

# Donald J. Trump's Protest Response: Rhetorical Language of His Speech at the "Save America" Rally

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## ABSTRACT

Language is deliberately utilized by politicians. Admittedly, it can perform a purposive function: to achieve the politicians' goals crucially in attempt to gain people's support. This study is interested in the current political context in the U.S. In the 2020 U.S. presidential election, Donald J. Trump lost in his second election. He, therefore, delivers his response of objection at the "Save America" rally in Washington, D.C. This study is targeted to explore a political speech from the defeated candidate perspective. Recently, rhetorical language in political discourse has been commonly analysed. However, this study contributes to an analysis of rhetorical strategy used in an informal, implicit, and pursuing to protest speech by Trump. This study is designed by a descriptive qualitative approach. The data is the speech text of Trump's speech on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Technique of data collection undertakes observation of the speech and the transcript, categorization, and coding. The grand theories include Teun van Dijk's discourse theory (1980) and Reisigl political speech's schemes (2008). The results indicate that repetition has become Trump's most potent strategy in his protest speech. Seemingly, he prefers to utilize the devices that are beneficial for him to emphasize something good about *Us* and emphasize something bad about *Them*. This is crucial for him since from the defeated side, it can impress the Republicans to support his objection. Nonetheless, Trump's capability to persuade the Republicans has caused an impulse, anarchic and illegal movement, which is contrary to their ideal vision to the country.

## 1. Introduction

In 2020, a great amount of practices of political discourse is easily found. During the end of 2020 to 2021, one of famous events was held particularly in the United States of America. The 2020 U.S. election offered various kinds of ideas for researchers to put their interest on. Within the period, politicians competed, composed, and arranged their strategies to be able to achieve their purposes, indeed, their purposes to win the election. Here, for those reasons, political discourses work. To begin with the definition, Reisigl (2008) affirms, that political discourses refer to relations of action implying function in politics that are expressed through discourse. In addition, he argues regarding to it, that the productions can occur in different political fields for instance, lawmaking procedures, formation of public attitudes, political advertising, or political control.

In the 2020 election, the practices can be observed easily in news articles, TV debates, campaign speeches, or interviews. Besides, several familiar practices are in inaugural speech, the presidential candidate debate, or election speech. Moreover, for the written ones, Woods (2006) argues slogans are also one of the discourses, that has become familiar strategy in election. Social media is included as well. Social media is utilized by the politicians

as a medium, to express what they intend to convey freely toward supporters. Additionally, it is a platform to make them having a unique bond between the politicians and their supporters. For instance, Twitter emerged as a significant medium in the campaign period of Barrack Obama (Yaqub et al., 2017). This case is triggered by these three features of Twitter, simplicity, impulsivity, and incivility (Ott, 2017). It is worth noting from a positive perspective, that those features support how the politicians interact with their supporters casually. In fact, Twitter offers a way of informal communication, so an intimacy can be easily built when they involve in tweets or discussions. Finally, from those political practices, it postulates targeted to a clear purpose, to persuade people and gain support as much as they can.

Eventually, in order to persuade people, the politicians need to have a practical strategy to accomplish their intentions. Obviously, the strategy particularly relates to the use of language. The language needs to be effective enough in order to support conveying well messages. The language has a crucial role on this strategy, in particular, in politics. This early picture is in accordance with Chilton's idea (2004), he argues that politicians frequently take opportunity to persuade people, their loyal supporters, regarding their goals through the language they utilized. Chilton also denotes benefit of the language in political speech, that it is useful on account of its share vision utility. It is when the

speakers are able to attract the addressee (corresponding supporters). The language can manipulate them to put their interest, sympathy and support to him (Al-abbasi, 2022; Khajavi & Rasti, 2020; Rahayu et al., 2018). Finally, they succeed in influencing the audience to give their votes and in making the speakers win the election. In short, the language that is implemented in political speeches should be practical, meaningful, and understandable. It also needs to have a clear purpose. Dealing with the range of analysis that deals with that language, those issues are discussed within rhetoric analysis.

We have observed that, there are a great number of previous studies examining politicians' discourses. In fact, the studies have offered an additional comprehension in discourses especially in politics. The studies' ranges of analysis also spread to various forms and contexts. The studies conducted, including web-based communication (tweets), speeches, and TV debates. The contexts include context of social campaign, presidency, and the election. First, Luo (2021) examines Donald J. Trump, the Former President's tweets. Trump seems embodied his message by his tweets that he posted on his Twitter. As a consequence, the tweets present his manner how he crates *us* and *others* image by indicating a positive for *us* but negative for *them*. Second, an Indonesian educational and cultural minister, Nadiem Makarim is also chosen in a study by Maghfiroh & Triyono (2020). The purpose of the study is to explore his message arranged behind his speech. Nadiem manages the speech deliberately to invite the educators in Indonesia to his mission of Indonesia's Education Change. Third, Proctor and Su (2011) study the distribution of personal pronoun in the 2008 US vice-presidential debate and interview. The results denote the usage depends on the external context and purpose. Those factors affect the politicians to reveal their intended self-identify and to evoke them to change their strategy during the debate.

In terms of the United States Presidential Election, it has become a suitable period for politicians to gain their purposes. In this case, there is a widely known phenomenon called political campaign. According to The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (2020), it occurs within a particular period, from June to the beginning of November commonly in every year. The presidential candidates from both Republican and Democrats parties arrange their campaigns (including speeches, TV debates, and interviews). For speeches, they rally potential and corresponding supporters in certain States in the U.S., especially in battleground states (the swing states). This strategy is essential since it determines the candidates to possibly win over the electoral votes in the Electoral College.

To have clearer description about electoral votes, we need to define what the Electoral College is. The Electoral College refers to a process to elect the newly President and the Vice President of the United States of America.

