The use of personal pronoun in Donald Trump’s speech

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ABSTRACT
This study concerns with the use of personal pronouns in political speech. The aims of this study are to find out personal pronouns used in Donald Trump’s speech and their functions. The source of data of this research is the speech by Donald Trump at 74th session of the United Nations general assembly. This study is descriptive qualitative using content analysis methods in collecting and analyzing data. The result shows that Donald Trump used personal pronoun I to emphasize his authority and his good qualities such as confident, share experience, and opinion. Personal pronoun you is used to refer to a specific group when he wants to separate one group from other groups. He also used you to refer to general to avoid conflict. He used personal pronoun inclusive we to involve himself with the United Nations members. He used exclusive we to show his good relation with other groups in sharing responsibility. He used personal pronouns they to make him and the United Nations members less responsible for other groups activities.

Keywords: personal pronoun, Donald Trump, United Nations, president speech

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Introduction

Speech is one of the ways to express thoughts in spoken words. In the speech, the speaker can express and deliver his or her opinion, overviews, and important events (Wahyuningsih, 2018:01). Speech is one of the ways for politicians to gain trust or convince their listener about their idea or information. One of the examples of politicians doing a speech is president of the United States, Donald John Trump (hereafter Donald Trump).

Donald Trump becomes the oldest first-term president of the United States. When he was the president of the United States, he had a lot of opportunities to deliver speeches in important forums. For example, he delivered a speech in the United Nations General Assembly forum. The United Nations general assembly is the world’s parliament, where the members are 193 sovereign nations. They have equal representation in the United Nations general assembly. Furthermore, the United Nations general assembly can express world opinion, make recommendations to the Security Council, and elect the council’s non-permanent members. In addition, the permanent members of the United Nations general assembly are dominated by the United States, China, United Kingdom, France, and Russia.

Moreover, as the president of a developed country, Donald Trump has a vital role in providing opinions for the progress of the country or giving solutions to the world issues. For example, Donald Trump delivered speech on September 24 at 74th session of the United Nations general assembly about the world issues. In his speech, he called for lifting up the notions, launching an economic revival, confronting unfair trade, holding Iran accountable, promoting a free western hemisphere, stopping illegal immigration, and protecting religious freedom.

In his speech, Donald Trump uses personal pronouns instead of addressing the name, because as a politician, it is beneficial for Donald Trump to use personal pronouns. The use of personal pronoun can create various meanings because words can have strong power on our mind-set; the words that are chosen affect people view of the others and themselves (Wareing, 2014: 13).

Moreover, the study of the use of personal pronouns has become an important aspect of analyzing political speeches (Makutis, 2016). This

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happens because politicians exploit the flexibility of pronominal reference to construct a view of themselves and others that is favorable to their image (Bramley, 2011). In addition, personal pronouns are associated with the correlation of authority and solidarity.

Previous studies were conducted by Wahyuningsih (2018) on the use of the subjects in Donald Trump’s inauguration speech especially focusing on linguistic functions and cultural dimensions enabling the interpretation. Hasan (2011) studied the use of in-group and out-group pronouns in Husni Mubarok’s speech. Ekawati (2016) examined the use of personal pronoun as a rhetorical strategy in Susilo Bambang Yudoyono’s speech. Another study was conducted by Hakansson (2012) for the pronominal choices used by George W Bush and Barrack Obama in political speech. Satwika et al (2016) focused on investigating, analyzing the meaning and applying the personal pronouns in Balinese and English. This study used different data and from the perspective of critical discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough. Besides, the choice of personal pronouns that are used by Donald Trump can create many interpretations for the listeners or the audience. Therefore, this study is intended to analyze the personal pronouns used by Donald Trump in his speech on September 24 at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Research Method

This study used descriptive qualitative as the research design. It deals with text and also explains it based on the context. The source of data of this study is Donald Trump’s speech at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly on 24 September 2019. The speech can be found on euronews official YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJnLNUrrffU). For the speech text, it can be found on the The White House website. The data of this study are the personal pronouns that are found in the speech, especially, the personal pronoun I, You, We, They and their inflections.

