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by Satya Limanta

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JL. RAYA TELANG, PO.BOX 2 KAMAL
BANGKALAN-MADURA

THE STYLE OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION OF TWO INCUMBENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN COMPARISON

Surabaya, ID t-tU J.O 19
Foto kopi sesuai dengan aslinya
Samuel Gunawan I, Liem Satya Limanta ', Leniwati Slall!..Hiversitas Kristen Petra
1,2,3 Petra Christian University ",!ITA tuB Sastra
Isamgun@peter.petra.ac.id, 2 sa a e ~<V-!> \ ' ||
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Abstract

This research is an attempt to explore the characteristics e 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 communicate the messages to their direct and target audience. Evidently both the incumbent set the ton¹ 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 ¹ 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

i. introduction

Political speeches are important for politicians as they have to communicate their platforms, persuading and convincing people to agree with them when they aspire fur some political position or wish to have the people's political support (Charteris-Black, 2005 : 14; Cf Beard, 2000, 35,36). 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 campaign, this paper is to focus on the styles of political communication of two incumbent presidential candidates, the first case is Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia for his bid for re-election in 2009; the second case is Barack Obama of the USA for his bid for re-election in 2012. Presidential election in Indonesia by direct votes began to be conducted in 2004 (Pelita, 2013), whereas the USA has had a long tradition (cf. Hardy, 1990). The different traditions between these two countries inevitably has had different influence on the styles of political communication of the two incumbent presidential candidates. 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" (Verdonk, 2002: 5-6).The study of the style of the two incumbent

is focused on their deployment of ¹ meaning resources within the framework of text-building and rhetoric (cf. Becker, 1977: 197-210; Thomborrow, 2002: 8; cf. Hesford and Brueggemann, 2007; cf. Zarefsky, 2005; cf. Gunawan, 2012).

2. Theories and methods

³ 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 analytical construct of "the central idea of a speech" as "a one-sentence summary of the speech content" (2009: 30-32). Furthermore the central idea is elaborated in terms of Beebe & Beebe's analytical construct of "the main ideas of speeches" as "further subdivision of the central ideas into key points of the speech" (2009: ² 30-32). 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. Therefore the sources of the data were Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's prepared text of his state address (Susilo, 2008), declaration for re-election (Susilo, 2009a), and Jakarta Fair political speech (2009b), hereafter referred to successively as SBY 1, SBY 2, and SBY 3; Barack Obama's prepared texts of ² Osawatome Economic Speech (Obama, 2011), his State-of Union address of 2012 (Obama, 2012a), and Virginia Beach Campaign Speech (Obama, 2012b), ³ hereafter referred to successively as BO 1, BO 2, and BO 3. The approach used in this paper was qualitative method of inquiry (Creswell, 2003, pp. 208-213; Dornyei, 2007, pp. 163-164, 268) as it deals mostly with the non-numerical data of the rhetorical means under study to be interpreted within a qualitative context (Dornyei, 2007, p. 271).

3. Finding and discussion

² 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 I that underlay the claimed success of his 2004-2009 Administration for the continued progress of Indonesia, BO 1 ² 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 relive the American promise.

Table 1: Central ideas of the two candidates' speeches

SBY's Speeches		Obama's Speeches	
	1		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		America had to reclaim the American Promises by restoring the middle class economy supported by market economy system and fair tax code.	
2	2		
To forward the claimed success of his 2004-2009 Administration, SBY declared his bid for second term of presidency 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	3		
Appeal 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 ..		!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	

Table 2: Most dominant main ideas of SBY I and BO I

SBY I		BO I	
	1		1
The success of SBY's development strategy: growth with equity.		Grass-root optimism of the nation and reclaiming the American values to overcome the national financial crisis	
2	2		
The success of all the government programs.		Reforming tax codes for rebuilding stronger middle class economy and continued fight against inequality.	
3	3		
The success of the three agenda: realization of secured and peaceful Indonesia, just and democratic Indonesia, and increased welfare of the Indonesian people.		Restoring middle-class security: everybody's fair play, fair shot, and fair share.	
4	4		
The increase of the National Revenues and Budget and more reliance on the internal sources for the national budget.		Restoring American middle class.	

Table 3: Most dominant main ideas of SBY 2 and BO 2

SBY 2	B02
1 Resolute determination to further the success of the Indonesian development.	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 furtherence of the success of SBY's 2004-2009 Administration.	3 Restoring stronger American economy: securing job markets and opportunities; Reformation of education, immigration, business regulations, tax and government regulations.
4 Appeal to vote for SBY-Boediono's victory	4 Continued commitment for world peace.

Table 4: Most dominant main ideas of SBY 3 and BO 3

SBY 3	B03
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 Appeal for the need of Obarna's re-election
3 Economic development for the people's welfare	3 Democratic economy vis-a-vis Republican economy
4 ..Developmen program for the people	4 Democratic apprach on tax
5 SBY-Boediono Administration of 2009-2014 was to realize a clean and effective administation for the sake of the people	5 Securing further rebuilding of the nation with the right vote for Obama

Based on Tables 1-4, SBY's ² style of political communication for re-election can be summed up as follows:

Table 5: SBY's style

Claimed success of SBY's 2004-2009
Administration ~forward the progress

Claimed success of SBY's 2004-2009
Administration ~ SBY's bid for re-election

t;

To establish a clean government and improve
the peoples' welfare ~ vote for SBY-Boediono

Based on Tables 1-4, Barack Obama's ² style of political communication for re-election can
be summed up as follows:

Table 6: Obama's style

Reclaiming American Promises ~
rebuilding middle

Unity of all Americans ~ establishment of

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 ¹ Obama's organization out of the mearung
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 can be
gathered that.

- (1) As text-makers, both incumbent presidential candidates did their best to provide strong arguments for their bid for re-election.
- (2) SBY's bid for re-election was heavily backed up by the claimed success of his first term of office.
- (3) More than what SBY did, Obama's bid for re-election was broadly backed up by the cultural and economic frame to reclaim the American Promises and restore the middle " class economy.

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