

**THE ANALYSIS OF RHETORICAL POWER
IN GEORGE W. BUSH'S POLITICAL SPEECH
'PRIME TIME PRESS CONFERENCE ON IRAQ WAR'**

A Project Submitted to the Faculty of Letters in Part-Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* in English and Letters

By

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**STRATA ONE ENGLISH PROGRAMME
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The project entitled:

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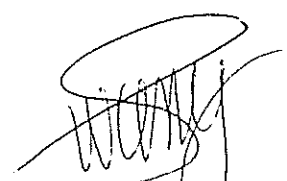
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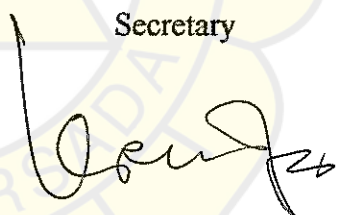
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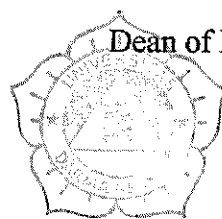
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**THE ANALYSIS OF RHETORICAL POWER
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Is a scientific research I conducted under the guidance of Dra. Irna N. Djajadiningrat, M.Hum. and Fridolini, SS., M.Hum. Since the project is truly original not a half or total plagiarism of someone else's—, the contents have become my responsibility.

With all sincerity, I made this statement in Jakarta.

Ia Amalia

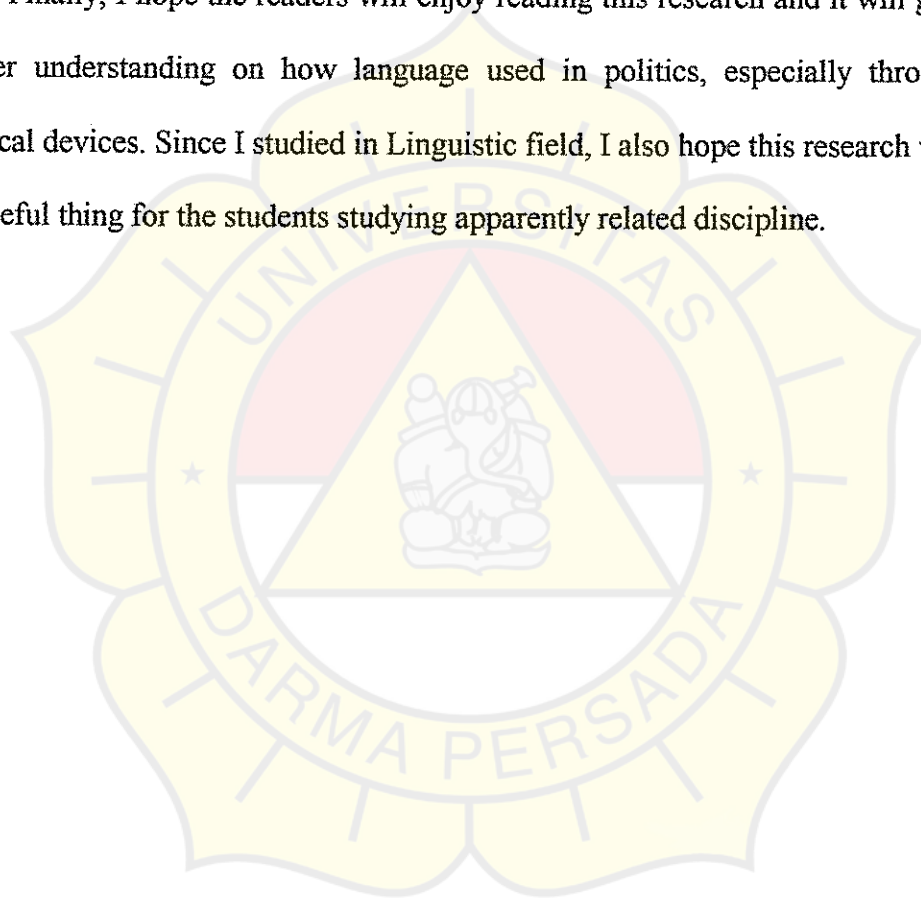
PREFACE

When I read *Cruel and Unusual* written by Mark Crispin Miller, I was interested in the word 'Bushism' that is used by Miller in explaining one kind of Bush's characteristics. Miller (*Cruel and Unusual*, 2004: xii - xiv), next, explained it is as just one more flight of gibberish from the president, who, we knew by then, would often say the darnedest things off-script. The presidential tongue goes haywire mainly when it is forced to tackle subjects that Bush finds boring or offensive. He just can not fake it when it comes to talking peace (*I will use our military as a last resort, and our first resort*), education (*We want results in every single classroom so that one single child is left behind!*), nation-building (*It'll take time to restore chaos and order in Iraq*), unemployment (*One of the problems we have is that enough people can't work in America*), conservation (*We need an energy bill that encourages consumption*), etc.