This study uses content analysis in collecting data. Content analysis is the method in analyzing the content of documentary material such as book, magazine, newspaper, and the content of other verbal material which can be spoken or printed (Kothari, 2014). There are several steps which are used in collecting data by reading multiple times the transcript of the speech, selecting the personal pronouns in the transcript of the speech by underlining it, coding the personal pronouns that already found by using number 1, 2, 3 and more to indicate the number of sentences and the code a, b, and c to indicate the same pronoun that occurs in one sentence. The code a is the first pronoun, b is the second pronoun, and c is the third pronoun.

The method of analyzing data of this study is document analysis. Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic (Bowen, 2019). There are some steps are used in analyzing the data. The steps are analyzing the function of the types of personal pronouns used in the speech. In analyzing the function of the type of personal pronouns, uses the theory of personal pronouns, explaining the function of personal pronouns in relation to the context of using the personal pronouns, and then drawing a conclusion.

Results & Discussion

Results

After collecting the personal pronouns in Donald Trump’s speech, the findings are presented in the tables below. Table 1 below is the categorization of the research finding of personal pronouns and their inflections in Donald Trump’s speech. They are I, my, you, your, yourself, we, us, our, they, them, their, theirs, and themselves.

| Personal pronouns and their inflections | Functions         | Quantity |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|
| I                                      | Personal believe  | 1        |
|                                        | Power             | 8        |
|                                        | Pledge            | 7        |
|                                        | Experience        | 4        |
|                                        | Acknowledgment    | 2        |
Table 1 above shows that personal pronoun we and its inflections, either inclusive or exclusive, are the highest among other personal pronouns used in the speech followed by personal pronoun they, you, I and their inflections, respectively. Their functions are also various.

The Use of the Personal Pronoun I

The personal pronoun I is not used as a substitution of the speaker’s name but it is self-reference of the speaker. According to Hakansson (2012: 10) the personal pronoun I is not used as a replacement for the speaker’s name but it is used to refer to the speaker himself. Beard (2000) argues that personal pronoun I provides a clear sense of personal involvement specifically in term of good news. In political speeches, I can be used to convey an opinion to make the speech more subjective (Ekawati, 2016: 655). The following examples below are the examples of the use of I and its inflections in various categories that are used by him.

The examples of personal qualities that want to express by politicians include being someone with principle, moral, power, and who is not afraid to take action when it is necessary.
(Bramley, 2001: 28). The examples (1) and (2) below are the examples of personal pronoun I and its inflections to show powers that are used by Trump.

(1) To stop Iran’s path to nuclear weapons and missiles, I withdrew the United States from the terrible nuclear deal, which has very little time remaining, did not allow inspection of important sites, and did not cover ballistic missile (Sentence 78).

(2) For this reason, my administration is working with other nations to stop criminalizing of homosexuality, and we stand in solidarity with LGBTQ people who live in countries that punish, jail, or execute individuals based upon sexual orientation (Sentence 171).

Example (1) shows he exercises his power to deal with Iran issues. In the speech, he states that he is pulling out all of the nuclear deal with Iran, not only that, he does not allow the inspection to the important sites and does not cover the ballistic missile. He states that because as the president of the United States, Trump thought that Iran is the biggest security threats that threaten the peace-loving nation. Therefore, here Trump used I instead of we to present himself.

The example (2) also shows that his power as the president of the United States in dealing with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer issues. He states that he and his administration cooperate with other nations to stop mistreating to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer who live in the county that not accept them. He states that, because there are a lot of lesbian, gay, bisexuals, transgender, and queer that got negative treatment from their societies and the media silent of it. In this context, Trump used my instead of we to emphasize his good relationship with his administration. By using my, he gives the sense of belonging. It means that he emphasized that the issues about mistreating to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer are not just his responsibility but also the responsibility of his administration and other nation.

Politicians use the personal pronoun I to present themselves as individuals and speak from their own perspective (Bramley, 2001: 262). For example, Trump as the president of the United States is using the personal pronoun I in his speech to show his pledge to his people. By showing his pledge, Trump can gain his confidence as the president of the United States. According to Bello (2013), the uses of I to show pledge is to gain confidence and a vote. In this context, he is not trying to get a vote but he is trying to gain his confidence as the president of the United States. Example (3) below is the speech that delivered by him to show his pledge to his people.