According to The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (2019b), the Electoral College is addressed in the Constitution. It is addressed that the Electoral College consists of selection of the electors, meeting of the electors, and counting the electors votes by Congress. Relating to the election, a candidate has to secure at least 270 electoral votes of 538 in total to be elected as the President (2019a). In the 2020 election, Joe Biden secured 306 votes (Ballotpedia, 2020). Meanwhile, Donald J. Trump secured 232 votes which have granted Joe Biden and Kamala Harris to be the newly President and Vice President of the United States of America.

After the announcement of the Electoral College, there is an interesting event to concern, in which both of the candidates (the winner and the loser) are allowed to give their remarks regarding the election result. On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2020, the President-elect Joe Biden gave his remark which was themed celebration and appreciation. The speech mostly addressed to thank and celebrate his victory with the Democrats and people who contributed to his success. On the other hand, the defeated candidate, Donald J. Trump (the Republican) gave a remark as well, but it appeared to be blaming and protest speech. This situation reflects Craig et al. study (2005), which report that the defeated party would tend to give false claim or blaming speech. Moreover, a survey as reported by Anderson et al. (2005), it exhibits that losing elections incline to perform certain political acts (i.e., protest). On 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021, at the "Save America" rally Donald J. Trump delivered his remark in front of the Republicans mainly to declare the Republicans' victory unilaterally.

Examining a political speech from the defeated candidate's perspective has become a concern in this study. The language, thus, that is utilized in the speech would be different. It is presumably in line with the context, purpose, and function of the speech itself. To begin with the type of the speech, this study refers to Reisigl's criterion (2008). Type of political speech "action of controlling" is categorized in type field of action as political control. Examples of the speech can be seen in speech of protest, commemorative speech, blaming speech, and election speech. Here, Donald J. Trump's speech at the "Save America" rally in Washington, D.C. is an example of speech of protest. It represents a form of response to his defeat in the 2020 election.

Apparently, within the speech he frequently claims the Republican's victory. He even impresses the audience (the Republicans) with evidence regarding illegal votes and other foul practices. On top of that, the speech easily gives rise to public confusion in no time. On 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022 these words (hashtags) on Twitter *#capitolriots*, *#6<sup>th</sup>january*, and *#donaldrump* were easy to find. According to the media ("Capitol Riots: Did Trump's Words at Rally Incite Violence?," 2021) the speech had provoked and incited a

crowd attacking the Capitol Building, in which later on, people know it as U.S. Capitol Riot. The assault, as a consequence, had caused the proceeding (the result announcement of the Electoral College) was postponed in a while (Mascaro et al., 2021). Finally, by observing the case, news, and prior studies, we are interested to conduct a research regarding it. The prior studies have oftentimes conducted studies on Donald J. Trump's speeches and other types of discourses. However, it is worth noting, that the 2020 election offers something uncommon practices, indeed when Donald J. Trump lost and refuted by delivering an influential speech.

Furthermore, political speeches in the U.S. presidential election context are repeatedly taken for exploring the use of rhetoric. In fact, the production of politicians' speeches naturally associates with the art of persuasive language. Previous studies examining political speeches within related context have shown a great deal of new understanding (Al-abbasi, 2022; Alshammari, 2020; Derakhshani et al., 2021; Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014; Khajavi & Rasti, 2020; Maghfiroh & Triyono, 2020; Nugraha, 2014; Perangin-angin et al., 2021; Pradiptha et al., 2020; Proctor & Su, 2011; Rachman, A; Yuniarti, 2017; Rahayu et al., 2018; Rohmah, 2018; Savoy, 2017; Tian, 2021; Widiatmika et al., 2020). With considerably numbers of studies of rhetorical language, varied examples are introduced. An example of metaphor adoption that says "America ... as a beacon of hope..." (Nugraha, 2014) in Hillary's speech depicts a meaning depiction for the U.S. The phrase means positive response and support for LGBT community from the speaker. The speaker implies to show her strong commitment for the community. In addition, repetition and irony adaptation are seen in "A nation without borders... a nation that does not protect prosperity..." (Rohmah, 2018). The study shows that Donald J. Trump tried to provoke and impress the audience. Presumably, taking benefit of his language, he simply exposes a strategy to create a good image for himself. To be noted that, depending on the context and issues, different examples can draw different meaning as well. Within the election context, a political speech from the defeated candidate is worth conducting.

The 2020 U.S. election produces two sides, the winner and the loser. As the result announced, Joe Biden came as the newly President of the United States of America. Otherwise, Donald J. Trump lost surprisingly. A remark delivered by the defeated candidate delivered at the "Save America" rally on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021. It obviously indicates to be response of protest. This type of speech is peculiar and has become our concern. By observing the previous studies, those commonly examined winning speeches, campaign speeches, campaign interviews, welcoming speeches, TV debates, or even presidential speeches in general. We also investigate that some of them examined the rhetorical strategies within structure of the discourse as well. Nonetheless, those studies serve formal and explicit

discourses. Therefore, this study is conducted to examine an informal, implicit, and pursuing to protest speech within the 2020 U.S. presidential election context.

Specifically, it would be important to observe the case of the speech. We were interested to find out, how Donald J. Trump's speech can be so influential? and what happen to the language utilized by Donald J. Trump in his speech, particularly in the structure of the speech.

Therefore, in order to examine the issues, this study pursues two research questions as follows, (1) What are the rhetorical devices utilized by Trump in his protest speech? (2) How is the function of the rhetorical devices in his protest speech? These research questions produce two objectives: to find out the rhetorical devices utilized in the protest speech and to discuss the functions. Finally, these concerns on the issues purpose to offer new exploration regarding the use of rhetorical strategies in Donald J. Trump's protest speech to the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Discourse Analysis

In a simple definition, discourse refers to language use. Meanwhile Paltridge (2012, p. 2) argues that there are typical ways in using language. He gives examples of how speakers or communicators deliver their messages with their utterances directed to the audience. Besides, the manner of the writers constructing words, paragraphs, or texts to express their messages within which the readers can comprehend. Those examples simple define what the discourses are and how they work. Meanwhile, in a specific situation for instance, in politics, the language obviously carries a certain intention. Furthermore, it denotes Beard's idea (2001, p. 18), that in politics the language becomes a tool of practice that is performed by the politicians to shape their argument.