Trying to understand more on how Bush uses his language techniques in delivering his speech or just in answering reporters' questions, I certainly conducted the research entitled *The Analysis of Rhetorical Power in George W. Bush's Political Speech 'Prime Time Press Conference on Iraq War'* as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* in English and Letters.

In conducting the research, I believe, then, that I am not fully right either in the research's contents or in the technical of the research's analysis. For that reason, I hope the readers could give advanced suggestions in order to improve the research.

Finally, I hope the readers will enjoy reading this research and it will give a better understanding on how language used in politics, especially through rhetorical devices. Since I studied in Linguistic field, I also hope this research will be a useful thing for the students studying apparently related discipline.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praise to Allah SWT as the cherisher and sustainer of the world that has given me a brightest way to finish this research.

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I warmly thank my parents, for their spiritual support and to whom this research is dedicated, my two pretty sisters; Rani and Aini, my two beloved grandfathers and grandmothers, and also my uncles and my aunts.

Last but not least, I express thanks to those I could not mention here. I do not mean to forget your existence. Your contributions will be kept in my mind.





FAKULTAS SASTRA

ABSTRACT

THE ANALYSIS OF RHETORICAL POWER IN GEORGE W. BUSH'S POLITICAL SPEECH 'PRIME TIME PRESS CONFERENCE ON IRAQ WAR'

The research discussed about rhetorical power in George W. Bush's political speech 'Prime Time Press Conference on Iraq War.' The reason why I choose Bush's political speech as my basic analysis source is because I find that Bush is the one of prominent leaders in the world and has a typical 'Bushism' power in delivering his speech or answering reporters' questions. The basic problem of my assumption is that Bush uses rhetorical devices, like: metaphor, euphemism, the 'rule of three', parallelism and pronouns in order to persuade public with his ideas. Trying to prove my assumption, I conducted the research through semantic approach. I employ some theories and ideas from the linguists concerning on metaphor, euphemism, the 'rule of three', parallelism, and pronouns.

In this research, I systemized my analysis by using all of five rhetorical devices. First, I analyzed Bush's speech through metaphor device based on Harris (2005) and Levinson (1983) theories. Second, I analyzed it through euphemism device based on Thomas, et al (2004) and Neaman and Silver (1983) theories. Third, I analyzed it through the 'rule of three' device based on Thomas, et al (2004) theory. Fourth, I analyzed it through parallelism device based on Thomas,

et al (2004) theory. Fifth, I analyzed it through pronouns' device based on Thomas, et al (2004) theory.

Finally, in the last chapter, I concluded that rhetorical devices in the speech, like: metaphor, euphemism, the 'rule of three', parallelism and pronouns, could be employed by people (not restricted to people who make their career as politicians) in order to persuade public, and, then, those rhetorical devices could only be applied by the people who understand much about them.

