat bahwa ia tetap berjuang untuk membersihkan diskriminasi, tidak hanya di negaranya tetapi juga diseluruh dunia. Obama banyak menggunakan klausa-klausula material dalam menceritakan kembali sejarah Amerika untuk membakar semangat nasionalisme dan patriotisme masyarakatnya. Pilihannya dalam menggunakan partisipan pertama "we(kita)" menunjukkan bahwa Obama menempatkan rakyatnya pada level yang sama dengannya dalam penyelenggaraan Negara. Hal ini membuktikan karakter pemerintahan yang demokratis. Selain itu, Obama juga ingin meningkatkan kesatuan dan persatuan rakyat Amerika. Obama juga menggunakan kata kerja mental untuk memberi sentuhan psikis dalam pidatonya, sebagai pendukung klausa-klausula materialnya. Proses relasional digunakan oleh Obama sebagai pengingat untuk rakyatnya bahwa mereka adalah warga Negara Amerika dengan Negara yang besar dan kuat. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahwa karakter kepemimpinan Obama bisa menjadi alat untuk menuai sukses di masa jabatannya yang kedua.

**Kata kunci:** Transitivitas, ideology, Analisis wacana kritis (CDA), dan politik

### **Abstract**

The study is set to analyze how the 44<sup>th</sup> United States president Barack H. Obama manipulated language in his second inaugural address to enhance his political ideologies by using Halliday's transitivity system that already adopted by Fairclough in his critical discourse analysis framework. Among the four processes outlined in the framework, the study discovers that material processes mostly dominating the speech, distantly followed by mental processes, while relational processes come third. Material clauses suggest that Obama arranged his word for action. He did it to restore the people trust and confidence after left many aspects imperfect in his first tenure. He underlined equality along his speech to show the people that he stayed fighting to clean up discrimination not only for America but also for the world. He use material clause in retelling America history to firing people nationalism and patriotism. His choice of actors suggests that Obama attributes the people in the same level with him in the government body. It is a characteristic of democratic leadership style. He also uses mental verb to give psychological touch in his speech, as a support for his material clauses. Relational processes have been used as a reminder for the people that they are American and they have a big nation. The study concludes that such leadership characteristics could be possible reasons that led to his political success in his next period as his record on good governance, human rights, and political tolerance.

**Key words:** Transitivity, Ideology, CDA, and Politic.

## INTRODUCTION

Language is closely bound up with the social development from childhood, and the identity formation. The attitude that a listener can adopt towards the speech of another speaker has been a significant issues in linguistics. Attitudes to language can be linked to social and cultural identity, to social status and to the notions of prestige and solidarity, and those attitudes to language and its varieties can be influenced by different factors related to the users of that specific language. The way people perceive language is the foundation of the social construction and individual or group relationship, and studies in linguistics have try to explain this relationship between the use of language and the importance of society. A particular discourse, spoken or written, can stem from different sources such as power, cultural or social background, social status, and religion. Although the use of language is unquestionably an important element of politics, Fairclough (2006) notes that it can "misrepresent as well as represent realities, it can weave visions and imaginaries which can be implemented to change realities and insome cases improve human well-being, but it can also rhetorically obfuscate realities, and construe them ideologically to serve unjust power relations (Fairclough, 2006:1). Therefore, Obama's political speech in his inauguration will become an interesting term to be analyzed. Such a political speech, of course ideology and power will be indicated.

### • Critical Discourse Analysis

According to Van Dijk (1988;1) Critical Discourse Analysis, which later acronym as CDA, is an approach which is concern to reveal power abuse, dominance, and inequality that laying in spoken or written discourse in social and political stance. CDA states that discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned. Furthermore, discourse is an instrument of power, of increasing importance in societies. The way this instrument of power works is often hard to understand, and CDA aims to make it more visible and transparent.

