

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Humans are social creatures who need to interact with others. The basic thing needed for this is communication. That is why communication is very essential in human's life. Communication can only be effective when there is a speaker who delivers and a hearer receives a message. Moreover, communication occurs when the speaker creates an effect on the hearer.

A medium to exchange the message in communication is language. The message can be delivered either in written or spoken form. Moreover, the message delivered depends on what the speaker says. A speaker may use various styles in using language while communicating. Language is defined as a means to convey feelings, needs, intentions, and thoughts (Thomas & Carmack, 1990, p. 19) and "style is the type of language and phrasing a speaker uses and the effect it creates" (*Speaking in public*, n.d.). Hence, in communication, a speaker may use various styles of language to deliver the message.

In this thesis I am interested in analysing a speech. A speech is defined as “a formal talk given to an audience” (Hornby, 2010, p. 1431). As I have already stated before, a speaker may use various styles either in written or spoken forms including a formal talk. That is why I would like to know what styles are used in a speech.

In this thesis, the speech that I would like to analyze is Martin Luther King, Jr.’s speech. King delivered a lot of influential speeches which are mostly about claiming equality and social justice. Believing in nonviolence, he was said to be the first person in the Western world to fight for equality in peace with words and reason. Unfortunately, on many occasions, he was imprisoned; he wanted African Americans to have equal rights (“Martin Luther King, Jr.”, 1964).

In 1964 King was the youngest person and the third black ever to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway. A year after receiving the prize, he led the Selma-to Montgomery Freedom March for voting rights bill that passed into law and became the new voting rights for African Americans. Moreover, US Congress established ‘Martin Luther King Day’ on the third Monday of January to appreciate him as one of America’s greatest leaders (Jones, 2006). Hence, he was considered one of the most influential civil rights activists in the twentieth century.

Regarding King’s great influence as one of the Western history’s significant figures, I am interested in analyzing one of his prominent speeches entitled *I’ve Been to the Mountaintop*. It was his last speech delivered a day before his assassination. King delivered the speech on April 3, 1968, at the Mason Temple (Church of God in Christ Headquarters) in Memphis, Tennessee. The speech is about the issue of Memphis sanitation workers who were going on

strike because of inequitable pay and treatment of employees of African Americans (“I’ve been to the mountaintop”, n.d.).

Moreover, Jones (2010, pp. 3-4) states King’s final speech is one of the most prominent speeches and the fifteenth most significant American Speech of the twentieth century, according to “American Rhetoric”, a list compiled by one hundred and thirty-seven rhetoric scholars. Furthermore, the most important thing is the fruition of his survival that can be seen clearly nowadays where Americans of every colour begin to accept and understand each other. It is also marked by the appointment of Obama that represents all African Americans as the first African American President in the United States.

I chose this speech because I was attracted by the title that resembled the title of the story of Moses in the Bible and I believe whoever reads the title might also feel the same. After I had read the speech, I found out that King used Biblical stories and others as analogies that are familiar to the hearer, and those resemble the current situation they were facing at that time. The use of schemes which are frequently revealed in this speech are under the scope of linguistic features. Therefore, I assume, these linguistic features can be said to be King’s style in delivering this speech. In this thesis, I would like to elaborate the schematic figures used in the speech.

This analysis of the style in this speech will be conducted under the study of stylistics. Leech (1981) defines style as the “dress of thought” (p. 15). It is the way of how the writer conveys the message. Furthermore, stylistics is defined as “a linguistic approach which explains the relation between language and artistic function” (Leech, 1981, p. 13). The analysis of schemes belongs to the study of stylistics. Specifically, the stylistic category of these forms is figures

of speech. The use of figures of speech as stylistic category will be very useful and helpful for me to analyse the linguistic features that King used in his speech.

The study of stylistics is significant because by studying stylistics, the hearers or the readers know that the *how* is as important as the *what*. The hearers or the readers commonly tend to focus on the *what* rather than the *how* whereas in fact the *how* is also crucial for the *how* is able to give the impact of the speech. The message may be important but if the *how* is uninteresting, the hearers or the readers will feel bored.

The hearers or the readers are also encouraged to appreciate a person's style as an ability in delivering a speech that is not easy to compose. The points and the contents in a speech can be the same whoever delivers it. However, the way of delivering a speech may be different for everyone as they have different styles. The difference is not about what is conveyed in a message but how the message is conveyed. King's style is able to drive the message well so that the speech becomes extraordinary.

(Word count: 973)

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problems that are going to be analysed in this thesis are:

1. What are the schematic figures that Martin Luther King, Jr. uses in the speech *I've Been to the Mountaintop*?
2. What are King's purposes of using the schematic figures in this speech?

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

In this thesis, I would like to:

1. Find out the schematic figures that Martin Luther King, Jr. uses in the speech *I've Been to the Mountaintop*.
2. Explain King's purposes of using the schematic figures in this speech.

### **1.4 Method of Research**

The first thing that I did is selecting one speech to be the source of data. I chose the speech of Martin Luther King, Jr. entitled *I've Been to the Mountaintop*, and then I decided the suitable approaches for the analysis. After that, I collected the data and analysed them. Finally, I wrote the research report.

### **1.5 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is organized into four chapters. Chapter One is Introduction, which consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is Theoretical Framework, which includes the approaches that are going to be used in the thesis. Chapter Three contains the data analysis. Finally, Chapter Four the Conclusion contains my personal comments and opinion of my findings. It is followed by Bibliography, which presents the list of references I use in analysing this thesis. This thesis ends with Appendices.