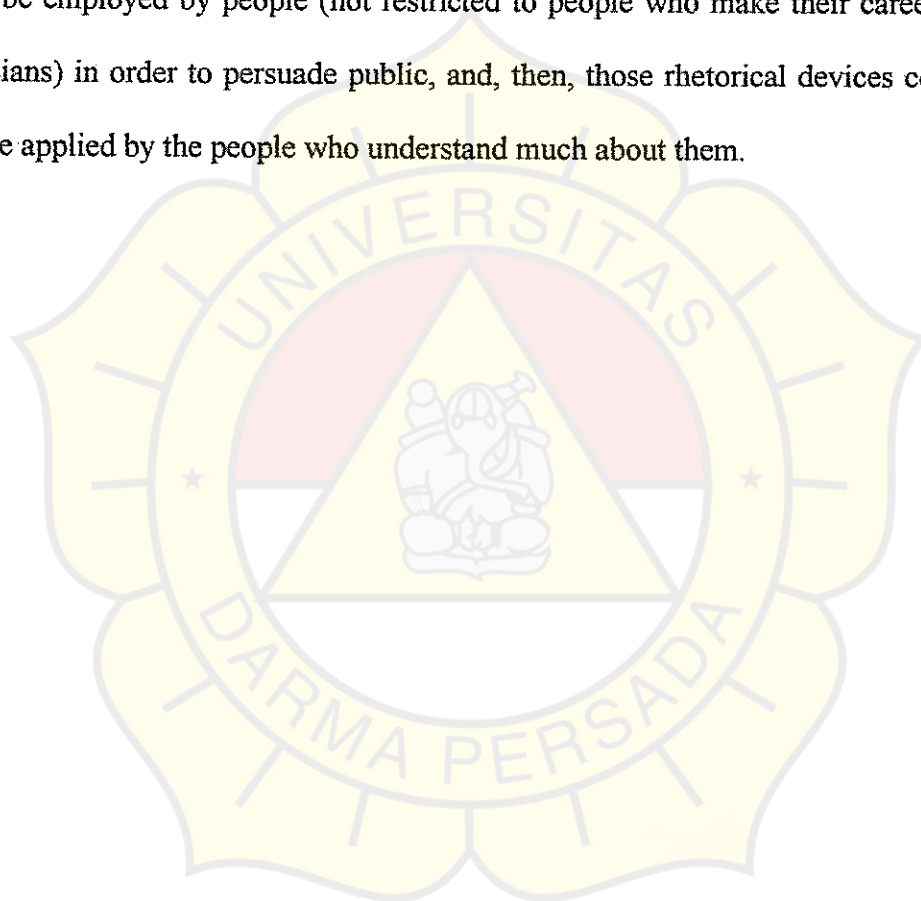


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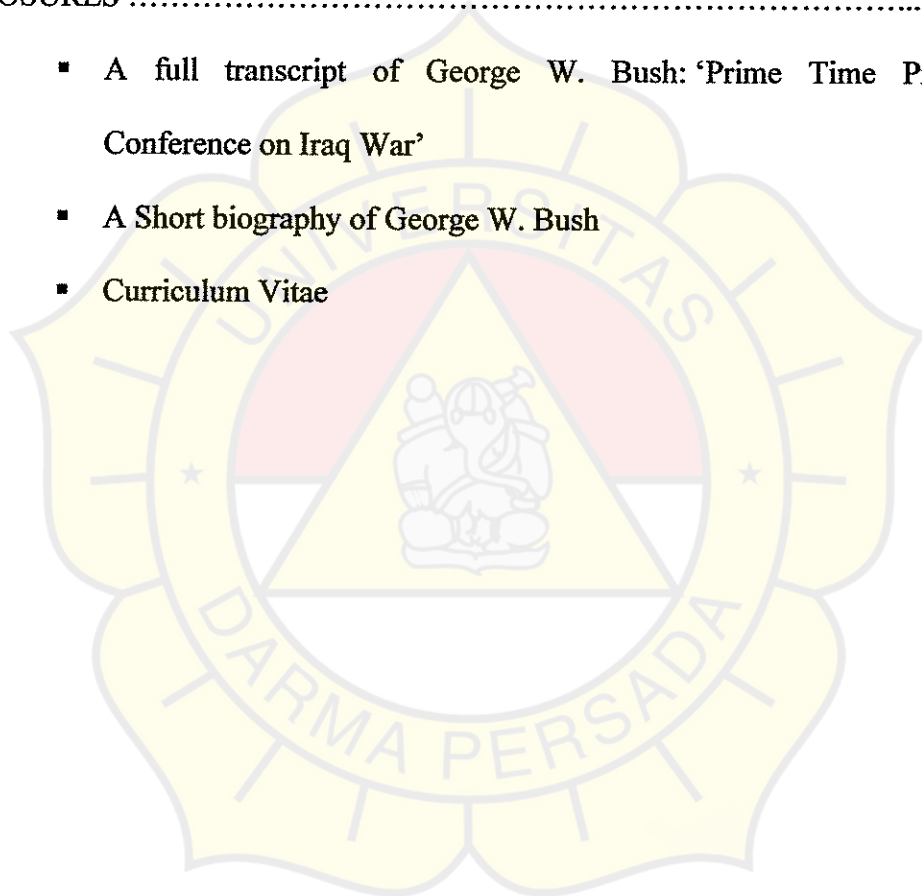
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- A full transcript of George W. Bush: 'Prime Time Press Conference on Iraq War'
- A Short biography of George W. Bush
- Curriculum Vitae



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background

Bourdieu (in Widjojo and Noorsalim (eds), 2004: 209) states language is not only a communicative instrument but also a part of an instrument that humans can actualize their hopes, plans, and ambitions. Moreover, language is also a field (arena or locus) which is gathered with various humans' interests (in Widjojo and Noorsalim (eds), *Ibid*: 201).