According to Baker and Ellece (2011), Hallidayan Functional Grammar is usually considered the main foundation of text analysis in critical discourse studies in which systemic grammar aims to explain the internal relations in language as a system while Functional grammar considers language as a means of social interaction. As Fairclough (2003) states, Systemic Functional Linguistics is profoundly concerned with the relationship between language and other elements and aspects of social life, and its approach to the linguistic analysis of texts is always oriented to the social character of texts.

Fairclough(1992:178, Locke 2004:48) states that transitivity is a good tool in doing CDA. Here are fourtypes of transitivity process adoptedby Fairclough from Halliday's theory (1985; 106-144):

### • Material: Process of doing

This process is usually physical and tangible action. Halliday calls themaction clauses expressing the fact that something or someone undertakes some action or some entity "does"something – which may be done to some other entity. Twoessential participants usually appear in material process are the Actor – the doer of the process – and the Goal – theperson or entity affected by the process. The pattern is: **actor – action/event process – goale**.g. "The police (actor) - shot (action process) - 100 demonstrators (goal)".

### • Mental: Process of sensing

This process includes the sense of perception (seeing, hearing, etc.), affection (liking, fearing, etc.), cognition (thinking, knowing, understanding, etc.). These can be probed byasking *what do you think/ feel/know about x?* Mental processes have two participants: the Sender – the consciousbeing who is involved in a Mental process – and the Phenomenon – which is felt, thought, or seen by the consciousSender. The pattern is: **Sender – mental process - phenomenon**, e.g. "The demonstrator (sender) feared (mental process: affection) the police (phenomenon)"

### • Relational: process of being, having, becoming

Relational process is clauses in which the "process" takes the form of a relation between two participants, or between one participant and an attribute. Both of these two types may have the verb be, which tends to obscure the difference between them. The main relational processes of transitivity may be:

- intensive, 'x is a' expressing arelationship of sameness between two entities;
- possessive, 'x has a' indicating one entity owns another; or
- circumstantial, 'x is at/of a' defining the entity in terms of location, time, and manner.

### • Event

This process involves an event and a goal. Usually express in intransitive clause; subject – verb (SV), e.g. "100 demonstrators died"

### • Political Ideology

Etymologically, the term ideology is derived from the word '*ideas*' or idea (thought, belief) and the word '*logos*' later becomes '*logy*' that means way or knowledge. So, according to Van Dijk (2006) ideology is a set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved. Instead of belief, ideology also shared opinion and value of an identifiable group, class, contituency, or society. As a system of belief, ideology will led or influence individual or a group of people to choose, do or act something.

This study uses 2 research questions. They are in what kinds of transitivity processes found in Obama's Second Inaugural Speech and how the transitivity processes found in Obama's Second Inaugural Speech reflect Obama's ideology(s). The purpose of this study is to categorize the kinds of transitivity processes and their functions which are used by Obama to express his

ideology. All of the research questions are about in Obama's Second Inaugural Speech.

## **METHOD**

The research type used in this study is descriptive qualitative. In this case, a qualitative research only deals with the words in written and spoken data. The study is more focus in observing transitivity processes of Obama's clauses, in his second inaugural speech.

The data of this study is Obama's clauses in Obama's Second Inaugural Speech. Furthermore, the source of data is Obama as the one who delivers the speech. This speech is used as the primary data.

The key instrument of this study is the researcher. There are also some tools which are needed to support this research. There are the video of Obama's Second Inaugural Speech, computer, and modem.

In this study, the data is an oral speech that already typed in a transcript form. In addition, documentation is a technique that is applied to find out the variable in the form of notes, transcripts, articles, and so on. According to Arikuntó (1997: 234) in collecting data in form of words, phrases, and sentences, documentation technique will be appropriate.