Moreover, other definitions of discourse have proposed by several experts. According to Foucault (1981), discourse is defined as an effect of procedure as part of the system in society. Foucault affirms regarding a way of a discourse is managed "...controlled, selected, organized, redistributed by a certain number of procedure" for the one who has access to it. Eventually, it turns out that the discourse will also give its control to people.

Meanwhile, Paltridge (2012) defines discourse as a study of language patterns that hooks into its cultural and social context. In addition, van Dijk's concept of context (2008) illustrates how context influences the production of discourse. Van Dijk examines a political discourse of Tony Blair's speech with the related context. It turns out that the context of Tony Blair' status as UK Prime Minister, purpose of the speech, and the social situation (UK politics) have affected Tony Blair's attitude in delivering his messages. In short, it can be concluded that admittedly discussion on

discourse presents the language and context interrelation that managed to be examined under discourse analysis.

## 2.2 Teun van Dijk Discourse Theory

Van Dijk’s approach in his theories is familiar with his social cognition material. Recently, especially for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) studies, Social-cognitive approach proposed by him has been frequently used by researchers in conducting their studies dealing with social issues. Aside from the approach, in past years the discourse structure theory by van Dijk has been applied by researchers examining discourses of political issues. Some of them conducted study on written discourse for instance in news articles (Huda et al., 2020) and mass media (Sahmeni & Afifah, 2019). Moreover, the other researchers conducted study on spoken discourse such as parliamentary speeches (Maghfiroh & Triyono, 2020; Nugraha, 2014; Perangin-angin et al., 2021; Pradiptha et al., 2020; Rachman, A; Yuniarti, 2017; Rohmah, 2018) or radiobroadcast (Yaqin, 2017). Van Dijk argues a theory for discourse approach. In *Macrostructure* (1980), he proposes a notion of discourse structure that closely deals with discourse and cognition. He asserts the theoretical framework for text analysis. He divides discourse structure into three parts, namely: (1) macrostructure, (2) superstructure, and (3) microstructure. The three structures as shown in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Van Dijk’s Text Analysis (Eriyanto, 2015, p. 227)

<b>Macrostructure</b>
Theme or Topic
<b>Superstructure</b>
Introduction, Content, and Closing
<b>Microstructure</b>
Syntactic, Semantic, Stylistic, and Rhetoric

First, the macrostructure of discourse is the theme. The notion of theme is explained as a point of the discourse. It refers to the semantic “core” globally. Van Dijk proposes a notion of *macroproposition*. It refers to the representation of a state as a whole. This illustration may explain how the *macroproposition* works, “John was ill. He didn’t go to the meeting” (van Dijk, 1980, p. 43). The global meaning of that statement is “John couldn’t come to the meeting”. To be able to formulate the global meaning, it needs to have the components of facts and details that are relevant. As a result, it can be formulated by steps of *macrorules* to derive global meaning from global relevance. It has four rules namely: (1) deletion or selection, (2) strong deletion, (3) generalization, and (4) construction. In addition, it also has zero rule. In brief, the deletion or selection means deleting the irrelevant text base. The strong deletion means an advanced step after deletion focusing on local details. The generalization means

constructing the proposition to be more general. The construction means conjoining the propositions. Lastly, in special case, zero rule means taking an intact of the proposition.

Second, the superstructure is the schematic structure of discourse. The scheme aims to present the discourse arrangement. In Macrostructures, van Dijk (1980) divides discourse scheme into three parts, namely: (a) introduction, (b) body or content, and (c) closing. Moreover, the scheme itself includes functional categories (1980, pp. 108–109) that need to be adjusted to a certain type of discourse. For instance, the introduction in formal speech consists of salutation and tribute. Afterwards, van Dijk (1980) explains the introduction exhibits the background of information, setting, participant, and topic that re introduced by the speakers. Second, the body or content consists of a further explanation of the events and additional topics. Simply put, this part deals with the important discussion. Lastly, the closing contains the conclusion, closing, summary, or future plan. In addition, Reisigl (2008) affirms that there are typical parts or schemes of political speech. In general, rhetorical political speech consists of four parts, namely: (1) introduction (*exordium*), (2) narration (*narratio*), (3) argumentation (*argumentatio*), and (4) conclusion (*peroratio*). The introduction includes an opening that purposes to gain audience’s attention. The narration is a part when the speaker states a case. The argument denotes proof or support of the case. Lastly, the conclusion is a summary that purposes to evoke audience.

Last, the microstructure is the local meaning of discourse. It focuses on words, clauses, phrases, and sentences. Simply put, microstructure analysis focuses on a micro-semantic level. It is in accord with van Dijk’s idea that microstructure refers to sentences and sequence of sentences (1980). Previously, it has been explained that macrostructure is the global semantic. Simply put, macrostructure analyses the general and wider scope of the discourse. On the other hands, microstructure analyses the details and narrow scope of the discourse. Van Dijk asserts that the analysis covers the surface, underlying structures, and cross level. It means that the analysis consists of syntactic, semantic, and rhetoric components (2008, p. 154). Additionally, stylistic is also included as the microstructure component.

## 2.3 Rhetoric

As part of the micro unit of analysis, rhetoric analysis is defined as a structure that supplements discourse meanings and accentuates intentions (van Dijk, 2008). Simply put, it is a language style that is persuasive when used by the speaker. Meanwhile, Sornig as cited in Wodak (1989, p. 95) asserts that the use of rhetoric means a process verbalizing ideas of purposes along with the message. In politics, persuasive language plays an important role for politicians. Moreover, Thomas (2003) gives the rhetorical devices that are commonly used by them. Politicians utilize them as a tool to

achieve their intentions by conveying speech’s meaning (Rahayu et al., 2018). Here, **Table 2** includes six rhetorical devices that are commonly used in political speeches, each with a brief description.