Therefore, humans with their various interests can do a lot of things with their language. One of them is that they use language as their media to do politics. It means that language is also a medium of domination and power (in Latif and Ibrahim (eds), 1996: 16). We call this kind of language as political language that is actually included of persuasive language (rhetoric).

Rhetoric is defined by Aristotle (in *Scholarly Definitions of Rhetoric* (Online), <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/rhetoricdefinitions.htm>) as 'the faculty of discovering in any particular case all of the available means of persuasion'. According to Lazar (2003: 124), it is originated in the study of how to communicate eloquently, undertaken by the Ancient Greeks, as they participated in public debate as part of their democratic responsibility. It is also designed to influence the judgment or feelings of people. Furthermore, rhetoric

comes to the term of semantic approach. Semantic approach means conducting research based on semantics.

Semantics is a study of meaning expressed by language (Kreidler, 1998: 303). It means that semantics refers to meaning and meaning is so intangible that one group of linguists, the structuralists, preferred not to deal with it or rely on it at all (Todd, 1987: 79).

Today, political language is in use all the time, all around us (Thomas, et al, 2004: 37). We often hear it in many kinds of politicians' speech. Politicians use political language to convey their political views in order to persuade public. By using political language through rhetorical devices, it seems that politicians owe much of their success to persuade public on the validity of their political views. There are kinds of rhetorical devices, like: metaphor, euphemism, the 'rule of three', parallelism and pronouns. Here are the examples of them.

Firstly, here is the example of metaphor. In the United States of America on 28 August 1963, Martin Luther King as a Baptist minister from Alabama led in 210,000 people in a march to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC and delivered one of the most memorable speeches of the 20th century.

...Now is the time to make real the promises of Democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the **quicksands** of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children (in Lazar, 2003: 125).

In the speech above, King uses metaphor as instrumental in creating reality by putting the word **quicksands**. He puts the word **quicksands** to replace the word **terrible dangers** (in Lazar, 2003: 126). By putting it, he wants to warn the people that there are terrible dangers of racial injustice in the United States. He equally supposes terrible dangers as quicksands by understanding the meaning of quicksands literally. Thus, it means deep wet sand that we can sink into and get stuck in.

Secondly, here is the example of euphemism. In the 1990s, Slobodan Milošević as a politician and President of the former Yugoslavia, embarked on a program of what he termed as **ethnic cleansing** (in Thomas, et al, 2004: 48). If we read Milošević's statement of using 'ethnic cleansing', we may assume that it is on positive light and there is nothing wrong behind it.

However, in reality this statement refers to **the forcible removal** of the non-Serbian civilian population in an attempt to redesign Yugoslavia along purely ethnic lines. He did it by bombarding towns with heavy artillery, besieging villages and massacring civilians (in Thomas, et al, *Ibid*).

The reason why Milošević 'hide' these details from public is because Milošević wants to present his statement in positive light by using the term 'ethnic cleansing' to be a prime example of euphemism.

Thirdly, the following is the example of the 'rule of three'. At the 1996 Labour Party Conference, Tony Blair claimed that three main commitments of the

Labour Party were **education, education, education**, while at the Conservative Party Conference in the same year, that party's main concerns were presented as **unity, unity, unity**. It means that the 'rule of three' or three part-statement is such a powerful structure that politicians have used it even when they have only one point to make (Thomas, et al, *Ibid*). Consequently, we can conclude that in his first speech at Labour Party Conference, Tony Blair is more concerned for his commitment to develop education in Britain. While in his second speech at the Conservative Party Conference, he is more concerned for his commitment to bring the unity into the nation.

Fourthly, here is the example of parallelism. On August 1963, Martin Luther King delivered speech to achieve freedom and equality for African-Americans through peaceful means.

...And so **let freedom ring** from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. **Let freedom ring** from the mighty mountains of New York. **Let freedom ring** from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. **Let freedom ring** from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado (in Thomas, et al, *Ibid*: 51).

