

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The liberty to speak without interference from the government, as well as political equality are indeed necessary to democracy. Luca (2007) mentioned that between liberty of speech and control from government for fair distribution is obligatory for impactful political speech. Democracy simply requires a fair distribution of the relevant political resources. For instance, Hashim (2015) presumed that politicians communicate directly with public in order to persuade them of their goals and perspectives. Political equality, free speech, and democracy are all fundamental aspects of American political culture.

One of the most important speeches in the America is the State of the Union address, at times abbreviated to SOTU. Address here means speech. The State of the Union address is the president central focus for encouraging their administration policy priorities near the start of each calendar year. Cummins (2014) stressed that the president shall provide congress with information and recommend their consideration such actions as it necessary and thoughtful. The congress, a national legislative body, especially that of the United States was established by the Constitution, is composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The State of the Union has a significant impact on every element of the United States such as offers solutions to state problems and important American issues including suggestions for new laws and policies.

In the United States, there are different important addresses delivered by the president such as the Inaugural address, State of the Union address, and Joint session of the United States congress. The inaugural address is speech given throughout the inauguration ceremony, frequently in front of a large spectators, which informs the public of their intentions as a president. It is held every four years on January 20 at the United States Capitol Building in Washington, DC. Joint session of the United States can somehow be held upon the special occasion, but they are necessary once the president delivers the State of the Union address.

A joint session of the United States congress assembles to declare the votes of electoral council, a body of people representing the United States, who formally cast votes for the election, since the presidential election or once the presidential inauguration takes place. In the 21st century, some modern critics have also voiced their concerns on political discourse analysis. Su (2021) appointed that many researchers researched the State of the Union address primarily through appraisal theory, critical discourse analysis and translation before the introduction of systemic functional grammar. Systemic functional grammar has progressed to the point that it is now considered a scientific method of discourse analysis (Thompson, 2014).

In general, scholars have observed to employ the transitivity system in political discourse because speech is an impactful instrument for achieving specific goals in a variety of situations (Medhurst, 2011). Therefore, the theoretical framework of current study is based on Halliday and Matthiessen's systemic functional grammar.

This theory is labelled functional in the sense that language fulfils endless practical functions in a range of settings (Ewusi-Mensah, 2015). Ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions are among them. This time the researcher took ideational functions as the perspective framework of experience in reality that can reflect linguistic actions. It can be seen in the address transcript sentence below:

“The State of the Union is strong because you.” (R.P.223)

In this example of clause, the token is “the State of the Union”. The process is encoded in the word “is”. The value is “strong”. The “because you” is circumstance of cause. This clause shows that Joe Biden emphasizes the relationship between public and himself. The state of the Union is nothing without Americans. Among the transitivity processes, it is considered a relational process.

As the oldest president in American history, Joe Biden was confronted with a number of difficult issues left by the predecessor president Donald Trump, such as economic downturn, wide spread of covid-19, social chaos, and so forth. This time, president Joe Biden's first official State of the Union address focused on Ukraine, inflation, the coronavirus pandemic and the four-point unity agenda. Joe Biden's agenda looks different than his speech to congress as the president in April 29, 2021, a session of congress. However, Joe Biden's State of the Union address is still fresh adding that makes it worth researching.

This paper is concerned with the linguistic perspective of systemic functional grammar, specifically the use of transitivity elements in such discourse. The research design is qualitative approach (Creswell, 2017) that investigate textual data which involves research design, data collection, data analysis and interpretation. The researcher used Joe Biden's State of the Union address transcript as the source of data. Qualitative content analysis by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) used as data analysis. The researcher used the strategy that focused on the use of textual data and highlight the relevant parts which, on the first impression, appeared to be related to specified codes defined by theoretical or previous research results (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Therefore, this study purpose is to identify the transitivity processes realized in clauses of Joe Biden' State of the Union address transcript. Research on Joe Biden's political speech and so on is still relatively rare, therefore it provides an opportunity for researcher to pave the way further.

B. Problem of the Study

Based on some reasons explained in the background of the study above and make this research easier to solve, so the researcher studies the particular problems as stated below

- A. What transitivity processes are found in Joe Biden's States of the Union address transcript?
- B. How are the transitivity processes realized in the clauses of Joe Biden's State of the Union address transcript?

C. Objective of the Study

Research must have objectives to be achieved through research. The objective here is to answer certain questions in the problem statement. Here, there are two objectives to be achieved in this research

1. To identify the transitivity processes found in Joe Biden's States of the Union address transcript
2. To identify the transitivity processes realized in the clauses of Joe Biden's States of the Union address transcript

D. Scope of the Study

In order to obtain a clear and good result in research, it is critical to limit the analysis and object of research. There are numerous topics that can be examined in relation to the study of systemic functional linguistic in this study. The researcher examines Joe Biden's State of the Union address transcript using a transitivity method based on Halliday and Matthiessen's theory.

The research only focuses on identifying the transitivity processes in address transcript, that includes material process, mental process, relational process, verbal process, behavioral process, and existential process. The designed system provides categories of transitivity processes in Joe Biden's State of the Union address transcript. This research applied systemic functional grammar as theoretical framework.

E. Significance of the Study

This study is intended to provide benefits, either directly or indirectly. The significances of this study are as follows

1. Theoretically, either in the world of education for lecturers and students.

The research has contributed to the field of systemic functional grammar on the interface of linguistic and political discourse from a function paradigm perspective. It has implications for future research purpose.

2. Practically, this research is expected to contribute knowledge about political speech which can later be used to assess other researchers. It can be used as a starting point for students who interested in conducting comparable research on transitivity processes analysis. As well as lecturers who will gain additional references on such discourse analysis to teach.