

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A president's inaugural address is usually something boring and does not appeal to most people. After hearing an inaugural address which is usually quite long, people will just easily forget its contents. However, there is an inaugural address which is still remembered even more than 50 years after its delivery. The title is *Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You; Ask What You Can Do For Your Country*. The title still remains a famous saying even until today. This is the inaugural address of the 35th president of the United States, John F. Kennedy. It was delivered on January 20, 1961. There must be something very extraordinary in this text, so that it becomes memorable. Language wise, there must be some outstanding features in the text worth analysing.

In this thesis, I am going to analyse the use of rhetorical figures in John F. Kennedy's *Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You; Ask What You Can Do For Your Country*. I have decided to analyse the rhetorical figures in the speech as

my topic because, although *Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You; Ask What You Can Do For Your Country* is a very short speech, it is so powerful that it has become memorable. The power of the speech is reflected through the rhetorical figures that are used in it. Thus, I feel interested in analysing the speech because this speech is considered to be one of the best inaugural addresses which is still remembered even until the next 50 years. “President John F. Kennedy would have been delighted to know that his inaugural address is still remembered and admired 50 years later” (“JFK’s Inaugural Speech: Six Secrets of His Success”).

Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You; Ask What You Can Do For Your Country is the fourth shortest inaugural address of the presidents of the United States. It contains only 1,364 words and takes only 14 minutes for the delivery. The speech provides an illustration of, or allusion to, the famous events during the era of John F. Kennedy. It is clearly seen from the title that the speech is about Kennedy’s call for Americans not to ask what their country can do for them, but what they can do for their country. Through the speech, Kennedy asks for the responsibility of the people to help the government. Besides being addressed to Americans, the speech is addressed to all citizens of the world. Kennedy asks everyone to fight together for the freedom of man. It is a persuasive speech that gives strong motivation to both citizens of America and citizens of the world.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy is the 35th president of the United States. Kennedy became a president at the age of 43. He became the first Roman Catholic president. His inaugural address offered the memorable phrase: “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country”. He was

assassinated on November 22, 1963, when he was on motorcade. Kennedy was the youngest elected president of the United States and the youngest to die in office. In 1960, Kennedy was nominated to run for presidency, and he won in the presidential election. During his leadership, Kennedy made many achievements for his country. “He did get an increased minimum wage, better Social Security benefits, and an urban renewal package passed” (“John F. Kennedy”).

This study is significant because the readers can appreciate the form of a text more. A text is not just something that contains a message since the way of writing a text has its own importance. In this thesis, the text to be analysed is a president’s inaugural address that contains some kinds of rhetorical figures. This thesis presents the analysis of the use of rhetorical figures of a text and its function. By reading this thesis, the readers can get a better understanding of the text.

In analysing the rhetorical figures, I use linguistic approach. The linguistic element in the analysis is stylistic element, which deals with functional styles of a language. In *Style in Fiction*, it is stated that the word *style* refers to the way of how language is used (Leech 10). Stylistics describes “what use is made of language” (Leech 13). I use the theory of rhetoric, which deals with the superficial expressive form of language. Rhetorical figures are also known as ‘figures of speech’. A rhetorical figure can be defined as a deviation of the ordinary form of expression or ideas in order to produce a greater effect (“English for Students”). There are some kinds of rhetorical figures which are frequently used, such as metaphor, simile, personification, climax, and metonymy.

(716 words)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In this thesis, I am going to analyse:

1. What kinds of rhetorical figures are used in the speech?
2. What are the functions of the rhetorical figures in the speech?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

By carrying out this study, I intend:

1. to show the kinds of rhetorical figures used in the speech.
2. to find out the functions of the rhetorical figures in the speech.

1.4 Method of Research

The method of research used in this study is library research. At first, I searched for data from the Internet. I read the text of Kennedy's inaugural address and then selected the data of the rhetorical figures used in the text. I analysed them with reference to some textbooks which deal with Linguistics and more specifically with Stylistics. I also took some supporting theories from the Internet for writing the research report.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters. It begins with Chapter One, the Introduction, consisting of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the linguistic theories used as references in analysing the rhetorical

figures. In Chapter Three, I analyse the rhetorical figures in *Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You; Ask What You Can Do For Your Country*. Chapter Four is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and Appendices.