Example (3) shows that he used the first and second I to show pledge. In his speech, he states that he will not take the bad deal that will cause a bad result for American people. He states that statement due to his relationship with China. In fact, China has violated his contract after he entered the world trade organization and it causing the loss of the United States.

According to Hasan (2011) argues that the personal pronoun me and my are used when it is expressing personal experience and involvement. Me and my are the inflections of personal pronoun I. It can be concluded that the function of I is the same as the function of me and my. Example (4) below is the speech that delivered by him to show his experience.

Example (4) shows that he used the personal pronoun I to show his experience. In this example, the personal pronoun I is to show that Trump himself has actually met with the chief executive officer of the traffic American company, Micron Technology.

Example (5) shows that he used personal pronoun I to show his acknowledgement by Donald Trump.

Example (5) shows that he used personal pronoun my to show his acknowledgement to his country. In the speech (5) above, he shows his appreciation to his country. Furthermore, in the speech (5 above), he indirectly shows that his country is a great country.

Bramley (2001: 259) also states that politicians use the pronoun I to present themselves as individual and speak from their own perspective. Example (6) below showing how I is used to show personal belief.
(6) I have told Kim Jong Un what I truly believe: that, like Iran, his country is full of tremendous untapped potential, but that to realize that promise, North Korea must denuclearize (Sentence 103).

Example (6) shows that he used the second personal pronoun I to show his personal belief and the first I to show his experience.

The Use of the Personal Pronoun You

The personal pronoun you is used to refer to the people that the speaker is talking to whether it is plural or singular (Collins, 2011). According to Bramley (2001) you is a generic pronoun that can be used in a generic way. From this statement, you can also use to refer to people in general. Collins (2011) also states that you is used a lot when it is directly refer to a group of people. From that statement, we can use you to refer to a specific group. The following examples show the use of you to refer to people.

According to Collins (2011) the personal pronoun you can be used to refer to people that the speaker is talking to. It means that the speaker directly points out to his audience. The example (7) below showing how you is used by him to refer to his audience.

(7) Each of you has the absolute right to protect your borders, and so, of course, does our country (Sentence 123).

Example (7) shows that he used personal pronoun you to refer to people that he is talking to. In the sentence before it, he mentions many of the countries here today are coping with the challenges of uncontrolled migration. In that sentence, there is a phrase many of countries here today that indicate the audiences or the United Nation members that present at that event. Furthermore, the personal pronoun you as the of you in example (7) also refers to the audiences or the United Nation members. In addition, he used you to refer to his audience, the United Nation members.

The speaker can use you to address part of, or the entire audience (Alavidze, 2017). It means that you can be used to refer to a specific group or the entire of the group. Example (8), (9), and (10) below show the use of personal pronoun you to refer to a specific group.

(8) To the Venezuelans trapped in this nightmare: Please know that all of America is united behind you (Sentence 148).

(9) Do not put your children in danger (Sentence 132).

(10) Do not put yourself in danger (Sentence 131).

Example (8) shows that he used personal pronoun you to refer to a specific group. In the example (8), he used personal pronoun you to refer to Venezuelans not to his audiences or to the people in the general.

Example (9) also shows that he used the personal pronoun your to refer to people in a specific group. In this context, he is talking about the illegal immigration that happens around the world. In his speech, he refers to a group of people who consider crossing his border illegally to listen that they will put their children in danger. Furthermore, he used your the inflection of you to refer to the people’s children who considering to do illegal migration to the border of his country. He used your here because you is a possessive pronoun that the function is to show something is belong to someone. In this case, he used your to refer to the children of the people who consider to do illegal migration to his border. In addition, he is not used you in this context to refer to his audiences or to people in general.

Example (10) also shows that he used personal pronoun yourself to refer to people in a specific group. The context of this speech is the same as in the example (9), talking about illegal migration. If in example (9) he used your to refer to children of them who crossing the border, but in example (10) he used yourself to refer to themselves who crossing the border.

You is to serve as indefinite pronoun (Hakansson, 2012). It can be used to anyone or everyone. The example (11) below shows the use of personal pronoun you to refer to people in general.

