CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In political speeches, ideas and ideologies must be expressed in order to the audience to accept them, as well as for others who might hear parts of the speech later in the media. Different aspects are employed or not used to convey meaning with words and expressions. Political language is a tool of power used to shape public opinion and control society. It is applied through speeches that can be interpreted differently by individuals, influencing the success of candidates. Beyond mere communication, political speech builds social connections, conveys emotions, and promotes ideas, policies, and programs (Hashim, 2015). According to Tameryan et al, (2018) political speech is the result of all communication practices that utilized in political discussions and public policy guidelines, supported by regulations and connected with standard procedures that have been shown to be successful through time.

Meanwhile, in contemporary political discourse, the power of rhetoric and persuasive communication cannot be overstated. Rhetoric is the skill of effectively communicating not just through words but also by considering how visuals impact an audience at a particular moment (Johnson, 2021). Political leaders employ speeches

as a powerful tool to convey their vision, rally support, and shape public opinion. One such speech that garnered significant attention and analysis was delivered by Joe Biden, the 46th President of the United States on 1st September 2022 in Philadelphia, titled "Battle for the Soul of the Nation."

President Joe Biden referred to the fight for the fundamental beliefs and ideals of the United States as the "Battle for the Soul of the Nation". It stands for his belief that the nation is dealing with serious issues, including as inequality and division as well as his dedication to bringing back decency, empathy, and unity in American politics and society. To put it briefly, it is about standing up for the strongest American ideals and making sure they defeat those that seek to divide us. On September 1st 2022 Biden delivered that speech in Independence hall, Philadelphia where the place declared the independence of the United States on July 4th 1776. Biden tried to influence people to believe with him and Democrat Party to bring unity and equality for the United States. Joe Biden's "Battle for the Soul of the Nation" speech was not just a standard campaign address; it was a call to action, a plea for unity, and a declaration of his vision for the future of the United States. Against the backdrop of a deeply divided nation, marked by polarizing rhetoric and social tensions, the speech aimed to resonate with a broad spectrum of Americans and convey a message of hope, healing, and a return to national unity.

In his speech, Joe Biden expressed concerns about the state of US democracy and criticized Donald Trump and the MAGA (Make America Great) Republicans for what he sees as threats to democracy. He accused them of limiting people's freedoms, undermining the constitution by not upholding the rule of law, disregarding the will of the people, and refusing to accept election results. Biden also mentioned the chaos during Trump's power. At that time, Biden delivered the speech for midterm election, is the general election held near the midpoint of a president's four-year term of office. It usually held to elect the legislatives and state governors. Furthermore, there would be an election for governor of Pennsylvania.

Therefore, political speeches and campaign have the power to enhance the advantages associated with one's identity by emphasizing and highlighting that identity (Dickson & Scheve, 2006). Thus, it is indicated that he is campaigning to get people to vote for the Democratic Party and calling for votes to hate Trump and Republicans. In Biden's speech, he used hegemony to portray Trump and the Republican Party negatively, positioning himself as the good person. This approach consistent with Lears et al, (2007), aims to marginalize Trump and create a clear divide. Republican Representative McCarthy countered by blaming Trump for worsening the situation in the United States, which intensified the polarization between Biden and Trump

supporters. Polarization here refers to the extreme division of individuals or groups into opposing camps, a key issue arising from Biden's speech.

In addition, Biden's speech touched on various themes, including democracy, social justice, and the character of the nation itself. Biden's discourse in this address had the potential to shape not only the outcome of the election but also the course of American politics and society. As such, it stands as a significant and compelling subject for critical discourse analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) views discourse as a social occurrence and aims to enhance the theoretical basis for conducting discourse analysis and understanding its place in society (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). Besides, critical discourse analysis can be used to investigate how social power, dominance, and inequality are implemented verbally (Afrianto & Widianto, 2022). To investigate this issue through discourse analysis, the researcher used description stage in Fairclough's three dimensional frameworks because this research will focus with linguistic features in Biden's speech. The urgency of this study lies in its potential to provide insights into how political discourse operates in contemporary America and how it influences public opinion, political debates, and the trajectory of the nation. Understanding the strategies and impact of political communication is vital for informed citizenship and decision-making in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

This study has done by several researchers such as (Aslam et al, 2024). In this research, the researcher conducted the study to assess President Biden's speech at Jordan's King Abdullah's visit for an immediate ceasefire during the Israel-Palestine conflict. Another researcher such as Awawdeh & Al-Abbas (2023) conducted the research to undercover the strategic lexical choices and grammatical constructions. Besides, Hatem (2023) did the research to unravel the linguistic elements, explore the ideologies conveyed by tweets, and verify its hypotheses. While Wibhisana et al (2023) did the study to assess the existence of power in and behind Kamala Harris's speech and examine the representation of hidden ideologies, and Allhwani (2021) did the research to understand and analyze the language that Biden used in his speech.

Most of the previous studies analyzed the three stages of Fairclough's three dimensional frameworks such as description, interpretation, and explanation. They analyze linguistic features and ideology behind the words in their research. Thus, in this research, the researcher just used description stage in Fairclough's three dimensional frameworks to unravel the words behind Biden's speech. Besides, the researcher analyzed vocabulary, grammar (personal pronouns, modal verb, and tenses), and text structure (mode) in Biden's speech.

1.2 Research Question

In accordance to the background of the study, the research question is how did the linguistic features reveal the meaning behind Biden's speech Biden's *"Battle for the Soul of the Nation"* speech?.

1.3 Research Objective

The research objective in this research is to unravel implicit messages by examining linguistic features in Biden's *"Battle for the Soul of the Nation"* speech.

1.4 Uses of the Study

This study is important to contribute to the field of critical discourse analysis by applying the principles of CDA to a significant political speech delivered by a sitting President, offering insights into the evolving dynamics of political communication.

1.4.1 The Theoretical Use

The theoretical use of conducting a critical discourse analysis (CDA) for the thesis involves applying established CDA theories and methodologies to dissect the linguistic, rhetorical, and discursive elements of Joe Biden's speech. This includes analyzing power dynamics, uncovering ideologies, contextualizing choices within the socio-political context, and critically evaluating language use. Overall, the application of CDA contributes to understanding how discourse shapes politics, ideologies, and societal perceptions.

1.4.2 Practical Use

Politicians can gain from practical application by improving their communication strategies, understanding public opinion, influencing policy communication, and managing the complexities of social discourse to foster unity and efficient government. In addition, society can develop into more informed and critical consumers of political information by learning about the rhetorical strategies employed by politicians. By encouraging a deeper analysis of political messages and conversations based on informed perspectives rather than emotional reactions, this awareness can help decrease the impacts of polarization.

Besides, it is very useful for future researcher because they can build on this study by exploring other political speeches or expanding the analysis to different contexts and time periods. Future researchers can continue to examine the complex relationships between political discourse and other societal issues by implementing and improving the theoretical frameworks and methodology used in this study so that they have guidance in doing the research.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research aims to unravel implicit messages by examining linguistic features in Biden's speech. This study employs the Fairclough's three dimensional frameworks of critical discourse analysis to analyze Joe Biden's speech with a focus on the description stage of this framework. This study assesses the linguistic features in the text such as vocabulary, grammar (personal pronouns, modal verb, and tenses), and structure (mode) to know the meaning about the words behind Biden's speech.