

# OBAMA'S SPEECH AT CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE COP 21 IN PARIS IN 2015: FAIRCLOUGH'S THREE-DIMENSIONAL MODEL

## *PIDATO OBAMA PADA KONFERENSI PERUBAHAN IKLIM COP 21 PARIS 2015: ANALISIS TIGA DIMENSIONAL FAIRCLOUGH*

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### **ABSTRAK**

The aim of this paper is to analyze Obama's speech at the Climate Change Conference (COP 21) held in Paris November 18, 2015. The analysis uses Fairclough's three-dimensional model. The three-dimensional model includes such aspects as text (language), discursive practice, and social practice. The results of analyzing these aspects show that under the textual (language) aspect, this speech is dominated by the use of both imperative mood and material process of transitivity. Under the discursive practice, the speech blends the discourse of long-term commitment in achieving the two degree Celsius global warming target with the discourse of innovation and investment in clean energy technologies. As for its social practice, the speech reflects the shifting from the discourse of climate change into the discourse of innovation and investment in clean energy.

**Kata Kunci:** Fairclough's three-dimensional model, imperative mood, transitivity, climate change (global warming) discourse, clean energy technology, innovation and investment discourse

### **ABSTRACT**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pidato Obama pada Konferensi Perubahan Iklim 'Climate Change Conference (OCP 21)' yang diselenggarakan di Paris pada tanggal 18 November 2015. Analisis dilakukan dengan menggunakan Model Analisis Tiga Dimensi Fairclough. Model Tiga Dimensi ini meliputi aspek-aspek seperti teks (bahasa), praktik diskursif, dan praktik sosial. Hasil analisis terhadap aspek-aspek ini menunjukkan bahwa pada aspek tekstual (bahasa), pidato didominasi oleh penggunaan imperative mood dan material process transitivitas. Pada tataran praktik diskursif, pidato Obama memadukan wacana komitmen jangka panjang dalam pencapaian target pemanasan global dua derajat celsius dengan wacana inovasi dan investasi dalam bidang teknologi energi bersih. Adapun pada tataran praktik sosial, pidato ini merefleksikan peralihan dari wacana perubahan iklim menjadi wacana inovasi dan investasi pada energi bersih.*

**Keywords:** *model tiga dimensi Fairclough, imperative mood, transitivitas, wacana perubahan iklim (pemanasan global), teknologi energi bersih, wacana inovasi dan investasi*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Many studies concerning Obama's Speech have been conducted. They range from the studies that do not belong to critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) to those that belong to CDA. The non-CDA-based studies consist of, among others, (1) a study based on corpus in analyzing the lexical aspect of 245 speeches given by senators John McCain and Barack Obama during the years 2007–2008 (Savoy, 2010); (2) a study on the act of representative within Obama's speech at interfaith prayer Vigil

in Newtown, Connecticut (Wibowo, et al, 2013); (3) a study on Obama's language in persuading the public in his "Super Tuesday" 2008 speech (Assmundson, 2008); (4) a study on Obama' Pragmemes in his South Carolina Speech (Capone, 2010); and (5) a study on interpersonal metafunction of Barack Obama's Victory Speech (Ye, 2010).

The CDA-based studies comprise, among others, (1) a study on analyzing semiotics of Barack Obama's Philadelphia Speech based on various perspectives of CDA's methods and

theoretical bases, particularly concerning power gain and maintenance (Catalano, 2011); a study on terrorism-related languages in the speech of Obama and Bush using Van Dijk's CDA concept. (Sarfo, E. and Krampa, 2013); a study on Barack Obama's 5 speeches in 2012 based on Fairclough CDA's textual analysis, Halliday's Ideational Grammatical Metaphor, and Rhetoric (Kazemian and Hashemi, 2014), and a CDA study on Barack Obama's speeches, particularly from the transitivity and modality aspect of Halliday's Systematic Functional Linguistics (Wang, 2010); and CDA study from the post-colonial perspective on the inaugural speeches of Barack H. Obama and George W. Bush (Viberg, 2011).