(11) Looking around and all over this large, magnificent planet, the truth is plain to see: If you want freedom, take pride in your country (Sentence 18).

Example (11) shows that he used personal pronoun you and your to refer to people in general. It is unclear whether he used you to refer to his audience or he used it to refer to everyone. The use of your here is also unclear because he did not mention which country he refers. It can be concluded that in this context, he used you and your to refer to all people in general, meaning that they did not refer to people in particular. Moreover, he used you and your here to refer to people in general to avoid the conflict.

The Use of the Personal Pronoun We

The Personal pronoun we is an important pronoun in political speeches in expressing the sense of institutional identity (Hakansson, 2012: 14). It means that the speaker speaks on behalf or representative of the institution (Ekawati, 2016: 656). We can also be used by politicians to share responsibility and give a sense of togetherness by
involve the speaker with the audience (Bamley, 2011). The use of we can be inclusive or exclusive (Scheibmen, 2014). Inclusive we refers to the speaker and the addressee or the listener while we exclusive refers to the speaker and others who are not the listener or addressee. According to Collins (2011), we refers to a group of people that includes the speaker. The group divided into three categories. The first categories are the speaker and the addressee. The second categories are the speaker and the people who are not there at the time but not including the addressee or the audiences. The third categories are any group that the speaker feels to be part of.

By understanding the use of we that stated by Collins (2011) and Scheibmen (2014), it can be concluded that the first include to inclusive while the second and the third include to exclusive. The following examples below show how Trump used we and its inflections to refer to people. According to Hakansson (2012) sometime we can be used to convey the image of a political party as a team to shared responsibility. The example (12) below is the example of the used of we to refer to the speaker and the audience or in this context is he and his audience. (12) We have beheld saints who inspired us with hope, rebels who stirred us with passion, and heroes who emboldened us with courage— all here to share plans, proposals, visions, and ideas on the world’s biggest stage (Sentence 6).

Example (12) shows that he used personal pronoun we and its inflections to refer to him and his audience. In his speech, the use of we and us mean that all the audience or in this context all the member of the United Nation are involved and making them also have responsibility. Therefore, he states that he and all the members of the United Nation to share plans, proposals, visions, and ideas. We and us above refer to he and his audience because in the speech he mentions all here that indicated the person that come to that event, not the people who did not come. (Collins, 2011). It is called exclusive we. Exclusive we is used to refer to the speaker another individual or group but not included the addressee. The example (13) below is the example of the used of exclusive we that is used by Donald Trump. (13) As the United Kingdom makes preparations to exit the European Union, I have made clear that we stand ready to complete an exceptional new trade agreement with the UK that will bring tremendous benefits to both of our countries (Sentence 42).

Example (13) shows that Donald Trump used personal pronoun we to refer to Donald Trump and his people or his nation but not include his audience or the United Nation members. It means that he distances himself and his people from the United Nation members. He also creates togetherness and responsibility with his people or nation in facing good news. Furthermore, he used our to refer to him, his people or nation and the United Kingdom but not include his audience or the United Nation members. The context of this speech is talking about the terrific new trade deal between he and Japan. In his speech, he mentions that he makes preparation to exit European Union and he also mentions his agreement with the United Kingdom that will bring a lot of benefit for both his country and the United Kingdom. He used our instead of his to emphasize that he and the United Kingdom share the same responsibility. He used our to show his good relationship while collaborating with the United Kingdom.

This function also includes exclusive we. The example (14) below is the example of the used of exclusive we that is used by him. (14) Americans know that in a world where others seek conquest and domination, our nation must be strong in wealth, in might, and in spirit. That is why the United States vigorously defends the traditions and customs that have made us who we are (Sentence 13&14).

Example (14) shows that he used personal pronoun our, us, and we to refer Americans to highlight that he used our to refer to his nation not to his audience or other nation. The context of this speech is talking about the great of his nation. Knowing the fact that all people seek conquest and domination, Trump said that his nation must be strong in wealth, in might, and in spirit. In this case, he used exclusive we to emphasize that he exclude him with other group but unite with his nation. He does that to show his good image as the president of his nation by sharing the responsibility.