**Table 2.** Rhetorical Device (Thomas & Wareing, 2003, pp. 45–52; van Dijk, 2000, p. 272)

No	Device	Description
1	Hyperbole	Hyperbole is an overstated statement (Fahnestock, 2011: 118).
2	Metaphor	Metaphor is an implicit comparison (Fahnestock, 2011: 109).
3	Simile	Simile is an explicit comparison (Fahnestock, 2011: 109).
4	Euphemism	Euphemism is an inoffensive expression replacement (Fahnestock, 2011: 139).
5	Repetition	Repetition is a pattern of emphasis (Fahnestock, 2011: 230)
6	Parallelism	Parallelism is a similarity of quality in phrases or clauses (Fahnestock, 2011: 224).

The table above shows the rhetorical devices that will be examined in this study. It is selected based on the accumulation of rhetoric by Thomas & Wareing (2003) and van Dijk (2000) examples of the usage. In explicit, this research will observe the usage in the protest speech. Dealing with the research object in fact, the discourse production is easily reached by people. Simply put, the use of persuasive language is essential. It can attract people’s attention, so the message can be well delivered. For instance, Yaqin (2017, p. 105) showed the use of simile *something* (In Indonesian: *sesuatu*) is meant for comparing something to something else. It leads the audience to pay attention to what is meant to say. Furthermore, a speaker is observed employing certain strategy to persuade people by stating Ethos, Pathos, and Logos that purposes to influence people on gaining power (Rachman, A; Yuniarti, 2017). In short, the use of rhetoric obviously lies in discourse body that needs to be examined in order to reveal its meaning.

In politics, language plays an important role for politicians to achieve a goal. Thereupon, the language is systematically persuasive to be able to gain people’s support. Woods (2006) exhibits an example of a slogan as one of political language example that is planned to advertise politicians’ goal. Moreover in political speech, Kazemian and Hashemi (2014) confirm, that the use of parallelism in a politician’s speech is meant to attract the audience by its rhythmic pattern and to emphasize the message by its efficiency. Here, by relating to the study examining an inclusive speech, the persuasive language will be necessary to be adopted since the speaker, Donald J. Trump, who

obviously plans to disapprove the 2020 election result simply needs to gain support from the audience. For this reason, this element directs to discuss Donald J. Trump’s strategy for persuading people and gaining support by playing with his language.

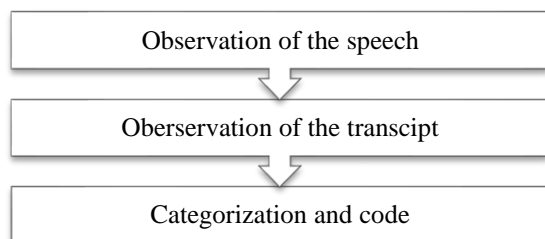
### 3. Method

This study applies a descriptive qualitative approach. According to Heigham and Croker (2009), by using qualitative approach, the main activities in the research perform observation, analysis, and interpretation. The process, in this study, closely relates to an examination of the language. Moreover, by adjusting the research object of the study, a political speech, the researcher applies a text analysis approach. The approach is studied under discourse analysis study, in particular, it applies discourse theory by van Dijk (1980). In short, the procedure encounters observation of the speech, analysis, and interpretation to the language function.

Donald J. Trump’s speech was uploaded on Bloomberg Quicktake (*YouTube* channel) entitled “LIVE: Trump Delivers Remarks at the ‘Save America Rally’ in Washington, D.C.”. The one-hour-speech video was accessed on 10th April 2021 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ht20eDYmLXU>. According to Baker (2006), he affirms that the spoken data needs a transcription. Eventually, this study uses the speech transcript. The transcript is taken from US News website. It was accessed on 10th April 2021 at <https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2021-01-13/transcript-of-trumps-speech-at-rally-before-us-capitol-riot>. The transcript consists of more than 10.000 words. Last, we verify the utterances in the video are the same as in the transcript.

According to Titscher et al. (2000), population of research refers to an wider universe where the study or the interpretation, happens. The population of this study is Donald Trump’s utterances. For further analysis, he argues that the researcher needs a selection of the population to get small and relevant number of units of analysis (2000, p. 38). The sample of this study is selected by applying purposive sampling technique. We choose two topics of the speech, namely Donald J. Trump’s claim of victory and fraud evidence in Pennsylvania.

In terms of the techniques of data collection, we use mostly observation as the research instrument. There are three steps of the technique. **Figure 1** below demonstrates a visualization of the steps.



**Figure 1.** The Technique of Data Collection

The technique of data collection consists of three steps: (1) observation of the speech, (2) observation of the transcript, (3) categorization and code. First, we observe by watching the speech video. Second, we observe and verify accuracy of the transcript's utterances. Last, we categorize and encode the data with codes, for example, HP is for hyperbole and SM is for simile. We only use Ms. Word as the instrument to collect the data manually.

To produce a well-conducted analysis, we use this technique of data analysis. This study applies a text analysis approach by using van Dijk's theory (1980). Therefore, there are four steps for analysing the speech and the language. The steps include (1) analysing the microstructure, (2) analysing the superstructure, and (3) analysing the macrostructure, and (4) drawing the conclusion.

#### 4. Results

Finally, Donald J. Trump's protest speech is observed and the result is collected. First, it is found that Trump does not employ all of the six rhetorical devices. Meanwhile, he prefers to employ certain devices to achieve his purpose. Therefore, there is an imbalance in the usage. Second, for the speech structure, it is divided into three schemes, namely the introduction, the body, and the closing. Last, for the macrostructure, the theme is concluded by formulating the supporting macro propositions.

##### a. Microstructure (Rhetoric)

According to Sornig as cited in Wodak (1989) asserts that the use of rhetoric means a process verbalizing ideas of purposes along with the message. In politics, explicitly rhetorical language is used as tool to convey politician's idea. There are six rhetorical devices that are examined. Based on the result, within the speech we found 9 hyperboles, 0 metaphor, 2 similes, 1 euphemism, 17 repetitions, and 8 parallelisms usage. **Table 3** presents the finding for the rhetorical devices.

