research is an attempt to explore the characteristics of the styles of political communication as displayed in the speeches of two incumbent presidential candidates, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Barack Obama. The research seeks to investigate whether the speeches of the two incumbent have things in common or not in the ways both the incumbent communicated the messages to their direct and target audience. Evidently both the incumbent set the tone of the political year in their official speeches. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in his last state speech claimed the success of his first-term Administration and thereby set the tone for his bid for the second term. Meanwhile Obama through his State-of-the-Union address highlighted
the message of the accomplished unity of Americans that enabled his first-term Administration to work for the common good of the people. If Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono through his declaration of candidacy made a bid for the second term to continue and further strengthen the previous claimed success, Obama framed his bid for a second term with

**a blueprint for American economy built to last.**

Keywords: Incumbent presidential speeches, style of campaign speeches, SBY and Obama

1. **Introduction**

Charteris-Black [1, p1-4] has argued that political speeches are important for politicians as they have to communicate their platforms, persuading and convincing people to agree with them when they aspire for some political position or wish to have the people’s political support (cf. Beard [2, p35,6]). Not the least important among political speeches are campaign speeches for presidential re-election. Obviously such a candidate for an incumbent presidential position has had a track record of his first terms of office as an entry point coupled with his convincing lines of thought for the proposed second terms of office. Still deeply rooted to the presidential campaign speeches, this paper is to focus on the styles of political communication of two incumbent presidential candidates: the first case is Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (hereafter SBY) for his bid for re-election in 2009; the second case is Barack Obama (hereafter BO) of the USA for his bid for re-election in 2012. Presidential election in Indonesia by direct votes began to be conducted in 2004 (cf. Sekretariat KPU Bagian ... [3]), whereas the USA has had a long tradition (cf. Hardy [4]). The different traditions between these two countries inevitably has had different influence on the styles of political communication of the two incumbent presidential candidates. As stated by Verdonk [5, p5

,6], the term of style in this paper is taken to mean as

"a distinct way of using language for some purpose and to some effect". The study of the styles of the two incumbent is focused on their deployment of

**meaning resources within the framework of text-building and rhetoric**


2. **Theories and methods**

The data for this paper were linguistic units in the forms of words, phrases, and clauses or sentences that were organized in terms of Beebe & Beebe’s [11, p30-2] analytical construct of “the central idea of a speech” as “a one-sentence summary of the speech content”. Furthermore the central idea is elaborated in terms of Beebe & Beebe’s analytical construct [11, p30-2] of “the main ideas of speeches” as “further subdivision of
the central ideas into key points of the speech. This paper is to examine

how these constructs were used to organize the meaning resources in order to

get across the important political lines of thought of both incumbent president candidates in their three initial speeches under study. Therefore the sources of the data were Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's following prepared text: his state address (Yudhoyono [12]), declaration for re-election (Yudhoyono [13]), and Jakarta Fair political speech (Yudhoyono [14]), hereafter referred to successively as SBY 1, SBY 2, and SBY 3; whereas the sources of Barack Obama's prepared texts were as follows: his Osawatomie Economic Speech (Obama [15]), his

State-of-Union address of 2012 (Obama [16]). and Virginia Beach Campaign Speech (Obama [17]), hereafter referred to successively as BO 1, BO 2, and BO 3.

The approach used in this paper was qualitative method of inquiry (cf. Creswell

[18, p208-13]; Dörnyei [19, p4,163, 268]) as it deals mostly with the

non-numerical data of the rhetorical means

under study to be interpreted within a qualitative context (cf. Dörnyei [19, p271]). 3. Findings and discussion Out of the five canons of rhetoric, the first one called "invention" is evidently the first step to be undertaken in order to shape and reshape a speech, namely by the designation of the core meaning to be conveyed (cf. [8, 11]). The central ideas having been designated, they were then used to elaborate the speech messages in terms of the main ideas of the speeches. A close scrutiny of both the

central ideas and the main ideas of the speeches under study

reveals the basic organization of meaning that: (1) unlike SBY 1 that underlay the claimed success of his 2004-2009 Administration for the continued progress of Indonesia, BO 1 focused more on rebuilding the American middle class economy; (2) unlike SBY 2 that placed his claimed success for his bid for re-election, BO 2 framed his bid for re-election for the unified pursuit of American economy to last; (3) Unlike SBY 3 that underscored the goal for the establishment of a clean government and the attainment of the peoples' welfare, BO 3 underscored the attempts to undertake the proposed programs to relieve the American promises.These findings were based on the following underpinnings: Table 1: Central ideas of the
two candidates’ speeches SBY’s Speeches BO’s Speeches 1 Indonesia was growing stronger by the claimed success of SBY’s 2004-2009 Administration, and thereby the Indonesian people had to work out for the continued progress of Indonesia 1 America had to reclaim the American Promises by restoring the middle class economy supported by market economy system and fair tax code. 2 To forward the claimed success of his 2004-2009 Administration, SBY declared

