

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Communication is a vital aspect of human life. It is like a bridge that relates one person to another. We can communicate and exchange the information concerning thoughts, opinions or feelings. Yet, whether people can communicate with others through many ways depends on the context, participants and the goals as well.

In our daily life, we may communicate the same idea in different styles of speaking. It depends on the relationship between the speaker and hearer, the situation, the time, etc. For example, we may find two sentences like this: “Thank you for not littering here” and “Do not litter here”. If we really pay attention to these two sentences, we will draw the same conclusion that the message is about the prohibition of littering. Nevertheless, the styles of the language used to deliver the message are totally different. The styles of communication determine how effectively the message will be received by the hearer.

Out of the many styles of communication, a speaker has to choose one of the best styles in delivering the message appropriately. There must be a reason why we decide to choose one style of communication to others. It is arguable why a speaker chooses certain words and not other words in one text. The speaker has to decide the choice of the style that he or she uses for a special purpose or intention.

According to Leech (12) style is the linguistic characteristic of a particular text. In Linguistics, there is one study which deals with the style of language, namely Stylistics. Stylistics, simply defined as “the (linguistic) study of style, describes what use is made of language” (Leech 13). By studying Stylistics, we are able to explain something explicitly or implicitly, so that we will understand specifically “how language serves a particular artistic function” (Leech 13).

Rhetoric is one of the topics in Stylistics. Rhetoric deals with some features of language that create "the art or skill of effective communication.” (Leech 210) By using rhetoric in our communication, we will achieve such communicative ends at a different level. Not only can we make the communication successful in transferring our ideas but we can also produce effective and beautiful form of communication. Besides, when one tries to communicate one’s ideas through writing, one must think more deeply, as it is intended to be read by others who have different ways of thinking. The reader may not see something exactly as the writer sees.

Actually, it is not a difficult thing to find some examples of the rhetorical figures in our daily life. There are many kinds of rhetorical figures. Examples of rhetorical figures can be found in speeches, advertisements, song lyrics or any texts. A writer must make a text “interesting, clear, persuasive, and memorable, so that they will pay attention

to, understand, believe, and remember the ideas it communicates.” (Harris para.5).

I am interested in analyzing the rhetorical figures in Martin Luther King’s *I Have a Dream* as the topic of my thesis. Martin Luther King, Jr. was not only a prominent American civil rights activist, but also a social reformer and an author. He is often referred to as the inspiration of human rights icon since he fought so hard for equality for all without changing to violence or aggression. Besides, he also becomes the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his work to end racial segregation, and racial discrimination using non-violent methods in 1964. (“*Biography of Martin Luther, Jr.*”)

Related to his good achievement, he changes the course of history by delivering *I Have a Dream*, which is one of the most influential speeches of the American history. This speech is delivered on August 28, 1963, to more than 200,000 people gathered during a huge demonstration before the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. called the “March on Washington”, the demonstration was organized on the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation to call attention to the wrongs suffered by African Americans and to push for federal legislation to bring about change (“*I Have a Dream-Background*”). Realizing how powerful the speech is, I am interested in analyzing the rhetorical figures used in the speech and how they give a color and impact to the speech. I find the topic exciting because there are many special forms of rhetorical figures that Martin Luther King used in this speech for different purposes and reasons. I intend to analyze some dominant figures properly to get a clearer picture of the speech.

The topic of Stylistics is significant because it encourages us to be more critical in understanding an effective way of communicating an idea. Thus, when reading a text, we will learn to take a deeper meaning through some of the rhetorical figures that are used in

the text. Besides learning how to comprehend the context of the text, we can also learn to appreciate the form or style of the language so that we can get pleasure from the artistic value of the speech. Moreover, we can also be encouraged to think ‘out of the box’ in dealing with the issue of stylistics. In short, hopefully we are able to communicate better on a meaningful level.

(868 words)

Statement of the Problem

Based on the topic that I choose, I would like to discuss the following two problems:

1. What are the rhetorical figures that Martin Luther King, Jr. uses in the speech *I Have a Dream*?
2. What is King’s purpose of using such rhetorical figures in the speech?

Purpose of the Study

In this thesis, I would like to show:

1. The rhetorical figures that Martin Luther King, Jr. uses in the speech *I Have a Dream*.
2. The King’s purpose of using the rhetorical figures in the speech.

Method of Research

The method I use in writing this thesis is divided into four steps. First, I begin the research by searching the text as the source of data that I am going to analyze. Second, I decide the scope of Linguistics and the approaches to discuss the data. Third, I analyze

the types and the effects of the rhetorical figures found in the speech. Finally, I write the research report.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One, the Introduction, contains the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two, the Theoretical Framework, provides the linguistic theories used to discuss the rhetorical figures of the speech. Chapter Three, the Analysis, contains the discussion on the rhetorical figures used in Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream*. Chapter Four, the Conclusion, presents my personal opinion and comments on the findings. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and Appendices.