### **Research Objective**

Among the studies on Obama speech mentioned in the previous section, there has been no study on Obama's speech delivered at the Climate Change Conference COP 21 in Paris in 2015. Therefore, this study aims to critically analyze Obama's speech delivered at the Climate Change Conference COP 21 in Paris in 2015 in terms of such aspects as language, discursive practice, and social practice.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In CDA, both discourse and non-discourse are important aspects in constructing the social world. (Jørgensen and Phillips, p. 7). Analyzing a discourse is done through analyzing its text, which involves not only analyzing the linguistic aspect of the text but also the aspect of the text's order of discourse. The order of discourse includes the social structuring of language (different discourses, genres and styles) of the text and the structuring of social practices of the text. By analyzing the text of a discourse, we can identify whether its linguistic

aspect and its order of discourse have undergone a change or are maintained (Ibid p: 2-3). In relation with the above-mentioned Obama's speech, the analysis of the speech will cover (1) the discursive aspect of the speech and (2) the non-discursive aspect implied in the speech. The analysis of discursive aspect of the speech will be focused on the language used in the speech, while the analysis of non-discursive aspect of the speech will be focused on the political or ideological practice that has influenced the speech. The analysis of the language aspect of the speech will use Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar theory, while the analysis of the political or ideological practice of the speech will be focused on the politics of climate change. These two analyses are based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model of discourse analysis, (Ibid, p 67).

### **Text (language) Analysis**

Under Fairclough's three-dimensional model, one of text-oriented forms of discourse analysis is to conduct a detailed textual analysis within the field of linguistics with the objective to understand how discursive processes operate linguistically in specific texts. This textual analysis uses Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (Ibid, p. 65-66).

In Systemic Functional Grammar, language carries the ideational, interpersonal and textual function. When the language users use the ideational function of a language, they use the language to embody their real world experience. Ideational function mainly consists of transitivity and voice. As for the interpersonal function, it is performed by a language user when he/she intrudes into a speech event. This function includes his/her comments, attitudes and evaluations, the relationship that he sets up between

himself/herself and the listener—in particular, and the communication role that he/she adopts of informing, questioning, greeting, persuading, and the like. The last language function is called textual function. It functions to make links between the language itself and the situation. The function is to weave the strands of meaning potential into the fabric of linguistic structure to produce a cohesive and coherent text or discourse (Halliday, 1979).

Concerning the interpersonal function, Hu Zhuanglin (1988:313) points out that in this function, Modality and Mood are often used. Modality can be used either to express the speaker's judgment toward the topic or to show the social role relationship, scale of formality and power relationship. As for Mood, it is used to show what role the speaker selects in the speech situation and what role he assigns to the addressee. If the speaker selects the imperative mood, he assumes the role of one giving commands and puts the addressee in the role of one expected to obey orders.

Under the text (language) dimension of Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the text of Obama's speech will be analyzed based on Halliday's ideational function and interpersonal function.

#### Discursive Practice

Critical discourse analysis presents a theoretical foundation and specific methods for analysis of the dynamic discursive practices through which language users act as both discursive products and producers in the reproduction and transformation of discourses and thereby in social and cultural change. Discursive practice is viewed as one dimension or moment of every social practice that interacts with other moments of social practice that function according to different logics,

for instance, economic logics or the institutionalization of particular forms of social action. Together, the discursive dimension of social practice and the other dimensions of social practice constitute our world (Jørgensen and Phillips, p. 17-19). The analysis of how a text is produced can be done by analyzing what happens before it is produced, and what changes a text undergoes during its processes. Hence, the analysis involves the combination of discourses (interdiscursivity) and how a text draws on other texts (intertextually). As for the analysis of how a text is consumed, it can be done by analyzing how readers interpret the texts. Fairclough claims that a high level of interdiscursivity is associated with change, while a low level of interdiscursivity signals the reproduction of the established order. (Halliday, 1979: 81-83).

In relation with Obama's speech, the discursive practice of his speech will be analyzed on the level of its interdiscursivity.