The Use of the Personal Pronoun They

The personal pronoun they and its inflections refer to people excluding the speaker and the audience (Ekawati, 2016: 656). According to Collins (2011) they refers to a group of thing or a group of people not including the speaker and the audience. He also states that they often used to refer to people in general. It means that they can be used in a neutral context, where the speaker does not point out the negative or positive way of others. In a political context, they used to separate
themselves or their group from others (Hakansson, 2012: 17). The personal pronoun they can also distinguish the speaker group and others (Ekawati, 2016: 656). By using they the politicians make themselves less responsible for their action and show ideological difference among people (Bramley, 2001). The following examples below show how Trump uses they and its inflections to refer to people or things.

Furthermore, they can be used to refer to specific group or things (Hakansson, 2011). The examples below are the example of the used of they and its inflections to refer to a specific group or thing that are used by him.

(15) The receiving countries are overburdened with more migrants than they can responsibly accept (Sentence 112).

(16) And the migrants themselves are exploited, assaulted, and abused by vicious coyotes (Sentence 113).

(17) Last month, African American, Hispanic American, and Asian American unemployment reached their lowest rates ever recorded (Sentence 30).

(18) Mexico is showing us great respect, and I respect them in return (Sentence 127).

Example (15) shows that he used personal pronoun they to refer to a specific group. The context of this speech is talking about illegal migration.

Example (16) also shows that he used personal pronoun themselves to refer to a specific group. The context of example (16) is the same as in the example (15). In the example (16), he did not use themselves to refer to receiving country like in the example (15) but it is used to refer to the migrants themselves who used illegal method to move to another country. In this context, he also describes the migrants in a negative way.

Example (17) shows that he used personal pronoun their as the inflections of they to refer to a specific group. The context of this speech is talking about economic policies. In his speech, he expresses his sincerity to his economic policies due to their achievement in decreasing the rate of unemployment. Therefore, he used their in this context because their is possessive pronoun that the function is to show something is belong to someone. In this case, he used their to refer to the lowest rate of unemployment that belongs to African American, Hispanic American, and Asian American. Moreover, he separates himself and the united nation member in this context; he does not perceive them in a negative way.

Example (18) shows that he used personal pronoun them as the inflections of they to refer to a specific group. The context of this speech is talking about the illegal migration like in the example (15) and (16). In this context, he mentions his sincerity to some country that cooperates with him in protecting the border from illegal migrants. He shows his great sincerity to the president of Mexico because of the great cooperation by putting 27,000 troops to his southern border. Therefore, he used them to refer to all Mexican to showing his respect not just to the president but to all he Trump also perceives all the Mexican in a positive way.

Another function of they and its inflections can be used in a neutral context (Hakansson, 2011). It means that the speaker can use they and its inflection to refer to people or thing. The examples (19) and (20) below are the examples of the used of they to refer to a general that are used by him.

(19) And they are waiting also to be pursued (Sentence 138).

(20) It must not attempt to erase them or replace them (Sentence 17).

Example (19) shows that he used personal pronoun they and its inflection to refer to things. It can be analyzed by analyzing the sentence before it (our region is full of such incredible promise: dream waiting to be build and national destinies or all). He used they here to represent the dreams of all people. Furthermore, in this context, he is showing his intention that he would help people invest in their own nation to make them have a bright future.

Example (20) shows that he used personal pronoun them as the inflections of they to refer to the national foundation. Them here are histories cultures and heritage. The context of this part of speech is talking about the phenomena of the nation around the world seeking conquest and domination. In his speech, he points out that country should cherish their histories, cultures, and heritages. Furthermore, he also used them here to position himself in a good way by persuading others to do a good thing.

Discussion

Personal pronouns used by Trump in his speech are personal pronoun I, you, we, and they with their various positions. The use I in his speech is to describe he himself in a positive way and highlight his personal qualities. The use of personal pronoun tin Trump speech has distinctive functions to express his intentions and purposes. The functions of personal pronoun I in his speech are showing his powerful position as a president, pledging, showing his experiences, acknowledging, and showing his personal belief.
The use of *I* to show his authority as the president is in particular by emphasizing his good qualities in dealing with some issues related to his foreign policy and the safety of his people and nation. As a president, making pledges are necessary to gain the trust and support from society. Those pledges are made by the politician himself. One of the ways to present that pledges is by using the personal pronoun *I*. In this context of speech, he used *I* to make a promise in order to emphasize his seriousness that he will not lose to China. He also uses *I* to show that he is confident in his statement.