**Table 3.** Rhetorical Devices of Donald J. Trump's Protest Speech

No	Rhetorical Devices	
1	Hyperbole	9

2	Metaphor	-
3	Simile	2
4	Euphemism	1
5	Repetition	17
6	Parallelism	8

According to the table, it is shown rhetorical language result based on its application within the speech. It is known that Donald J. Trump does not employ all of them. In sum, repetition, hyperbole, and parallelism are shown frequently employed by him. In contrast for simile and euphemism are seldom used. Metaphor is even never be employed by him. From those results, we postulate that Donald J. Trump tends to employ certain devices as his potent strategies to make his goals accomplished.

##### 1) Hyperbole

"Almost 75 million people voted for our campaign, the most of any incumbent president by far in the history of our country, 12 million more people than four years ago." (10''-1/9/HP)

##### Excerpt 1

According to the example above, the use of hyperbole is shown to have been adopted by Donald J. Trump to exaggerate his own achievements. The presidential election, which is part of the general election, occurs every four years and always starts on the first Tuesday in November. On Election Day, the popular vote result always becomes the public interest. In the 2020 election, Donald J. Trump received more than 74 million votes which are higher than him in the prior election (in 2016:62 million votes). In fact, before the 2020 election, statistically, in 2008 Barack Obama is recorded to have received the highest number of popular votes, which are more than 69 million votes. Nevertheless, in the 2020 election, Joe Biden has surpassed the former president by receiving more than 81 million votes. Consequently, it makes Joe Biden the current presidential candidate who has received the highest number of votes within the period of the presidential election in the U.S. until now.

On the other hand, Trump excessively claims that he is the first presidential candidate who receives the highest number. In the 2016 election, it is interesting to know that Trump lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton but still won the Electoral College. It is recorded that he secures 63 million votes while Hillary receives 65 million votes. It is a special case when the popular vote does not guarantee a victory. Consequently, Trump believes it is still highly possible for him to win again. However, Joe Biden successfully won almost all of the swing states, which has triggered him to win. Regarding the hyperbole usage above, it is not reasonable to the fact that he does not receive the

highest number at all. However, by emphasizing his own accomplishment, he seems to be covering up his defeat.

## 2) Metaphor

Metaphor refers to an implicit comparison by comparing two different things (Fahnestock, 2011, p. 109). Additionally, Thomas & Wareing (2003, p. 46) argue the usage functions to make the concept (the analogy) easily understood, for example in political discourse, it is used to convey a message of hope (Nugraha, 2014, p. 67). Meanwhile, van Dijk (2000, p. 273) asserts, that it is usually used to give negative comparison for representing out-group members. Nevertheless, in this study, we did not find the usage in the protest speech. It results from the speech's purpose. The fact that Trump needs support causes on how he adopt an alternative rhetorical strategy while expressing a sequence of messages to his supporters.

The speech that occurred on 6th January 2021 at the "Save America" rally in Washington D.C. is considered a protest speech. It clearly shows Trump's protest of the 2020 election result. In fact, it is essential for him to gain support from the audience (the Republicans) to achieve the same goal. Dealing with, it has caused an effect on his language in his speech. Eventually, it turns out rather than adopting implicit messages, the simple and direct are more understandable and effective. On top of that, aside from the speech's purpose, Trump's strategy is also in line with Savoy (2017), saying that Trump's language style is known for being simple, direct, easy to understand, and using repetitive terms. Finally, we assume that Trump tends to adopt other practical strategies to convey his message instead of using an analogy in metaphor.

## 3) Simile

*"Republicans are, Republicans are constantly fighting like a boxer with his hands tied behind his back." (10''-2/15/SM)*

### Excerpt 3

Based on the data above, it also shows other examples of comparison, but it is used for referring to the Republicans including Donald J. Trump. In the protest speech, he frequently claims that the election is unfair. It is caused by a great number of illegal ballots being counted in several states. He shows the evidence in Pennsylvania that there are unregistered voters. Several returned ballots exist in Arizona, and invalid registrations are allowed in Georgia. He confidently claims the result is not acceptable. Moreover, he challenges the certification for the sake of justice and democracy. Dealing with the analogy usage above, it depicts the Republicans emotively who are in struggle, demanding justice for them.

The depiction is shown by referring to the Republicans first by saying "Republicans are, Republicans are..." when afterwards he starts to make the analogy. It can be observed in the following phrase "constantly fighting like a boxer with

his hands tied behind his back". By the typical form of like, the phrase simply implies the Republican to a person (a boxer) who hardly acts due to his tied hands. However, connotatively, the phrase attempts to show a victim's depiction. Trump targets to create an image as if the Republican (as the boxer) is aggrieved in the 2020 election. It can also mean a struggle to protest their defeat in the name of good and justice. The analogy in some ways gives rise to a positive and patriotic sense of action. It describes the Republicans denying the corruption in the country, which tends to show the other respectable side of the Republicans. In contrast, it implicitly shows the opposing party is responsible for the Republicans' defeat. Finally, the use has become a strategy for Trump to evoke an emotional attachment between the audiences.

## 4) Euphemism

*"For years, Democrats have gotten away with election fraud and weak Republicans. And that's what they are. There's so many weak Republicans." (10''-1/34/EU)*

### Excerpt 4

Based on the example above, the use of *weak Republicans* phrase is adopted to refer to a small group of the Republicans. The context shows that in the main discussion of the protest speech, it talks about Donald J. Trump accusing Joe Biden of deliberately cheating in the election. In order to make the audience trust him, the fraud evidence is provided. Trump claims the officials also involve in the fraud for example in Pennsylvania, he adds "the Democrat secretary of state and the Democrat state Supreme Court justices illegally abolished the signature verification ..." In addition, there are a lot of unregistered voters found casting their ballots. In short, he always shows signs of provocation by always blaming and accusing the Democrats in a straight way. Nevertheless, when he mentions some Republican members, it seems to be somewhat fine.