In his speech above, Martin Luther King uses both of the repetition of phrase, **Let freedom ring**, and parallel structure. His speech above shows an even more extensive parallelism (in Thomas, et al, *Ibid*). The four sentences end with identically patterned prepositional phrases:

from + the +	adjective	+	noun (hills/mountains) + of +	noun	(American State)
	prodigious		hilltops		New Hampshire
	mighty		mountains		New York
	heightening		Alleghenies		Pennsylvania
	snow-capped		Rockies		Colorado

Fifthly, the next is the example of pronouns. Prime Minister Tony Blair, addressing the Labour Party Annual Conference in October 2001, shows a shift in pronouns between **I** and **you**, with a similar effect (in Thomas, et al, *Ibid*: 53). The switch from **I** to **you** brings together his audience and, more importantly, encourages them to identify with the emotions that he felt at the time.

Just two weeks ago, in New York, after the church service **I** met some of the families of the British victims...And as **you** crossed the room, **you** felt longing and sadness, hands clutching photos of sons and daughters, imploring **you** to believe them when they said there was still on outside chance of their loved ones being found alive, when **you** knew in truth that all hope was gone (in Thomas, et al, *Ibid*).

Then in other case, we are sometimes quite difficult in presuming someone's utterance. Even it is a simple utterance; we are still hard to presume it. Politician's speech is for example. We know that politicians use rhetorical devices in his speech by looking at his utterances that imply on the five of rhetorical devices. This idea supports by Hyde and Smith (in *Scholarly Definitions of Rhetoric* (Online), <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/rhetoricdefinitions.htm>).

They state that the primordial function of rhetoric is to 'make-known' meaning both to oneself and to others.

Thomas, et al (2004: 45) states that there are five rhetorical devices in politics that are used by politicians to increase the impact of their ideas. There are metaphor, euphemism, the 'rule of three', parallelism, and pronouns. The five rhetorical devices will led us to establish how political speech increases the impact of politicians' ideas.

In my research, I take a full transcript of George W. Bush's speech, 'Prime Time Press Conference on Iraq War', delivered on 13 April 2004 from <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/wariniraq/gwbushiraq41304.htm>.

I prefer choosing Bush's political speech because I find that Bush is one of prominent leaders in the world. He has a typical 'Bushism' power that can also hold his own when talking politics and tries to persuade public with his political ideas.

1.2 The Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the problem above, I identify that politicians often use rhetorical devices in their speech. I assume that Bush uses those devices in his speech 'Prime Time Press Conference on Iraq War' which was delivered on 13 April 2004 from the East Room of the White House in order to persuade public with his ideas.

1.3 The Limitation of the Problem

The problem that will be discussed in this research will be taken from a full transcript of George W. Bush's political speech 'Prime Time Press Conference on Iraq War.' I try to limit the research of the speech by using rhetorical devices, like: metaphor, euphemism, the 'rule of three', parallelism and pronouns. Therefore, I use semantic approach in conducting this research.

1.4 The Formulation of the Problem

I formulate the basic problem of my assumption that in his speech 'Prime Time Press Conference on Iraq War', Bush uses rhetorical devices, like: metaphor, euphemism, the 'rule of three', parallelism and pronouns in order to persuade public with his ideas.

1.5 The Objective of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem above, I state my objective to prove my assumption that Bush uses rhetorical devices in order to persuade public with his ideas. I manage my objective by proving Bush uses rhetorical devices, like: metaphor, euphemism, the 'rule of three', parallelism and pronouns, in order to persuade public with his ideas.

1.6 The Methodology

I use qualitative method in this research. By using it, I try to rely on the identification of structural elements, like: metaphor, euphemism, the 'rule of three', parallelism, and pronouns.

1.7 The Significance of the Research

I hope at least this research could achieve maximum results and be useful in giving best understanding about the link between language and politics. I also hope that this research could be something different from the previous project done by students of faculty of letters because in this research, I strict to the point on what the aim of Bush using rhetorical power in his political speech is. In addition, this research could also be used as one of the sources in the future research, especially the research about language and politics.

1.8 The Systemized Presentation of the Research

To simplify the arrangement of this research, I systematically arrange it as below:

Chapter 1 Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the general explanation, such as: the background, the identification of the problem, the limitation of the problem, the formulation of the problem, the objective of the

research, the methodology, the significance of the research, and the systemized presentation of the research.

Chapter 2 Fundamental Theories and Conceptual Framework

In this chapter, I explain fundamental theories and conceptual framework that are used in this research.

Chapter 3 The Analysis of Rhetorical Power in George W. Bush's Political Speech 'Prime Time Press Conference on Iraq War'

In this chapter, I analyze rhetorical devices used by Bush in the speech in order to persuade public with his ideas.

Chapter 4 Findings

In this chapter, I explain findings related to chapter 1, chapter 2 and chapter 3.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

This chapter is the last chapter of this paper and usually explains conclusion of this research.