**his bid for second term of presidential office** of 2009-2014  
**The unity of**

all Americans in order to achieve their common goals toward the establishment of American economy to last. 3 Appeals for supporting SBY-Boediono as 2009-2014 president and vice president in order to enable Indonesia to establish a clean government and improve the peoples’ welfare. 3 Appeals for reliving the American Promises by realizing programs congruent to the vision that everybody

**gets a fair shot, does their fair share, and plays by the same set of rules**

From Table 1, it is obvious that SBY’s claimed success of his previous first-term Administration became the main backbone of arguments for

**his bid for a second term of presidential office.**

However, unlike SBY, BO used the cultural heritage and economic arguments of “the American Promises” – promises of a better future – to be pursued together by the stronger bond of all Americans in the direction to restore stronger middle class economy. The following tables 2,3,4 show the most dominant main ideas of respective speeches under study that displayed each central idea. Table 2: Most dominant main ideas of SBY 1 and BO 1 SBY 1 1 The success of SBY’s development strategy: growth with equity. 2 The success of all the government programs. 3 The success of the three agenda: realization of secured and peaceful Indonesia, just and democratic Indonesia, and increased welfare of the Indonesian people. 4 The increase of the National Revenues and Budget and more reliance on the internal sources for the national budget. BO 1 1 Grass-root optimism of the nation and reclaiming the American values to overcome the national financial crisis 2 Reforming tax codes for rebuilding stronger middle class economy and continued fight against inequality. 3 Restoring middle-class security: everybody’s

**fair play, fair shot, and fair share.**

**Restoring American middle class.**

Table 3: Most dominant main ideas of SBY 2 and BO 2 SBY 2 1 Resolute determination to further the success of the Indonesian development. BO 2 1 Unity for the common good of all Americans. 2 Securing God’s wishes and People’s mandate for SBY-Boediono’s 2009-2014 Administration. 2 Restoring the strength of American manufacturing, and boosting as well protecting the American trade and business. 3 Continued furtherance of the success of SBY’s 2004-2009 Administration. 4 Appeals to vote for SBY-Boediono’s victory 3 Restoring stronger American economy: securing job markets and opportunities; Reformation of education, immigration, business regulations, tax and government regulations. 4 Continued
commitment for world peace. Table 4: Most dominant main ideas of SBY 3 and BO 3 SBY 3 BO 3 1
President had done his best for the accomplishment of his promises during his 2004-2009 Administration 1
Reclaiming the American Promises 2 Proposed five agenda and 2009-2014 five national short-term plan. 2
Appeals for the need of Obama’s re-election 3 Economic development for the people’s welfare 3
Democratic economy vis-à-vis Republican economy 4 Developmen program for the people 5 SBY-
Boediono Administration of 2009-2014 was to realize a clean and effective administrat on for the sake of the
people 4 Democratic approach on tax 5 Securing further rebuilding of the nation with the right vote for
Obama Based on Tables 2,3, and 4, it is evident that the most dominant main ideas of the speeches of the
two incumbent candidates were elaborated in accordance with the previously designated central ideas in
order to get across the essential meaning deemed to be most important by each incumbent candidate.
Having discussed both the two incumbent candidates’s

central ideas and their further elaboration into the most dominant main

ideas of their speeches

under study, based on Tables 1-4, therefore SBY’s style of political communication, i.e.

his distinct way of using language for some purpose and to

some effect aiming at his re-election, can be summed up as follows: Table 5: SBY’s style of political
communication Claimed success of SBY’s 2004-2009 Administration ?forward the progress forward the
progress Claimed success of SBY’s 2004-2009 Administration ? SBY’s bid for re-election To establish a
clean government and improve the people’s welfare ? vote for SBY-Boediono Finally, based on Tables 1-4,
BO’s style of political communication, i.e.

his distinct way of using language for some purpose and to

some effect aiming at his re-election, can be summed up as follows: Table 6: BO’s style of political
communication Reclaiming American Promises ? rebuilding middle class economy Unity of all Americans ?
establishment of American economy to last Reliving the American Promises ? programs congruent to
everybody’s fair shot,

fair share, and play by the same set of rules

4. Conclusion Based on a close scrutiny of both SBY’s and BO’s organization out

of the meaning resources at their disposals in terms of the central ideas

and the main ideas of their political speeches under study, some insight

into their respective style of political communication