In the beginning of the speech, he often shows appreciation to the supporters as a consequence of their willingness to defend their justice together. He praises then addresses them as *American patriots*. In contrast, he mentions some of them as *weak Republicans*. The phrase refers to those who do not recompense his merit. He additionally says "I helped them get in, I helped them get elected. I helped. ... then all of sudden you have something like this ... they've turned a blind eye...". He argues that behind Joe Biden's victory there are some weak Republicans who support and let the fraud happen. Once again during the speech he deliberately brings the idea to disapprove the election result on behalf of justice. The *weak republicans*, consequently, seem are meant for betrayer, passive and indifferent republicans, who do not care and support him. However, compared to when he offends the opposition (e.g., *theft, ruthless, outrageous assault*), by avoiding it making sound offensive, he addresses several members as the *weak republicans*. It turns out that the use indicates to his intention

to normalize the issue. He avoids making the issue prominent. Eventually, he adopts that expression to cover it. As a consequence, it would appear that the usage above is a strategy to de-emphasize their weaknesses. Meanwhile, as in line with van Dijk (2000, p. 273), it is a rhetorical mitigation strategy to distract attention from the concrete meaning.

#### 5) Repetition

“So Pennsylvania was defrauded. Over 8,000 ballots in Pennsylvania were cast by people whose names and dates of birth match individuals who died in 2020 and prior to the election. Think of that. Dead people, lots of dead people, thousands. And some dead people actually requested an application.” (10’-4/14/RT)

#### Excerpt 5

In this example, an expression referring to *dead people* is repeated for four times for emphasis on the illegal voters. Previously, Donald J. Trump began his speech by claiming that the election result was invalid. It has dragged the media and the opposition into being accused of committing illegal action during the election. In order to strengthen his prior claim he even enforces it with the following argument. The sequences of fraud evidence collected from several states include Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Madison, Georgia, Arizona, Nevada, and Michigan. He provides it by starting from some pieces of evidence in Pennsylvania, one of the important and valuable swing states.

In the U.S., there are four requirements for a voter to be a qualified one. Those included are U.S. citizens who meet the states’ requirements, so they have been registered to vote by the state. In contrast, according to his statement above, it shows the passive construction denoting the voters (the agent) participating in the election with irrelevant ID. He reports that hundreds of votes match unregistered voters. Moreover, he adds that their names and dates of birth match people who have passed away. He even repeats the same expression to *dead people* for instance, by saying “who died in 2020 ... dead people ...dead people ... dead people”. He also gives an accentuation of quantity to it by mentioning “dead people, lots of dead people, thousand...”. Eventually, it is clear that the usage contributes to his strategy to stress the accusation. In short, he succeeds in creating a pattern of emphasis by saying that Joe Biden does not have fair elections in Pennsylvania as well as other states owing to the tabulation of illegal voters.

#### 6) Parallelism

“We’re supposed to protect our country, support our country, support our Constitution, and protect our constitution.” (10’-1/18/PR)

#### Excerpt 6

In the opening part of speech, it is important for the speaker to effectively draw the audience’s attention. Trump is observed employing several methods to attract attention

such as appreciation and allegation of the fraudulent election. Furthermore, when he starts to discuss the main topic, he appears to state sequences of persuading statements since it is based on the context that reveals his denial of the election result. He assumes that the election was corrupt, so his loss is debatable. Thereupon, he bravely persuades the audience to take back their justice through his language. For example, by using parallelism, he can manipulate the audience since it has appealing pattern and can be persuasive along with its sound effect.

Based on the data, it is found that appealing and persuasive pattern deliberately used by him. It is represented in the grammatical pattern, in which it starts with pronoun (*we*) + are supposed to + verb (*protect*) + our + noun (*country*). Afterwards, the verb phrase is readopted, so the last part of structure is repetitive, for example verb (*support*) + our + noun (*country*), verb (*support*) + our + noun (*Constitution*), and + verb (*protect*) + our + noun (*constitution*). Simply put, the statement emphasizes the same message to protect the country along with its repetition, and later it is supported by its memorable pattern. The usage will make the audience attracted to the importance of the issue (Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014). It is considered useful for him since he previously challenges the election result and he needs support. Accordingly, because of its appealing pattern and emphasis, the usage becomes a useful strategy to convince the audience and manipulate them.

#### b. Superstructure

In the speech arrangement, the results show the discourse structure refers to van Dijk (1980) and Reisigl (2008) theory. We found that, the introduction (*exordium*) functions to attract the audience’s attention, which is in line with the theory. On top of that, the purpose simply leads the main discussion to a declaration of the Republican’s victory and their objection to the 2020 election result. The body consists of the narration (*statement*) and the argumentation (*proof*). The narration mainly addresses fact of a case dealing with a claim of fraud in the 2020 election. Meanwhile, the argumentation confirms Trump’s claim by providing sequences of fraud evidence to make the audience trust him. The closing (*peroration*) presents its similarity to the opening scheme. The closing draws the audience’s attention, but his strategy tends to sums the issues in persuasive way. Trump, additionally, also denotes a contrast between the Republicans and the opposition. He even adds the Republicans’ actions are crucial, as they claim that the protest is merely to protect the country.

#### c. Macrostructure (Theme)

In the macrostructure discussion, we collect sequences of macro proposition in Trump’s speech. Then, we formulate the collected macro propositions with *macrorules* (van Dijk, 1980). In fact, in the protest speech, Donald J. Trump often discloses varied topics. Nonetheless, those sequences of



topics convey to a big picture, which is representing the main topic. As a result of the analysis, the varied topics have demonstrated major propositions. We formulate those findings afterwards. According to it, we conclude that the theme of the speech is Donald J. Trump's objection regarding the 2020 U.S. presidential election result.

## 5. Discussion

This study pursues aims to discuss the rhetorical language of the defeated candidate speech. The results here have shown another example compared to previous studies in political speech analyses. The results here will discuss three parts of the speech. According to the microstructure analysis above, it turns out that five of the six rhetorical devices are found. It is important to consider that Trump's speech in this study is response of protest to the election result. We, consequently, speculate that the speech itself has caused Trump's preference in his language. He prefers to adopt the most beneficial strategy to gain the Republicans' support. Finally, this study, by analysing a protest speech occurred within the 2020 election, offers another contribution to political discourse study.