#### Social Practice

In Fairclough's CDA, the concept of discourse includes text, talk and other semiological systems (e.g. gestures and fashion). Discourse is just one among many aspects (dimensions) of social practice, and hence it is different from other dimensions of social practice. (Halliday, 1979: 18-19). According to Fairclough, the main aim of critical discourse analysis is to explore the links between language use and social practice. The focus is the role of discursive practices in the maintenance of social order and social change. Since social practice is constituted by both discursive and non-discursive aspect (e.g. economical, physical, biological and psychological), Fairclough uses other theories (e.g. social theories) to analyze other aspects

of social practice, (Halliday, 1979: 35). Therefore, to identify the social practice, it is necessary to draw on the discipline, or disciplines, which studies the social practice of interest. The discipline(s) in question could be, for example, sociology, social psychology, political science or history, (Halliday, 1979:78).

In relation with Obama speech, the analysis will be focused on whether the speech conforms to or deviates from the order of discourse of climate change and what ideology or political global climate change has constructed the text of the speech if deviation takes place.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Text Analysis**

#### **Ideational Function (Transitivity)**

Obama's speech contains many sentences with the structure We have (We've) as they are shown below:

1. Over the last seven years, we've made ambitious investments in clean energy, and ambitious reductions in our carbon emissions.
2. We've multiplied wind power threefold, and solar power more than twenty-fold, helping create parts of America where these clean power sources are finally cheaper than dirtier, conventional power.
3. We've invested in energy efficiency in every way imaginable.
4. We have broken the old arguments for inaction.

Sentence no. 1 above shows we as the actor, have made as the material process, ambitious investments in... as the goal, and over the last seven years as circumstance. As we know it, material process is a process of doing something that is done by the participant. In this sentence, Obama wants to show that both America and he himself have been doing something to solve the climate change problem, which is to invest. The diction ambitious here is to emphasize

that America is very serious about this problem and to reveal their identity as country which has the largest economy in the world. The circumstance over the last seven years seems to inform in detail how serious America has been since seven years ago.

Sentence no. 2, 3, and 4 are expressed to follow up what he says about what America has done seven years ago, that is America not only has done some things to solve the problem but also overcome the pessimism directly by having done the things, such as multiplying both the wind and the solar power –driven electricity and investment in energy efficiency. All of the sentences are expressed in material processes or process of doing.

### **Verbal Process**

There are two sentences with We have (We've) structure that express Verbal Process or process of saying something. They are as follows:

1. We've said no to infrastructure that would pull high-carbon fossil fuels from the ground.
2. We've said yes to the first-ever set of national standards limiting the amount of carbon pollution our power plants can release into the sky.

Each of them contains such elements as Sayer, Receiver, Target, and Range/Verbiage.

Sentence no. 1 contains We as the sayer, have said as verbal process, and no to infrastructure... as verbiage. As for sentence no. 2, We, as the sayer, have said as verbal process, and yes to the first-ever set... as verbiage. From both verbal clauses, the actors are represented by the word we, which refers to America. There is an interesting point that we need to notice in verbiage in both, which is the words yes and no. These words imply that Obama is firmly determined to reduce global warming.

### Interpersonal Function (Mood)

Also in his speech, Obama uses many sentences containing imperative clauses *let's*. They are as follows:

- a. Here in Paris, *let's* reaffirm our commitment that resources (fund) will be there for countries willing to do their part to skip the dirty phase of development
- b. Here in Paris, *let's* also make sure that these resources (fund) flow to the countries that need help preparing for the impacts of climate change that we can no longer avoid.
- c. And finally, here in Paris, *let's* show businesses and investors that the global economy is on a firm path towards a low-carbon future.
- d. (There are hundreds of billions of dollars ready to deploy to countries around the world if they get the signal that we mean business this time.) *Let's* send that signal.

According to Halliday (2004: 76), *let's* belongs to a mood of imperative. A sentence that begins with *let's* may have the meaning of 'I want us (you and me) to do something', for example *Let's* go home now. In addition, Forey states that the personal pronoun *us* in *let's* commonly functions both as an ideational and an interpersonal element in the text (Forey, p. 68). Thus, the sentences that Obama uses above can be interpreted that he wants the delegates and he himself to do the things he mentions in the sentences (interpersonal element). His call to the delegates to do them is relevant since his experience in doing them has shown a success. Also, he has seen the fact that without the increased usage of fossil fuel, the global economy grew (Ideational element).