After collecting the data, it comes to the process to analyze the data in this study. The theory which is used for the data analysis technique is from Miles and Huberman (1992:20). They said that in analyzing the data, it needs three steps. They are data reduction, data display, and the last is conclusion drawing and verification.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **• Transitivity Process Found in Obama's Second Inaugural Speech**

As the study of this speech proved that the majority process identified are *material process*, *mental process*, and *relational process*. Short may be written as chronologies that mental process comes after material process; it sometimes appears following the appearance of material process. Relational process also sometimes appears during the appearance of those two processes, as the smallest data appeared among them. Detail description of their categories describe below, as:

#### **• Material Process**

Material process is also known as *process of doing*. This process is easily identified by pointing on the verb that expresses areal action. It has two participants, *actor* and *goal* that become the subject and the object. In the data of this research, material clauses appeared more often than the other processes found, it easily found in the beginning until in the end of the speech. This process suggested that Obama pointed his words for actions; what has been done, what is being done, and what will be done. As a nation leader, presidents use their inaugural addresses as an opportunity to talk about the future time they will lead the nation. But when they take the oath of office for a second time, they also use it to talk about the past.

Just like what happen in Obama, in his second term, the concept of "talk about the past" are mentioned some in the speech. The verbs like *gave*, *made*, *vowed*, and *has been tested* prove that the activities of *material process*; a process done by *the actor* to *the goal* substantially; is occurred in the clauses. The past form that used by Obama implies his acknowledgement of the United States history. This acknowledgement included his first terms four years before. He reminded people that he is a re-elected president, and he showed his gratitude over it. It is natural for an incumbent president to think about his place in history.

Obama also served some present material clauses to sign that at this time, the things need to be improved. Material processes like *meet*, *do*, *make*, and *compel* to act establish Obama's action point of view. The way he put the word *must* emphasize his ambition "do it now or never". Obama's speech was showed through this material process analysis that he could convey anything needed to support his leadership and he wants to achieve the nation goal by it.

As an incumbent president, Obama uses his progress programs in leading United States as showed in some verbs. Obama's inaugural speech's main concept is talking about future, what will be done in the next term. When talking about future, the vision and mission of the leadership will be shaped. Indeed, future plan really needed for a new term presidential. By mentioning the future action, Obama try to encourage the people as well as wish the people support and participation. He wanted to make the people believe that in his second chance in leading United States, there will be many actions taken to accomplish problems and to reach the nation's targets.

The appearance of material clauses from the beginning of the speech also show that since the speech is started, Obama have tried to emphasize tangible actions. This plot is continued until the end of the speech, material processes are still easily found there. It indicates that Obama deliberately set the speech in the majority of action clauses in purpose to shape his vision and mission in his next tenure. The dominant of material clause in the data also implied Obama's efforts to convince the people in his next leadership. Obama cited the accomplishments of the past four years while laying out a progressive agenda for the next tenure that will tackle issues like gun control, climate change and immigration reform. After his first presidential period that still leaves many imperfect aspects, he needs to restore the people's trust to be lead again by him in the next five years.

#### **• Mental Process**

People usually not only talk about tangible action like what happening in material process, but also about abstract things they thought or they felt. In transitivity, those things are arranged in mental clause. It characterized by the sense of perception, affection, or cognition.

Mental processes used by Obama give psychological sense to the speech. It is attempting to support the material process. He arranged a good



combination in his speech when he put *mental process* after *material process*. After show what happened, what happening, and what will happen in America as his action (in material process), he talks about feeling and sense through people perception as showed in verbs like *bear witness, affirm, recall, learned, requires* as a doctrine to convince people then he talk heart to heart, sincerely and seriously. It will help to build the people vision moreover synchronize their ideology with Obama's.

Mental cognition verb likes *understand, reject, remember, know, and lend meaning* establish the cognition sense. These cognition processes is easily found in the speech and this mental process is the most dominant. The cognition words like *know, understand, believe*, carry a deep meaning that Obama tried to deliver to the people. Obama really need his people support, then he burned the philosophy of nationality by using those cognition process in his speech. In other words, Obama attempt to indoctrinate the people by touching their cognition aspect through this verb words' use.

- **Relational Process**

Relational process or *process of being* is a process that signifies a relationship of one entity and another entity. The process divided through *intensive, possessive, and circumstantial*. In the data, the common types found were intensive and possessive processes. Intensive process pointed the relationship of 'x is a' and possessive process underlined the relationship of 'x has a'.