First, to begin with the microstructure discussion, a response of the defeated candidate presents different and meaningful intention. By comparing to the formal type of political speeches, those speeches are performed and targeted to the public, for Americans in general. It contributes to state of affairs which the messages are universal and the speeches are accepted as public concerns. Nugraha (2014) reports a case of marriage equality in the U.S. Besides, Rohmah (2018) presents cases for terrorism and the U.S. national security and defense. Derakhshani et al. analyse Trump's speech to the UN (2021). Maghfiroh & Triyono (2020) denote a mission form Nadiem Makarim on Indonesia's education. Moreover, Pradiptha et al. (2020) examine the U.S.-Israel foreign affair. On the other hand, informal and implicit type of political speeches are considered incline to have an intentional and directed aim. This study presents response of protest by Trump as the defeated candidate. His speech strongly delivers his disappointment toward the Democrat, his rival, in the 2020 election contest eventually.

To observe deeper in the language use, the results are different when the related context and speech's purpose involve in. Maghfiroh & Triyono (2020) discuss language use on a speech by Nadiem Makarim, the newly educational and cultural minister of Indonesia. Interestingly, the study reveals the minister did not employ rhetorical strategies and prefer to employ direct language style instead. Based on his intention, eventually, to make the messages well conveyed and to ease the audience's understanding, the style is chosen at the end. Meanwhile, Nugraha (2014) reports an example how metaphor strategy used in Hillary's campaign. Previous studies indicate that metaphor becomes one of the most used devices in terms of political speeches. For example, the

device are commonly employed by Barack Obama (Al-abbasi, 2022; Khajavi & Rasti, 2020). The function is simply to convey the idea and to influence the people. Back to the Nugraha's, he narrates the context of the former U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton obviously attempts to gain support from Americans. Finally, Clinton employed *beacon of hope* simply to portray that she and the government highly support LGBT community.

Nonetheless, in this study, the defeated Trump preferred not to employ metaphor device. As the results indicate Trump's intention has influenced his preference. In his response to protest the 2020 election, a great number of supports from the Republicans are crucial. He manipulates his words to be well shared and easily comprehend. For this reason, instead of employing a comparison or an analogy, he inclines to employ other strategies those are far more effective. It refers to when repetition is the most used device in his protest speech with 17 data. Trump is known for his characteristic using repetitive terms admittedly (Alshammari, 2020; Savoy, 2017). Yaqin (2017) additionally shows that an emphasis in repetition reflects the politicians' ideology. It indicates that the repeated words which are carrying messages are crucial. Moreover, the messages are meant to be shared and accepted by the audience. In this study, we observe the same intention that Trump aims to make his messages well approved by the Republicans by repeating "I... I won them both ... I won much bigger".

Alshammari in his study (2020) observes Donald J. Trump's characteristic employing parallelism and repetition in his inaugural speeches. The results indicate that he means to build solidarity, unity, and encouragement. Compared to this study, it is found, in fact, the use of repetition and parallelism concurrently. It has been mentioned before, that repetition is the most frequent utilized device. We postulate it is grounded on Trump's intention to make the Republicans comprehend his major messages in a simple way. For instance, with these repetitive words, *fight*, *dead people*, *ever*, *we must*, *we're going to*, and *election theft*. The function works for emphasis and, stronger, for encouragement. Dealing with how Trump shared his disappointment, Trump finally succeeds in gaining the Republicans' trust. Specifically, it would be important to highlight, that this case reflects what Savoy (2017) and Alshammari (2020) find by disclosing Trump's language style (i.e., direct, simple, and reusing the same words).

Meanwhile, for parallelism, this study collects 8 data. The results indicate Trump directs to focus on the importance of the issue. He also utilized it due to its rhythmic pattern. As in accordance to Kazemian & Hashemi (2014), they present that the structure of parallelism functions to add emphasis, persuasion, and beauty. Moreover, Derakhshani et al. (2021) report that the structure targets for expressing influence, rhythm, and power to the speech itself. Another study

(Widiatmika et al., 2020), here, exhibits that politicians have utilized memorable structures during their campaigns. In this study, it turns out that Trump mentions this typical and memorable structure “to defend and preserve government of the people, by the people, and for the people”. It is essential to consider, that his speech is directed toward the implementation of the election in the U.S. By carrying the issue of fraudulent election, he therefore, means to engage his positive and strong commitment towards the government. He aims to depict himself better than his rival. The example above ultimately has attracted the Republicans smoothly by gaining support and sympathy.

Rohmah (2018), furthermore, presents another example of three rhetorical devices: hyperbole, repetition, and irony. The study discusses presidential speeches by Donald J. Trump. Those are on about capital city of Israel, security and defence security, and terrorism. The speeches are obviously directed to the public. Put simply, reputation of the country and himself are seen widely. Here, the speaker’s competence to use and to manipulate the language becomes essential. Rohmah’s study exhibits hyperbole usages purposed to influence people’s opinion with Trump’s subjectivity about the previous leaders. In this study, Trump utilizes several overstated expression for glamorizing his own achievements and making bad impression of *them*. He overstates that he won the popular vote. Besides, he exaggerates his statement about the Democrats that claims “this is the most corrupt election in the history”. In other words, this is simply a strategy from the loser to cover up his defeat in the 2020 election.

Euphemism refers to a mild expression meaning to replace the offensive one (Fahnestock, 2011). Meanwhile, in political speeches, choice of words is explicitly distributed by the speaker since those are the most appropriate words to select (van Dijk, 2000). Perangin-angin et al. (2021) report that pronouns *Bro* and *Sis* are deliberately employed Grace Natalie, the leader of PSI party, to have closer approach toward the audience. The speaker aims to create positive and casual strategy. In contrast, these words are inclined to be a negative opinion or bias as in *slaughter, terrorist, rebel, radical*, or in terms of animal, *dogs, rats, snakes* (Sahmeni & Afifah, 2019; van Dijk, 2000, 2008). Besides, Proctor & Su (2011) examine that there is a difference on how personal pronouns are used in certain venue. They report, that, in debate, personal pronouns are the essential indication to observe how the candidates denote their self-identity and loyalty toward their running mate.