### Discursive Practice Analysis

Interdiscursivity occurs when different discourses and genres are articulated together in a communicative

event (Jørgensen and Phillips, p. 73). In Obama speech, it can be concluded that interdiscursivity has taken place because the speech reflects such discourses as (a) the climate change discourse that has existed since 1990, when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report confirmed the existence of global warming and human responsibility for the global warming and (b) the discourse of Green Climate Fund (GCF), which has existed since 2010. The aim is to help developing countries cope with climate change (Key Dates on World's Climate Change Conference). In addition to the above interdiscursivity, Obama's speech also blends the new discourse, i.e. the discourse of research and investment in clean energy. The reason that the discourse of research and investment in clean energy is categorized as a new discourse under the discourse order of climate change is because it involves the private sector led by Bill Gates to invest capital in early-stage technology development coming out of 20 countries' mission innovation program (in *The Mission Innovation*). This discourse has a different aim from both the above-mentioned GCF discourse and the discourse of Global Environmental Facility (GEF) (in *Global Environmental Facility*).

### Social Practice Analysis

It was mentioned above that the social practice is constituted by both discursive and non-discursive aspects. Many of Obama sentences (text production) in his speech reflect his political or ideology in which he believes that solving the problem of climate change has to be done quickly, and it is possible only through clean energy innovation and investment by involving the private sector. The sentences are as follows:

1. Here in Paris, *let's* reaffirm our

commitment that resources (fund) will be there for countries willing to do their part to skip the dirty phase of development

2. Here in Paris, let's also make sure that these resources (fund) flow to the countries that need help preparing for the impacts of climate change that we can no longer avoid.
3. And finally, here in Paris, let's show businesses and investors that the global economy is on a firm path towards a low-carbon future.
4. There are hundreds of billions of dollars ready to deploy to countries around the world if they get the signal that we mean business this time. Let's send that signal.
5. And that's why, this afternoon, I'll join many of you to announce an historic joint effort to accelerate public and private clean energy innovation on a global scale.

Under the order of discourse of climate change, the sentences above represent a new discourse. Thus, it can be concluded that the discourse order of climate change has undergone some alteration.

The sentences are in line with some of Giddens's suggestions on how to develop a politics of climate change below:

1. Becoming an ensuring state: it relates to the state that can act as a stimulator, facilitator, and enabler for the various groups as far as the climate change is concerned.
2. Applying the concept of political convergence: it refers to how far climate change policy overlaps in a positive way with other values and political goals.
3. Applying the concept of economic convergence: it is about how far economic and technological innovations that are developed to combat global warming can generate

competitive advantage to those who deploy them. The greater the level of economic convergence, the better our chances of success in limiting climate change. It is essential that politicians and business leaders seize and broaden the opportunities offered (p. 6-9).

## CONCLUSION

The language Obama uses in his speech is dominated by both ideational and interpersonal function, particularly through imperative mood and material process. In performing these two language functions, he uses the discourse of climate change and the discourse of world's clean energy investment. The former belongs to the order of discourse global warming control, while the latter belongs to the political and economic convergence of global climate change. The former represents the commitment of reaching the reduction of the global warming to 2 degree Celcius, while the latter represents one of the quick ways to reduce the global warming to 2 degree Celsius. This presumed a quick way of solving global warming may be possible to be realized since, as according to Lovins, using renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and biofuels (Soft Energy Paths) would apparently allow for the evolution of a more participatory political culture (in Schreurs, M. and Papadakis, p. xl). Hopefully, the participation of private sector led by Bill Gates to invest patient capital in early-stage technology development coming out of 20 countries' mission innovation program will not be distracted by other 'interests' like what happened before the agreement of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, where many countries had been busy with the 'business' of carbon emission, renewable energy technologies, and of new investment opportunities while ignoring to restrict

the fossil fuels use as the main goal of carbon emission reduction (Newell P. and Paterson, M. 2010). Therefore, it is hoped that all countries that have signed the climate change agreement at COP 21 are committed to achieve the target of reducing global warming to 2 degree Celsius that they have set and are ready to conduct regularly updated targets.

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