The use of to be as verb appeared in relational process like *have never been, is, and are* are part of relationship of one entity and another entity in Obama's speech. Relational process in intensive table above showed participant 1 is participant 2 mean that Obama tried to be part of the nation, equal as United States citizen, and link a thing with another thing as apart of relationship and continuum to assure his people of being a big nation. This process is a crucial transitivity's process in Obama's speech then it can wrap in two others process before, they are material process and mental process.

Obama used this process also for supporting his action process. In the speech, this process usually comes before material process. The combination of transitivity processes can improve the strength of meaning. The word *is* and *are* found in the data; take some as example above; rolled not only as a *to be* but more as a tool for Obama to underlined what America is, and what America has. As the history tells that their nation is a super power one, that they have everything as a big nation, Obama tried to remind the people about it in purpose to increase the people's confidence after some problems; such as economy crisis and criminality; attack United States along his first tenure.

- **Obama's Ideologies reflected from the Transitivity Processes Found**

As a new re-elected president, Obama delivered his inaugural address with many purposes. He need the people to support his government, he need the people to

participate in improving America to be better nation, fixing problems left from his first tenure. To reach his purposes, he needed to instill his ideology to people; synchronize vision and mission with the people he led. It requires strategy, being loved by the people since his first presidential period ease him for this second period. He just needs to improve the strategy to hold the people trust and affect the people mindset. The aim, he wanted to lead United States based on them.

The combination of transitivity processes Obama arranged show a good ability in shaping his ideas, thus indicates as his persuasive strategy. From four transitivity processes beard by Fairclough, there are three of them found in the whole Obamas's speech transcript. Those three processes found already explained in the previous subchapter. In this part, the writer analyzes Obama's ideology reflected from the transitivity processes found. These are some ideas reflected from Obama's utterances:

#### 4.2.1.1 Equality

In the beginning of the speech, Obama quoted United States Declaration of Independence. It shows that Obama try to underline the ideas of equality that becomes one of the three Declaration of Independence principles. That idea becomes interesting theme along the speech when Obama mention it for several times.

11c. *we learned that no union founded on the principles of liberty and equality could survive half-slave and half-free.*

30c. *because she is an American; she is free, and she is equal, not just in the eyes of God but also in our own.*

66. *For our journey is not complete until our wives, our mothers and daughters can earn a living equal to their efforts. (Applause.)*

67b. *until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law -- (applause)*

67c. *for if we are truly created equal,*

67d. *then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well. (Applause.)*

The idea of equality mentioned by Obama in the speech, using several kinds of transitivity processes. He established the combination of "being equal" in relational clauses and "do something to hold equality" in material or mental clauses. The idea of equality is reinforced when Obama invoked "Seneca Falls and Selma and Stonewall," connecting the women's rights convention in 1848, the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the Stonewall riots that pushed forward gay rights in one sentence. It shows that Obama seriously yelled out the same right for gay and lesbian, for women, for discriminated or feeble community.

If we should look back to the history of America, there were many cases of discrimination. That was the reason why equality become the main slogan of United States from that time. Though it listed in the Declaration of Independent, but some communities are still discriminated. The story of black people for example, they were slave and stereotyped as a slave descent until Obama; as a black people; proved that he able to lead United States. That is the reason why Obama holding

tight the principle of equality, because he knows well the feeling to be discriminated people. This situation is used by Obama to gain people's sympathy. As a black people who successfully struggle on the right of equality, Obama considered as equality hero.