Meanwhile, in this study, Trump is in the position which is defeated. He lost both the popular vote and the Electoral College. We find that he employs provoking statement frequently toward the Democrat. However, on how he mentioned his own party Trump appears to be mild. Thus, when he realizes his party has a weakness, he manages to normalize it. Finally, this finding presents he would employ

positive terms to describe his own party and negative terms to portray the opposing party instead (Luo et al., 2021; Rachman, A; Yunianti, 2017).

It is worth noting that in this study, Donald J. Trump utilizes those rhetorical devices while carrying a goal simply to manipulate the Republicans. In addition, he succeeds utilizing his language as his potent persuasion. Compared to Rahayu et al. study (2018) that report Obama has his own the most potent strategy to gain people’s trust. They examine that Obama frequently tells the audiences stories which are about himself or even the audience. In the end, the strategy gives rise to a powerful persuasion in the campaign contest. Meanwhile, here, we observe that Trump’s speech is enriched with fraud evidence in several states (Wisconsin, Madison, Georgia, Arizona, and Pennsylvania) rather than stories. Back to the 2016 election, in fact, he in majority won those states (Ballotpedia, 2016). However, the fact that he lost in the current election damages his expectation. In accordance with his main goal (i.e., gain support), repetition exhibits for emphasis and encouragement because it is the most powerful device to persuade the Republicans. Afterwards, to make the Democrat bad, hyperbole is employed. In particular, he also tends to normalize his own weaknesses while keep creating the Democrat bad. In sum, certain rhetorical strategies employed in Donald J. Trump’s language stems from his own main goals.

Second, in the superstructure discussion, the structure of the speech is successfully arranged to disclose Trump’s objection in well-organized structure of speech. Normally, in political speeches, the opening (the introduction) presents salutation and appreciation in a formal way. It is often intended toward other guests and leaders at the venue. Derakhshani et al. (2021) disclose structure of Donald J. Trump’s speech at the UN. The opening consists of addresses and salutation. The addresses are certainly conveyed toward members in the 72<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nation General Assembly. Through his speech, Trump carries dignity of the U.S. Moreover, he strongly highlights his position and superiority over other leaders of countries. Eventually, he will maintain it positively. It is worth noting, that when Trump’s speech are in formal situation, he yet implies to blame the previous leaders of the U.S. Pradiptha et al. (2020) report that Trump blames them for being too slow in taking action for the country.

Compared to this study, the opening of Trump’s speech demonstrates to have closer approach toward the audience. Trump’s speech itself was watched by the Republicans in majority. We also do not observe an address for certain guests. He builds an intimate situation by omitting distance between him and the Republicans instead. Additionally, he tries to recognize them by saying appreciation and embraces them as they stand for the same purpose. This strategy is taken merely to attract their attention. It is obviously helpful

to gain their sympathy, since he directs to make them support him (i.e., to disapprove the election result).

In terms of the superstructure, Huda et al. (2020) exhibits that in news discourse, the scheme consists of two schemes (lead and story) by referring to van Dijk's theory. Furthermore, Maghfiroh & Triyono (2020) report that Nadiem's speech has implicated the proper arrangement which it start from the general elements first to convey his foremost message well. Meanwhile, in this study, the body of the speech which indicates to two major parts refer to theory of political speech scheme's by Reisigl (2008). The results present that the distribution of political speech schemes: narration (statement) and argumentation (proof). In the narration, Trump succeeds in persuading the Republicans regarding his claim. He frequently claims that the election is fraudulent. He also discloses statements saying there are a lot of foul practices in the implementation. Furthermore, Trump frequently highlights humiliating description for the opposition. Meanwhile, for the argumentation, he shows his trustworthiness to the audience. He provides fraud evidence which is disclosed with numbers. The strategy is taken to make them trust and support him. In this part, he maintains to create bad image of the opposition. Moreover, to make it different to them, he introduces the audience with his strong commitment toward the country.

In the closing part, it is equally targeted to attract the Republicans with memorable statements. Trump manages to make his message is well delivered. It is worth noting, that how he concludes his protest becomes somewhat an encouragement to the audience. In this statement, "We're going to, we're going to walk Pennsylvania ... to the Capitol... we're going to try and give" by utilizing his approval, he strongly persuades the Republicans to join the rally participating to the parade. In the speech, he repeatedly engages the actions that they should take are simply on behalf of democracy. This study speculates that when the encouragement seems promising, it has incited the audience to protest in the Capitol.

## 6. Conclusion

This study discloses the research gap of rhetorical language analysis in political speeches. In particular, the study examines political speech of the defeated candidate within the 2020 U.S. presidential election. To begin with the results of the linguistic preference, it obviously reflects how Donald J. Trump intends to gain support. It is worth noting that there are five rhetorical devices found in the speech according to Teun van Dijk (2000, p. 272) and Thomas & Wareing (2003, pp. 45–52). Meanwhile, not a one metaphor is employed. We postulate that not only Trump addresses his oral language style but also utilizes the most potent strategy to gain support. As a result, it is found that there is an imbalance of frequency of the usage. Moreover, we observe that the structure of the speech refers to Reisigl's theory of political speech schemes (2008). Put simply, he tries to

arrange his protest with provocative narration and reasonable argument. In the speech, Trump has utilized his power effectively as the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America. He represents himself who is experienced enough of taking care of the country. Eventually, he frequently creates the opposition is nothing better than him. Besides, to manipulate the Republicans, he convinces them that their actions are merely for the sake of the country. Nevertheless, those messages that are embodied and shared in his speech have incited people to act violently toward the country, in which it contrasts the considerate value they have believed in. In sum, this study demonstrates on how preference of rhetorical language is deliberately utilised by the politicians in their discourses respectively. Finally, we hope, that this study would help future researchers to analyse other related issues.

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