He used *I* to show his experience to make it clear that what he said is based on his personal experience. In this context, Donald Trump discusses about the domination of China for the economic sector by using a cunning trick such as manipulation, product dumpling, forced technology transfers, and others. To prove that China manipulated the economy by using a cunning trick, he told his experience to support his statement.

The use of *I* is also to express acknowledgment or appreciation. He used his country as a role model in comparing to another country. He also used the word love to call his country. By using this word he shows his appreciation to his country.

Personal pronoun *I* is to show president's personal belief can be seen as an individual and place himself outside the shared of responsibility of his colleagues. In his speech, he said that he believed that North Korea is similar to Iran in term of tremendous untapped potential country. His belief is just his personal statement not including his nation and others. Therefore, in this case, he takes full responsibility for what he said.

Personal pronoun *you* is used to refer to the people that the speaker is talking to, refer to a specific group, and refer to people in general. He used *you* to refer to the people he is talking to whenever he passes on the audiences, in this context is all the members of the United Nation attending that event. It can be proved by understanding the co-text as delivered in the speech.

Furthermore, he used *you* to refer to specific group when he points out Venezuelans. In this context he shows the situation in Venezuela that is in a worst condition. Therefore, in his speech, he used *you* to refer to Venezuela in order to highlight that American people will help Venezuela to overcome their problem. He also used *you* to refer to Venezuelans to distances his audience to be involved in delivering bad news.

Another function of *you* is to refer to people in general. When *you* is used as an indefinite pronoun, it can be unclear whom the speaker is referring to rather than referring to general. In relation with avoiding any conflict, *you* refers to all people in general.

Another personal pronoun used in his speech is *we*. The functions are to refer to the speaker and the audience, to refer to the speaker and the third party but not including the audience, and to refer to any groups that the speaker feels be part of.

The most important point of using *we* is to be part of a group membership. It means that by using inclusive *we* the speaker tries to position himself as the audience. By positioning himself as the audience, the speaker can share his responsibility to the audience. He also wants to emphasize that he shares the same responsibility with the entire group of the United Nation members.

Meanwhile, to refer to the speaker and other people but not including the audience, exclusive *we* is used. Another use of exclusive *we* is to refer to him and his people or nation, did not include his audience or in this context the member of the United Nation.

The last personal pronoun used is *they*. It refers both to people and things in a specific group and to refer to people and things in general. The function of the third personal pronoun *they* is to separate the speaker and his audience to other groups. It means that the speaker and his audience are not responsible for what the other group’s action.

He used *they* in the speech that separated him from the audience is whenever he refers the country that accepts the illegal migration. Furthermore, in this context, he separates himself and the United Nation members from other groups i.e. the countries that accept the illegal migration to make him and the United Nation members less responsible of what their actions. It is also used when he describes any other UN members in a negative way.

When *they* is used for general when he mentions the positive aspects of his nation to encourage people to reach their dreams. In addition, he used *they* here to position himself as a good leader who supports good things.

**Conclusion**
Personal pronouns in presidential speech have various functions. It relates to the speakers’ corroboration, point of view, intentions, and purposes. Personal pronoun *I* which refers to the speaker himself tends to be used when the president want to emphasize his good personality in leading the nation or to underline his personal dedication, contribution toward the nations, and his superiority among others. Like other uses of *you*, in the speech *you* refers to the speaker is talking to, both on specific referring to a particular nations and nations in general. Meanwhile, the use of *we*, inclusive and exclusive, has different meanings and functions. Inclusive *we* refers to the speaker and all the audience he is talking to and exclusive *we* refers to the speaker and his group, in this matter not including the audience. Personal pronoun *they* as the otherness is mostly described in negative ways as *they* is other group or people outside the speaker’s group, i.e. the group as the member of the United Nations.

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