#### • Nationalism and Patriotism

There are three kinds of transitivity processes found in Obama's second inaugural speech. But it is interesting to underline material clauses in this political speech that imply Obama's idea. By using action clauses, Obama to transmit the spirit of nationalism and patriotism to the people. Consider these clauses:

No	Sentence	Type of Transitivity
8	The patriots of 1776 <b>did not fight to replace</b> the tyranny of a king with the privileges of a few or the rule of a mob.	Material
9.	a. They <b>gave</b> to us a republic, a government of, and by, and for the people, (9b) entrusting each generation to keep safe our founding creed.	Material
21	Now, more than ever, we must <b>do</b> these things together, as one nation and one people. (Applause.)	Material
26	a. My fellow Americans, we are <b>made</b> for this moment,	Material
26	b. and we will <b>seize</b> it – so long as we seize it together. (Applause.)	Material

Table 1 Material Clauses imply Spirit of Nationalism and Patriotism

Firing up the people's spirit of nationalism and patriotism is important because Obama realized that people have a big role in building the better nation. Persuading the citizen to take action and fight together is a wise common strategy for a democratic president. It will make the people feel exist; feel that their participation is needed and useful to the nation. The advantage for the president is not only being respected, but also being loved by the people. It increases the people enthusiasm to the president as well as to the nation.

It was happening at the US Capitol in January 21<sup>st</sup> 2013 morning when Obama delivers his inaugural speech. In a wintry weather, it did not reduce the intention of American people to watch and to hear to their president. Reflecting big enthusiasm and support were dedicated by millions people for Obama. There was hope, trust, and love collected to escort their re-elected

president to the highest position in the nation. Of course, those things were felt by Obama. His words serve as a political contract between Obama and the people. A tool to defuse the public concerns over all problems happened in his first tenure.

#### • Democracy and National Unity

In material process, the choice of pronoun as the first participant also gives significant. Especially in a political speech, it carries deep meaning through the use of first participant. It is believed that a closer examination of first participant and their roles is also ideologically motivated. In Obama's second inaugural address, pronoun "we" is used almost in all his utterances. The use of first person plural pronoun is always advantageous as it spreads the responsibility during bad state of affairs. Moreover, it reduces the distance between the speaker and the audience, Obama and US people. This pronoun gives a sense of unity and inclusiveness: the feeling that the speaker and the audience are not divided entities, developing an unconscious pride in the listeners. They, consequently, admire and take a side of the speaker.

As already analyzed above, it proves that Obama not only came from democrat party but also has democratic soul. He realized that the supreme sovereignty is on the people's hand. It is the concept of democracy. Implicitly, Obama knows well who is American and what kind of people he led. Smartly, Obama able to place himself equal to the people. It comforts the people to put big enthusiasms to the nation.

Another idea also rise from the use of first participant "we". As in a powerful speech, Obama in his second inaugural speech try to include all the members of the nation in the national ritual. By repeating "we, the people" as the first participant in the processes, he is almost chanting the words of Constitution, also emphasize sacral circumstance of the people at the heart of being American, while at the same time legitimating his political agenda. The inclusion of the people goes even further by comparing the president's oath to every citizen's oath – that of a soldier, or an immigrant or every American's pledge to the flag, thus empowering the people as much as remind them of their obligation. In other words, the "we, the people" reinforcing the sense of national unity.

#### CONCLUSION

From the result and discussion in the previous chapter, the writer has drawn some points of conclusion as mentioned below:

1. Material processes dominated Obama's speech, followed by mental process and relational process comes in the last.
2. Material process used by Obama to show that in his next tenure there will be more action to resolve problems. Using material process clauses, Obama tried to gain the people trust that in his next period, there will be many actions; he less gave promise but persuading the people to work together

3. Mental and relational processes found in the data used to support the actions process.
4. The appearance of mental process clause (by the use of verbs in the speech) sometimes is a tool for Obama to give psychological touch in his speech; he wants his people notice his sincerity and seriousness to lead America. It is also in a purpose to open the people feeling and mindset and ease him to instill and synchronize his ideology to the people.
5. The types of relational process that often used were intensive and possessive clause. Obama used it as a reminder for United States people that they are American, America is a big nation and they have everything as a big nation. This reminder in purpose to restore people confidence after many problems happened along his first period.
6. In the transitivity processes found in the data, the writer found some themes; equality, nationalism and patriotism, democracy and national unity.
7. The themes found indicate as Obama's political ideologies that he tried to instill and synchronize them to the people. Obama is succeeding to deliver his speech as well as instill his ideologies proven by the enthusiasm of his people in giving applauses.

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